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Maintaining and Pruning The Perfect Hedges

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Maintaining and Pruning The Perfect Hedges

Hedge Maintenance Nightmares – What You Should Not Plant

The beauty of a hedge lies not only in its outward appearance, but also in its character. Most hedges can be virtually left to thrive on nature's own elements, with the occasional pruning if desired. Although this all sounds nice and stress-free, when you add hedges to your existing landscape, things can get a little tricky. If you have heard of or if you simply fear hedge maintenance nightmares, you should certainly think before adding a hedge to your property.

While you should not be scared to add, you should research the proper type of hedge for your yard, your schedule, and the suspected location of planting. By researching beforehand, you will be able to know exactly what you should not plant and choose something appropriate for your needs.

If you want to avoid hedge maintenance nightmares, you should first research different types of hedges. When doing research consider how often each species needs to be pruned. If a species needs to be pruned often, you may not want to plant it. Look for those that are basically maintenance-free. These varieties may need to be pruned once a year and some may be able to thrive without any pruning at all. When you forgo pruning you may end up with a more erratic style, but if you are against maintenance altogether, these will work for you.

Another thing you should definitely look at when researching is the height of the hedge at its mature age. This will also be important when trying to think of the location in which you want to plant your hedge. If you choose a hedge that gets too tall for the area, it may become a maintenance nightmare. For instance, if you plant a hedge right under a power line and you don't know it will grow over 20 feet tall, you could find yourself trimming it more often than you'd like. Never plant hedges that will grow very tall under any type of wire or roofing. You will only be creating a hazard and stress for yourself later.

When considering height, remember to also consider width and other growth patterns. You can find hedges that like to grow strait upward or you can find those that like to sprawl horizontally as well. If you don't consider these things however, you could end up with a hedge that wants to overtake other plants in your yard, your fence, or your neighbor's property as well. If these things happen, you will likely be in a hedge maintenance nightmare trying to constantly keep your hedge exactly where it needs to be.

Never plant a hedge too close to your neighbor's property without asking their opinion first. If they are willing to allow the hedge to grow as it wishes you won't have to worry about as much maintenance. However if they are picky about the issue, you may want to avoid all stress and plant a different variety or choose another location.

Remember as well that some hedges don't tolerate pruning very well. Many conifers like Leyland and Lawson's cypress are included in this grouping. Be sure you know exactly what

your hedge likes, so you don't ruin a beautiful plant. If you are unsure about these things, just research on the web or ask the specialist at your local nursery.

Overall, if you are looking for a hedge that does not require much maintenance, you need to look for those varieties that are slow growing and only require up to one pruning per year. If you accidentally purchase a fast growing hedge you will find yourself pruning about once a month, which may be a nightmare in itself. Decide how much time you want to devote to your hedge and choose accordingly.

Some people may think three prune sessions a year is a nightmare while others may be able to tolerate that amount well. Remember, where you plant a hedge has a lot to do with how well you enjoy its beauty and functionality. If you choose a spot that is inappropriate you may find yourself stuck with a hedge that is killing the roots of other plants or bothering your neighbor. Just be sure not to choose something that gets too tall, too wide, or needs pruning too often and you will be fine.

How to Ensure Hedges Don't Hog Your Landscape

Hedges are the perfect solution for someone who would rather add privacy to their home in a beautiful way than install an unattractive fence. They offer benefits such as durability, protection, and also entice wildlife to your area. They are extremely easy to maintain, in most cases. In some cases however, a hedge can be quite a pain. The source of frustration in most cases does not lie as much with the hedge as it does with the person who chose and planted it.

When you decide to add a hedge to your property, there are certain things that you must think about before doing so. If you simply purchase a hedge that you think will work in the area, without researching the species, you could end up with a headache trying to take care of it. So, before adding a hedge to your property, make sure you choose the right type. Otherwise, the hedge may completely take over your entire landscape area.

The first thing to consider is what size hedge you can use. If you have a small area in your garden in which you think a hedge would be appropriate, be sure to choose a smaller hedge. Research the species that would work best in the area. Consider things like amount of sunlight and width when choosing. Ask your local expert about a particular species and explain to them where you are planning to place it.

If you choose a hedge that is too large for the area, it will likely smother out all other plants around it. The way this works is that the roots of the hedge like to sprawl out underground. If the roots sprawl too far, they can deprive other plants around it from natural elements like water.

The roots of a hedge are something to pay attention to in general. Since they do sprawl underground, you may want to avoid putting them too close to a walkway or concrete area. They can grow beneath these things and cause the paths to crack. This can be costly when looking at replacement and repair. Make sure the location in which you are planting your hedge is free from any potential pathways. This is the best way to ensure the hedge will not

cause a problem and take over your walk areas.

