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The Many Uses and Functions of Hedges

Four Reasons for Having Hedges in Your Landscaping

There are more than four reasons for including hedges in your landscaping design, but I'm going to touch on just four. Privacy, beauty, mark boundaries, and windbreakers. No matter why you are putting in hedges be prepared for high maintenance. Hedges do need to be taken care of to look good and provide the beauty and role you want. If you are choosing a hedge for a more formal look, then be prepared to put some time into its maintenance. A flowering hedge usually needs to be pruned perhaps once a year and allowed to grow in their natural shape.

Privacy is one good reason to have a hedge on your property. If you live in an urban area, hedges can be an alternative to a privacy fence. It can be made intruder proof by just selecting the right plants. It can be kept at whatever height you prefer. Some hedges can grow as tall as ten feet or more, and can be trimmed down to whatever best suits your needs. Hedges are dense and that makes it hard for intruders or animals to get through it.

Some hedges have thorns to further discourage anyone from trying to get through. Some good plants to use for a security hedge are Holly and Hawthorne. The Hawthorne has white blooms followed by bright red berries that normally will last through the winter. They both have many vicious thorns that provide a good barrier against unwanted intruders. These two types of hedges will grow to at least 12 feet.

Beauty is another reason to plant hedges. Hedges can be planted that will give color all year. From beautiful flowering shrubs in the springtime, to beautiful autumn colors, red, bronze, and orange in the fall. Flowering hedges can be chosen so flowers will bloom at different times of the spring and summer, and in winter, they may have colorful berries. Informal flowering hedges can be made a part of a mixed border and they don't have to be of uniform shape. They can be planted for their blooms and aromas and need low maintenance.

Formal clipped hedges can make a dramatically different impact on your landscape. Not only can they be shaped, but they also give dimension to an otherwise normal landscape. Formal or informal hedges can also make beautiful backgrounds for other plants, provide walking paths and can help prevent soil erosion. You may want to use both and place them in strategic areas of your lawn. Small hedges lining walkways and driveways are popular as well as the formal hedge clipped in a straight line. Formal hedges can also be used to divide large lawn spaces into smaller enclosed garden rooms, quiet little nooks to put up your feet with a good book.

Hedges are often used to mark boundaries between properties. They are used successfully both in the country and in the city. Many country estates have well-kept hedges to mark boundary lines. They are more attractive than a wire fence, longer lasting than a wooden one and can be trimmed to the height you need for privacy. Popular use of hedges for boundaries in the urban areas is a line of hedges between one driveway and another property. In the city, it gives you a boundary line that can be counted on for a good number of years.

Remember when planting hedges for boundaries; don't encroach on your neighbors land. Hedge plants grow outward as well as up, so give them plenty of room on your neighbor's side. Using hedges rather than wooden or chain link fences are more pleasing to the eye and can be just as effective in marking boundaries, as well as increasing the beauty of your lawn.

Hedges used as windbreakers are especially popular and practical for those living in rural areas. These hedges are normally trees. Several different trees that are good for windbreaks are Beech trees, hemlock, evergreen and fir trees. They all provide good windbreaks if you are in a part of the country that is flat with nothing to break the wind and snow from assaulting your home. These trees can also be used as barriers against traffic noise and debris. The interesting fact about trees as windbreaks is the destructive force of wind against a solid wall or fence can allow the wind to jump right over it with the same amount of strength. Hedges will cushion the force of the wind and lessen its strength.

Planting Privacy with Hedges

If you are planning to install a fence to keep an area of your property more private, you may want to consider plants used for privacy with hedges instead. Hedges can offer a more natural look to your landscaping while still being a functional part of your property. Privacy hedges are also great for hiding unattractive things such as a messy part of your neighbor's yard. Installing a fence may still be what you want, but a privacy hedge is less expensive and requires no repair down the road. Consider these things when you need more privacy or simply want to add to the beauty of your property.

Although any plant will essentially work as a hedge, you will need to use specific species when trying to build a privacy hedge. When looking for a plant to use, try finding one that has dense foliage. This will help the plant maintain a solid look and really work to help you have more privacy. If you choose one that is not dense, you will find that you and your neighbors will be able to see straight through it. When you find a really dense plant to use, there will be little vision available to you and your neighbors through the hedge.