When a root system sprawls, the hedge tends to get wider. When planting, consider that your hedge will not only grow in height, but also in width. Don't plant your hedge close to a road, neighbor's home, or a pathway. This can cause problems with your neighbors or even the local authority. If you do choose to ignore this warning and plant your hedge close to a boundary, be sure to maintain the hedge as necessary. You will need to have free time to prune and shape the hedge to avoid any problems.

The best way to ensure the hedge does not damage any other area of your landscape is to plant it away from everything else. You can plant the hedge separately and watch it grow for a few years. Later, when the hedge is at maturity, you can add other plants around it. This will allow you to know exactly where it is safe to add things. If you don't wait until the hedge is mature, you will likely plant something in an unsafe area. Planting the hedge away from everything will also ensure that the hedge will not harm the structure of your home or block necessary light.

Although it may seem that hedges are difficult to deal with, the opposite is true. They are very easy to deal with, as long as you follow a few basic rules. The responsibility lies on each planter to research their particular species and choose the most appropriate location for it. The hedge will be predictable and likely grow just as the research notes. If you know this information beforehand, you can prevent the hedge from taking over and causing problems with other elements of your property.

So, before planting any type of hedge on your property, be sure that you are choosing the best species available as well as choosing the best planting location. Maintain your hedges as necessary with pruning if they seem to be getting out of hand.

Pruning the Perfect Hedge

Many people start to sweat from nervousness when they think about trying to prune their hedges. The anxiety likely comes from the fact that most people never really learn the proper techniques to pruning and end up "winging" it the entire time. When you try to prune without knowing exactly what you are doing, the results can be inconsistent. One year you may come out with a lovely hedge, while the next year you may come out with a terrible looking hedge. If you want to prune the perfect hedge, there are some tips to remember when pruning.

The first thing you can do is decide if you are simply pruning the excess or dead areas of the hedge or if you want to shape the hedge. An initial shaping can be difficult, but once you get a shape you like, maintaining it is much easier. You can look through magazines or books at hedge shapes to use as a guide while pruning. Once you have decided what you want to do, you can move on to more preparation.

Experts say that the best way to begin shaping a hedge is to begin when the plants are small. By beginning early, you can "train" the plant to grow the way you want it to go. If you wait until the hedge is mature, you will likely have a lot more work on your hands. Keep in mind

that generally, a hedge should always be wider at the base than at the top when keeping with formal style.

Some hedges should be cut back completely each year in order for the plant to produce the best possible appearance. Deciduous hedges such as spirea, privet, or forsythia should be cut all the way to the ground in late winter. This also gives you an opportunity to reshape the plant each year, which can be welcoming if you messed up the year before. Plants such as burning bush or viburnum should not be cut in this manner however. You can cut them in half and get great results nonetheless. When it comes to evergreen hedges, there is really not too much pruning necessary. It is best to begin in the summer and remove any new growth that lies outside your desired hedge shape.

When beginning to prune, there will be a few things you should consider. First, be sure to prune as often as needed and no more. You can prune each time there is between two and four inches of new growth. Some hedges will produce this once a month, while others may only produce this once a year. The growth rate varies depending on species of the hedge and planting location.

Second, be sure to remember you need to maintain the hedge's health. This may mean that you should leave a few unsightly sprigs of growth if they are helping the plant to grow in a healthy manner. Never trim so much of the hedge that you are compromising its health. This will only cause your hedge to die. If you want to prevent thinning, consider trimming with a taper. This means that you will keep the base wider and slightly taper the top in a more narrow fashion. This not only looks great but also prevents damage from the snow or ice.

If you are trying to train a hedge that has not matured, you can do so with pruning. Begin by cutting one third of the hedge back. This will force the hedge to grow laterally. Add fertilizer and growth food to the hedge to ensure that it will grow back healthy. Doing this to older hedges may not produce the same effects, however, so only try it on young hedges.

Lastly, always be sure that you have an idea in mind before trimming. Never grab your trimmers and go at the hedge with no specific purpose. Doing so will always end up in catastrophe for your hedge. Trim small areas at a time. Always step back and admire your work before moving on to another area. If you are unsure about a certain branch, leave it alone. If you decide to remove it, you can always come back to that area a few days later. Taking your time and doing it right will always lead to a more beautiful hedge.

Pruning Your Hedges – Four Top Tips to Know Before You Start

Pruning your hedges may seem like an easy task, until you actually take it on. In truth, the difficulty of the task lies in the type of hedge you own. If you have a hedge that is slow growing, you may only need to trim it a little each year. However, if you have a hedge that quickly gets out of control, you may find yourself heading for the trimmers every week! Before you begin trimming however, consider these four top tips most landscapers and gardeners never forget.

Get the Proper Tools

Part of the preparation before you begin trimming your hedge revolves around the proper tools. If you are going to attempt pruning yourself, you must have a few necessary items to use. First, be sure that you always have protective gloves and safety goggles. When you prune, it is easy for twigs and sprouts to fly unexpectedly toward your face. When this happens, you want to be prepared and not be harmed. Although it may seem excessive, having the proper safety tools is a very important part of trimming a hedge.

Secondly, you will need to have the right type of trimmer. If you are only doing minor snips here and there, a small hand trimmer will work fine. If you are stuck pruning a large area however, you may want to consider an electric or gasoline powered trimmer. Sure these trimmers are bulkier and can be more of a pain to deal with at first, but when pruning a large area, they are lifesavers. It is up to you on which type to choose ultimately. Cordless electric trimmers with rechargeable batteries are one of the best choices however. They can be purchased in lightweight models as well, making them handier than ever before.

Know Your Hedge's Growth Patterns

An important step in pruning or trimming is to know when to do it. If you are up to date on the growing patterns of your hedge species, then you will have little trouble deciding when trimming is necessary. For instance, some hedges must be pruned at specific times of year for best growth. New hedges should not reach maturity before their first trim. You should trim them immediately after you notice new growth to stimulate the process.

Needle evergreen hedges are very easy to deal with and typically require only one pruning a year. It is best to do this in the spring season. Broadleaf evergreens however may require numerous trimmings, as they grow throughout the year. Deciduous hedges may also need to be trimmed several times throughout the summer months.

Knowing exactly what your hedge requires is essential before trimming. If you trim your hedge too often, you will end up with a dying plant. If you don't trim it often enough, it could really get out of control or not look as healthy as you would like.

Take It Slow

Probably the most important thing to remember when trimming your hedges is to take it slow. So many people will rush through the job and end up dissatisfied with the result. Remember, once you make a snip, it cannot be taken back. If you are unsure about any area, leave it for a while and re-evaluate it later. Make sure you step back several times throughout the trimming to make sure what you are doing is symmetrical and necessary. Only trim areas that are necessary. You should always have a purpose when trimming. Don't just go at your best hedge because you have nothing else to do in the yard.

Get Help

Part of trimming your hedges responsibly means that you know when you are over your head. If you are dealing with a stubborn hedge or an extremely large hedge, be sure to ask for help.

Ask a friend to assist you or better yet, hire a professional. If you try to trim large hedges on your own, you could injure yourself by falling. Be sure to always trim responsibly and never be afraid to ask for help. Doing so will ensure your safety. It will also ensure that your hedges look flawless and beautiful. Anytime you are unsure about something, don't hesitate to ask a local expert for their opinion on trimming as well.

Common Hedge Hacking Mistakes

Hedges make a lovely addition to most garden spaces. Some hedges are better suited to decoration, while others serve very important practical purposes. For example, a hedge can be an excellent way to secure your property if you are not interested in installing fencing. Hedges, like fences, can also serve as privacy screens from noisy neighbors (not that your neighborhood has any of those!).

Though they serve many purposes, hedges do require maintenance. They are not for people who don't have time to care for them – so if your schedule is already jam-packed hedges might not be the best option.

If you do decide to go forward with planting hedges or if you already have some hedges that need a little TLC, here are a few suggestions of things you can do to avoid common hedge hacking mistakes.

Pick the Right Kind of Hedge for Your Space and Needs

There are different kinds of hedges so you'll need to figure out which is best for your space and for your needs. Your local garden center should have a good selection of hedge plants that will thrive in your area and should be able to offer helpful suggestions when choosing the right hedge for your garden.

Preparation

As with most things, the key to pruning your hedges is preparation. If you take some time to educate yourself on proper pruning techniques, you will save yourself a lot of time and hassle down the line – not to mention how much better your hedges will look as a result of your careful preparation.

Invest in a Good Hedge Trimmer

You need the proper tools to do the job properly. Being prepared and having the right tools are two very important steps, though far too many people are content to skip over these and get right onto the trimming. There are many good hedge trimmers on the market today. You will need to assess your needs to pick the best kind of trimmer for your garden. If you have a lot of trimming that needs to be done on a regular basis, you might consider investing in an electric hedge trimmer to decrease the strain on your body and your time.

Your Hedge Shouldn't Be Straight (From the Bottom to the Top That is)

Even though you may want your hedges to look straight, you don't really want to trim in a straight line from the bottom to the top. What you want to aim for rather is a wider base and narrower top. Gardeners often refer to this shape as an inverted keystone. What is the reasoning behind this shape? You want to make sure that enough sunlight reaches the bottom of the hedge and this type of shape ensures that.

Measure, Measure, Measure!

Though you don't want your hedges to be a straight up and down wall, you do want the final product to appear straight and even. How do you achieve this? Again, it all rests in the preparation. If you put the work into measuring and marking out your design before you begin cutting, you will end up with a much better looking hedge than simply eyeballing it. You want to use a tape measure to place guides exactly where you want the cuts to be. This part of the process may seem time consuming, but on the bright side the actual trimming will fly by and will be worry free thanks to the time you put into the planning stages.

Don't Over Trim!

If you make a wrong cut, it's not the end of the world – but if you try too hard to fix it, it might be the end of your hedge. A lot of people, when making a mistake will overcompensate by moving away from their plan and making more cuts than intended to match the mistaken side. Take a deep breath, step away and see if there is a way to match the other side. If there is, then trying adjusting your guides. If there isn't any easy fix for the problem, then just leave well enough alone. The hedge will always grow back. If you are too hasty while trying to fix the problem, you most likely will end up with an eyesore.

Five Features to Look for in an Electric Hedge Trimmer

Electric hedge trimmers can really make the task of pruning quick and painless. While some people prefer softly pruning with handheld trimmers, others appreciate the ease of technology. If you have a large amount of hedges on your property or are simply looking for an easy way to get your pruning done and over, consider purchasing an electric hedge trimmer. You can find them at most home improvement stores or even in the garden area of your local general merchandise stores.

Although you may find this product a bit much to purchase when you are only planning on using it once a year, it will likely come in handy for other jobs as well and last for up to twenty years or more. When deciding to purchase an electric hedge trimmer, be sure to look for these five features. They will help make the job even more tolerable.

Cordless Versions

When you begin shopping for an electric hedge trimmer you will likely notice there are three different power types to choose from. You can choose a corded trimmer, which will be less

expensive, if you have only small jobs to do. You can also choose a gas powered trimmer if you have a large property or need to use the trimmer for long periods of time. The best overall choice however is the cordless trimmer. These trimmers are great for all sized projects and are easy to deal with. They require less maintenance than the gas-powered trimmers and are easier to use than the corded varieties. If you want a great hedge trimmer, a cordless version is the one to choose.

Easy To Handle

The way a trimmer handles is one of the most important aspects to using it successfully. If you are a smaller person, you will certainly want to pay close attention to this. Some trimmers are bulky and heavy to hold. Never buy a trimmer that you feel is too difficult to pick up and hold steady. There are many lightweight options that are perfect for males and females. They are especially great if you are trimming a large area. You don't want to get tired halfway through and not be able to lug around your heavy trimmer to finish the job! So, be sure to try out the models in the store to see which fits you best.

Easy Spool Changes

Something that most people neglect to check out before buying is the spool changing procedures for the model of their choice. Different brands and models will offer different ways to change the spool. Take a look at the model in the store and see if it seems easy to change the spool. If you think it looks hard in the store, chances are it will be just as difficult at home. Keep this in mind when choosing. Most stores will have each model put together for you to see up close, so it should be easy to get an idea of how this task will go.

Edging Converter

When you are planning to use your trimmer once a year for your hedges, it can be frustrating to shell out the money for one. However, today you can find trimmers that not only work for hedges, but also convert to other useful things. One thing to look for in an electric hedge trimmer is an edging conversion. Many hedge trimmers can now convert to an edger. This can be great for any weekly or monthly edging you perform. It basically allows you to have two tools in one machine. Be sure the conversion is an easy one so you will be more likely to use the tool more often.

Vegetation Guard

If your hedges are close to other vegetation that you don't want to harm, consider finding a trimmer with a vegetation guard. There are many gardeners who won't let their spouse work the mower or trimmer because they run over their plants. This is a great way to avoid this accident. A vegetation guard will allow you to trim the hedges or grass without harming any plants nearby. Although you may not see this as a necessary option, you will find it easier to trim when your trimmer contains this luxury.

Questions to Ask Your Landscaper About Trimming Your Hedges

The most difficult task for hedge owners is trimming. As far as planting and maintenance goes, hedges are among the easiest plants to own. However, trimming can be an intimidating process. Some homeowners are so intimidated that they hire professionals while other dive in without researching at all. If you have the chance however, you may want to talk with your landscaper about how to trim your hedges yourself.

These are some great questions to ask, however they may be a bit general. Your landscaper will know what species of hedges you own and be able to tell you more specific instructions.

When Should I Trim?

In general, most hedges should be trimmed in late spring or late fall. These are great times to trim because they are when new sprouts will have shown up. You can essentially trim at any time of year. Most landscapers would probably tell you to stay away from winter trimmings unless you are completely cutting back the hedge. If this is the case, you can cut it back in late winter so new growth can begin and be present in the spring and summer. Some species are more particular than others about when to trim, so asking your local expert may help.

What Should I Trim?

If you are only trying to maintenance your hedge, you will need to concentrate on a few things. First, if there are any branches or areas of dead plant, you should remove them. This may mean only removing a few stems or needing to remove an entire chunk. Be careful when removing large areas of the hedge however, because you will not want to take more than necessary. Secondly, you will probably want to keep with your original shape of the hedge and remove any new growth that does not fit into the shape. You can do this with hand trimmers for the best results.

If you are planning to completely shape the hedge, be sure to do so slowly. Begin with one area at a time. Step back frequently to check your work and reexamine the direction in which you are trying to go. Consider training your hedge to grow in the manner you want it to grow before shaping. Young hedges can be trained to grow upward by trimming them laterally.

How Often Should I Trim?

Most hedges will require only one trimming per year. It all depends on the species of hedge you have however. Some hedges will require once a month trimmings. This is typically because these varieties are fast growing. When you plant a fast growing hedge, new growth will appear frequently, which will cause the need for more trimming. If you have a normal hedge that has growth showing a few times a year, only trim when necessary. If you trim your hedge more than necessary you will see that you can stunt its growth and cause it to look very unhealthy.

What Do I Need For Trimming?

There are basic tools you can use to trim your hedges. If you prefer to trim manually, you can

purchase hedge trimmer. Make sure they are an appropriate size for your hedge. If you are pruning lightly, use smaller trimmers for better accuracy. If you are trimming large hedges, you may want to use larger trimmers. You can also purchase an electric or gas powered trimmer for large jobs. These trimmers can make the job quick and easy. Remember to wear the proper protective items as well. Gloves and safety goggles are recommended when trimming. While they may not seem necessary, they will ensure your safety from flying branches and sprouts.

What Tips Do You Have?

If you simply want to ask your landscaper for general tips, he or she may spill the beans about these things. First, if you want to train your hedge to grow upward, simply trim the side of the hedge and keep the top level. This is a great tip that many novice trimmers are unaware of. Second, if you want a thick hedge, be sure to trim with the direction of growth. For instance, make sure you clip in the same direction the branches are growing. This will discourage damage to the healthy areas.

Tips on How to Choose the Best Cutting Tools for Pruning

If your plants, trees and hedges are looking a little straggly, then it might be time for some pruning. To keep your garden looking good, you need to make sure that you are doing the proper maintenance and that includes trimming whenever your hedges or trees require it. To prune properly, you need to make sure you have the right tool for the job.

Pruning is the process by which a plant, hedge or a tree is trimmed or cut so that some stems, branches and limbs are removed. Pruning is done to help shape a plant. It can also be done to redirect the growth of a plant, hedge or tree. Pruning is also necessary to remove dead or injured stems, branches and limbs.

Pruning tools fall into three separate categories. First there are pruning shears. These tools are the most commonly used pruning tools. Pruning shears can be used to trim shrubs and flowers. They can also cut through soft wood up to a thickness of 3/4 inch so they can be used to trim smaller growth on trees.

The other two types of cutting tools for pruning are loppers and saws. A lopper has a longer handle than gardening shears. It is a two-handed clipper that has a curved blade. Loppers are used for trimming and pruning small trees. Finally, you can use a garden saw for some of your pruning. These handled blades are useful in removing branches. Garden saws come in different sizes so you might even consider having a couple of different ones on hand.

It's important that you use the right one of these tools for your specific pruning needs. If you use a tool that is too small for a job, you will end with a limb that looks like it has been mangled. On the other hand, if you use a tool that is too big for a job, you may end with another kind of mess – a massacre where you only intended a tiny trim. You also want to make sure that you keep your tool sharp and clean to prevent torn or ragged edges.

There is quite a range of tools on the market and all of them vary greatly in price. As with most things, you get what you pay for. The most expensive pruning tools have replaceable parts so you can merely purchase a new blade if yours becomes too dull. If you know you'll be doing a lot of pruning, you'll want to spend the money at the start and invest in good quality cutting tools that will last for years. If you have little pruning to do, then a less expensive pair will probably get the job done.

When purchasing a pruning tool, the first thing to look at is the blade. You want high quality steel – cheaper models will have blades that won't stand up over the long haul. You also want to make sure that the blades come together smoothly.

There are some teflon-coated blades on the market. They claim that these blades will cut through the wood more smoothly, but many people don't notice a great deal of difference. You'll need to decide whether or not you want to go with coated or non-coated blades.

Take the time to examine any tool you are considering closely. If you do a bit of shopping around and put the effort into research, you'll end up with a much better tool.

Safety is the key when doing any pruning in your garden. You should wear gloves and also safety goggles when doing any trimming overhead.

To ensure the longevity of your pruning tools there are a few things you can do. Remember to clean your tools regularly. It is all too easy to transfer disease from plant to plant if you don't take the time to wipe down the blade before moving on. You also need to oil your clippers. You should also make sure your tools remain sharp. There is special equipment you can buy to sharpen your shears, but you might want to have them professionally sharpened or purchase a higher-end tool with replaceable blades. You should make sure you are storing your pruning tools in a dry place, especially through the winter months to prevent rusting.

How to Tame an Unruly Row of Hedges

Taming an unruly row of hedges may seem like an impossible feat, but it does not have to be. There are many things to be taken into consideration when taming an unruly row of hedges including:

- knowing when to prune
- correct selection of tools
- proper tool usage
- proper technique usage
- choosing a pruning style and being consistent with it

Knowing when to prune your hedges and pruning them at the appropriate time is an important factor in taming an unruly row of hedges. Most hedges are like other plants, and can only be pruned at certain times of the year. While most trees are best pruned when dormant, hedges can be trimmed in the spring, after the flowers fade away. If the hedges bloom in the summer, they are best when pruned only in the early spring.

Using the proper tools when pruning, also plays a big part in taming an unruly row of hedges. Most professionals will recommend using pruning shears with curved blades. Pruning shears with curved blades tend to do less damage to the branches of the hedges. Blades are now available with Teflon protection. Many feel that the Teflon is beneficial to the shrub, leaving a smoother and even cut. This causes less damage to the hedge and easier pruning.

When the branches on the hedges are over a quarter inch thick, it is best to use a bow saw. There are many tools available to help with trimming your hedges. Selecting the right tool for your type of hedge can be determined by speaking with your local garden center.

One of the most important factors in taming a row of unruly hedges is using the proper pruning techniques. Using the proper pruning techniques will help tame an unruly row of hedges, as well as aid in developing a good pruning style.

First, all of the dead parts of shrubbery should be thinned out, and the oldest branches should be removed. It is best to remove the oldest branches right down to the ground to effectively tame them. Doing this should open the center of the hedge to sunlight, and will increase leaf production throughout any bare spots in the hedges. Removing the oldest branches even with the ground will also encourage heavy leaf production at the end of the branch, which will help prevent bare stems and dense surface growth. Be sure to check the trimming as you go along. Don't over trim as this can actually cause more damage to your hedge.

After cleaning out all the dead shrubbery in the row of unruly hedges, the next point of concentration should be the branches that most need to be shaped, making the cut just above the bud, on the outside of the branch. This will encourage outward growth of the branches. This will also give the row of unruly hedges a more natural look without taking on a more formal look.

Last, in order to successfully tame an unruly row of hedges, you must choose a pruning style, and be consistent with it. For lower maintenance, a natural pruning method would likely be the best choice. These methods mainly rely on thinning to keep a row of hedges healthy. These hedges will be neat, but natural, being allowed to grow in natural directions with very little shaping. Snipping off an unruly branch here and there will help keep the natural look of the hedge.

The other method of hedge pruning achieves a more uniformed look, and is known as formal pruning. Formal pruning also includes thinning techniques to keep a row of hedges healthy and tame, but entails regular pruning all over to keep its formal appearance. Often gardeners will use a tape measure for more accurate formal hedge trimming. When using formal pruning, the first cut should never be overdone. At some point the final size of the row of hedges can be determined, and once that happens, you will want to keep them that way.

Knowing the appropriate times to prune your hedges, using the proper tools, using good pruning techniques, and choosing a pruning style and being consistent with it will all aid in taming a row of unruly hedges.

Is it Motorized or Manual? Pros and Cons of Pruning Both Ways

When pruning your hedges, there are many types of tools available for you to use including:

- Electric powered hedge trimmers
- Gasoline powered hedge trimmers
- Hand held hedge pruning shears

While many professionals recommend the hand held hedge pruning shears as the best tool to use when pruning your hedges, there are advantages and disadvantages to each type of tool used for hedge pruning. The following paragraphs will briefly discuss some of those pros and cons.

The reason most professionals recommend hand held hedge pruning shears as the best tool for pruning hedges is because the benefits are great! Hand held hedge pruning shears cut much closer than the gas and electrical powered trimmers, and do not cause the branches to break and tear. Hand held hedge pruning shears can be used on any type of hedge, they are quieter, and far less likely to gouge hedges or cause harm to the operator than gas and electrical powered trimmers. These hand held hedge pruning shears have proven extremely helpful in removing stray branches, and are almost essential if your hedges have an informal look.

The greatest benefit is of course the money you'll save. Hand held shears are much cheaper than electric or gas powered trimmers. They are also considered safer to use since an electric or gas trimmer can bounce off a branch and will keep on cutting, no matter what's in the way. Also hand held hedge shears are much lighter than the electric and gas powered trimmers making it easier for you to keep on trimming!

Where there are advantages though, there are usually disadvantages. The disadvantages associated with using hand held hedge shears to prune your hedges are very few. The main disadvantage to pruning your hedges with hand held hedge pruning shears is that it can be much more time consuming than using gas and electrical powered hedge trimmers. Though the shears are lighter, another disadvantage is that your arm may tire easily from the movement necessary to open and close the shears, causing you to need a break during the pruning session. As you can see, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

Although the advantages to using hand held hedge pruning shears to prune your hedges are great, many people turn to gas or electrical powered hedge trimmers to do the job. Gas and electrical powered hedge trimmers have advantages, as well as disadvantages.

The main advantage to gas and electrical powered hedge trimmers is the convenience of pruning your hedges quickly, with less effort. More expensive electrical powered hedge trimmers are generally light weight, and can get the job done a lot more quickly than pruning with hand held hedge pruning shears. But electrical and gas powered hedge trimmers do not work on all types of hedges. That is only one disadvantage to using electrical or gas powered hedge trimmers to prune your hedges.

Another disadvantage to using electrical or gas powered hedge trimmers to prune your hedges is that they will often grab, and break the branches in your hedges. This is not good, and

damaged areas of the hedges need to be touched up with hand held hedge pruning shears, to ensure their health and proper growth. Also, when pruning with electrical powered hedge trimmers, you need to have a source of electricity, along with a very long cord. And while you are pruning your hedges with an electrical powered hedge trimmer, you will need to be very careful not to cut the cord by accident.

There are advantages and disadvantages to every type of pruning method. While many professionals recommend hand held pruning shears for the best results when pruning your hedges, there are people who simply want to use electrical and gas powered hedge trimmers to prune their hedges. Whatever the chosen method, there are clear advantages and disadvantages associated with each. It is best to do some research, and educate yourself on the advantages and disadvantages of each before making a final decision on which method might be best for you.

Keep in mind, some hedge types cannot be pruned with electrical or gas hedge trimmers, so you will have no choice but to prune those hedge types manually with hand held hedge pruning shears. Do your homework before making any final decisions.

Size Matters in Creating the Perfect Hedge

When creating the perfect hedge, size certainly matters. For everyone, the perfect hedge size may not be the same. There are several factors that should be considered when trying to create the perfect hedge including:

- hedge location
- intended purpose of the hedge

The following paragraphs will discuss why size matters in creating the perfect hedge, and what sizes are appropriate with different aspects figured in.

First, if your hedges are located close to your home, you may want to cut them smaller to create the perfect hedge. When located on the corner of the house, it is generally okay to allow the hedges to become a little bigger. But in order to prevent your hedges from blocking the views from your windows, and preventing them from growing taller than your home, hedges near your house generally should be of the smaller variety, such as dwarf hedges. Imagine peering out your kitchen window to see you children playing outside, only to be looking smack dab into an overgrown hedge. Size matters in creating the perfect hedge since if you leave hedges located in a certain spot without maintaining it and let it grow too large; it will not be the perfect hedge.

Next, since size matters in creating the perfect hedge, you should consider the plants around the hedges when deciding the perfect hedge size. Some important questions to ask your self will include:

1. How tall can the hedge safely grow without blocking the sun from the other plants? Will the hedge block a wanted view?

2. How wide can the hedge safely grow without blocking your view of the other plants? Will the hedge grow out onto a path or driveway?

3. How far should I trim my hedges back from the edge of my landscape bed for best visual appearance?

Since size matters in creating the perfect hedge, you should never allow your hedge to grow so tall that it blocks the sun from your other flowers and plants. If you'd like larger hedges, but the ones you currently have are blocking the sun from the other plants in your landscape bed, you may want to consider another location in your yard for the hedges. A place where they can freely grow, without hampering the growth of other flowers and plants will be the ideal spot for your hedge.

This same concept falls into place when questioning the width of a perfect hedge. If the width of your hedge is so wide that it blocks your other flowers and plants from view, the hedge is then considered too wide. If you wish to have wide hedges, you could consider a different location in your yard for the hedge, where it can grow wide without blocking your view of your other flowers and plants. The same is true of hedges that are too tall.

On the other hand, if your hedges are not located near your house, or in your flowerbeds, the perfect size could be larger. People often use hedges to serve as:

- property line markers
- privacy fences
- sound barriers

When being used to serve these purposes, and those like them, hedges should be allowed to grow tall. No other flowers or plants should be planted near the hedges, and they will be free to grow as tall and as wide as you would want, or need them to be. Hedges that are at least 6 feet tall make great privacy fences, while thicker hedges will help soften the sound of passing cars or loud neighbors. When hedges are planted in parts of your yard away from your house, you will not have to worry about large hedges taking over your home, or blocking the view from your windows.

Size matters in creating the perfect hedge. If your hedge is too big, it could cause inconveniences and headaches, and if it is too small, it won't serve well as a privacy barrier. Make sure to ask yourself a few questions before planting your hedges. This can help prevent some of these problems, as well as following some hedge trimming tips. Location is everything when it comes to the perfect hedge size.

Relocating Your Hedges – How Hard Can It Be?

Moving into a new home or making modifications to your own is a process difficult enough to handle, without having to worry about dealing with a misplaced hedge. Unfortunately, you run the risk of losing a lot of natural beauty (and possibly a great fence!) if you simply tear the

plants up and toss them out with the trash. Transplanting the entire hedge to a location that suits both you and the plants is an ideal solution, but how do you go about moving an entire yard's length of growth without destroying either the plants or your own sanity?

First, take stock of the condition of the hedges. If more than half of the row is dead or dying than you may have to reconsider trying to transplant any of them. Moving plants that are old or in frail condition will probably not survive the move. If, on the other hand, the hedge is healthy and green and obviously growing, you'll most likely have success in transplanting them. Try to find out, though, the species of the plants used in the hedge, if you don't know already. If you're moving the hedge from a sunny location to one that receives very little sunlight, this can be especially important, as the hedge may not be suited for its new home.

The best time to attempt to transplant hedges is when the plants are dormant, in late fall or winter. However, if you live in a climate that freezes often, this can be difficult. In this case you will have to use your own judgment to determine when to proceed with the transplantation. Moving hedges in the middle of summer involves working around a more active root system, and must be considered carefully so as not to risk damage to the plant.

Once you've determined that it's possible to move the hedge, prepare everything you need before you dig into the soil. Moving an entire row of hedges is like trying to put a complex puzzle together with an egg timer beeping off the seconds. Since you will not be able to transplant the entire root system, you will have to thin the plant out through pruning in order to avoid overworking the roots that will remain after transplanting. Also, exposed roots can quickly dry out, so once you have dug up the plants of your hedge, it is best to transplant them immediately or temporarily plant them in pots. Determine the depth of the root ball (the root and soil that has attached itself to the main root system) and try to measure the transplant location to the same depth.

If you plant it at a lower level, oxygen cannot reach the established roots of the root ball, while planting it higher can expose roots and cause them to dry up. Placement of the individual components of a transplanted hedge is almost as important as keeping them watered. The branches of such a hedge have intertwined and grown together for some time; therefore, if one plant is rotated or placed in a different location in relation to its prior neighbors, you'll more than likely end up with a skewed and off-balance hedge.

When performing the actual transplant of the hedge, resist the urge to break the soil at the bottom of the holes you've dug. It doesn't help the roots penetrate deeper as much as it allows the plants to sink, inviting excess water and risking rot. Instead, leave the holes solid at the bottom, ensure that the width of the holes are about twice as wide as the root balls that you have, and place them in, covering with a mixture of compost or mulch and the excavated soil. Water as you fill in the hole to avoid air pockets which can cause the hedge to shift as it settles.

The last and most important thing that you'll need to do to complete the transplant of your hedge is: water it! Until the root system gets established, you'll need to water the hedge daily, as well as keep it free from invading pests and weeds. Rest assured that the work will be well worth it. You'll have a hedge that beautifies your home rather than gets in its way.

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