Another thing you should consider when trying to find a plant to use for your privacy hedge is height. You will definitely want to choose a plant that will grow to be at least six feet tall. You want to choose a taller plant so your hedge will do exactly what it is intended for, to provide privacy. Most people are less than six feet tall, so a privacy hedge that is six feet tall will not be able to be peered over easily.

Choosing a smaller plant will only ruin the entire purpose of the privacy hedge. The only exception is if you are only planning to use the hedge to cover up an unattractive area. In this case, you may be able to use shorter plants, as long as the unattractive area is hidden by the hedge.

One of the most popular varieties of plants to use is the purple lilac. These plants are beautiful and offer a dense coverage. The plant is plenty tall enough, growing to almost ten feet tall. The plant offers beautiful flowers that emit a lovely fragrance. You will not only enjoy the privacy when using this plant, but also the beauty and fragrance. One of the best things about

using this plant as a privacy hedge is that it is extremely hardy and can withstand even the coldest temperatures.

If you want something that will grow even taller, the Siberian Peashrub may be the choice for you. This hardy plant can also withstand cold weather when it presents itself. It grows to be around 15 feet tall. This is certainly a great choice if you have had a hard time growing a hedge. This plant works well in even the most difficult growing locations.

When it comes to privacy hedges, most people think of those that are nicely squared off and pruned regularly. These privacy hedges are beautiful and traditional in style. They work great in yards and gardens that have a classic or English style. When dealing with privacy hedges however, there are few rules. If you loathe that groomed style, you can always choose to leave your privacy hedge virtually unpruned. There is no need to prune them, unless you feel the need to style them a bit. An unpruned privacy hedge may look a bit messy in style, but if that is what you are going for then there is no problem with it at all.

Overall, adding a privacy hedge to your property is the best way to ensure your privacy as well as the beauty of your yard. When you add an ugly fence to your yard, you often end up with a very manufactured and unnatural look to your property. If you want to preserve your yard as well as keep your privacy, strongly consider adding a privacy hedge instead. Once you plant the hedge, there will be very little maintenance needed, unless you want to prune it. Unlike a fence, a hedge will likely last you for years with no extra repair needed.

Hedges – The Natural Property Dividing Line

Sometimes we need a little something that shows us exactly what we have. This can especially be true with property lines. With houses being sold and resold, it can be difficult to know exactly what is yours and what is not. Using something lovely like a hedge is a great way to naturally enhance your property line. Before planting however, there are a few steps you should take. If you are going to enhance your property line, be sure you are being completely fair and legal about it. Talking to your neighbor is a good way to begin. Letting them know what you are planning will allow them to take no offense to your gesture.

Figuring Out Your Boundaries

The first thing you will need to do after deciding to add hedges to your property line is figure out exactly where your lines run. You can do this in several ways. Many people just assume that their lines end at their driveways or where their fences end. The fact is that most property lines are not as simple as that. Many of them are very crooked. Even though your fence ends at a specific point in your back yard, it may slant to the boundary area in the front yard. The best way to be sure you are legally adding to your property is to measure the lines of your property using a plot guide.

If you are completely confused about this issue or would rather not deal with it yourself, you can hire a professional to plot your yard for you. Basically these professionals measure out your property lines and will either flag them or paint your lines on the ground for you. If you

think you can handle this job yourself and would rather not spend the extra money to hire someone to do it, you can always visit your city building code office. These offices have copies of all property diagrams. You can obtain a copy of yours, which will include exact measurements from your house. Then taking a tape measure, you can measure and mark the lines yourself.

Choosing a Size

After you know exactly where your property begins and ends, you will need to figure out exactly what sized hedges you want to use. If you want complete privacy from your neighbor, you may want to consider a tall hedge that stays green all year long. A large box hedge is great for this task. This is perfect if you want to keep people from walking through your yard as well.

If you are simply looking for a small way to block off your yard, consider using a shorter hedge. This will still look adorable and keep kids from running through your yard, but you will still be able to see your neighborhood well. This is probably the best option for those simply wanting to add beauty with hedges in their yards.

Planting

After deciding exactly where you want your hedge to go, be sure to plant it a little in front of your boundary lines. Consider how thick and long your specific species of hedge will get when planting. You don't want it to go too much over your property line, especially if you haven't discussed it with your neighbor. Never put it directly on the property line. If you do, and your neighbor complains, you will have to remove the hedge and replant it. This can cause stress to the plant and require unnecessary labor as well.

Maintenance

After planting, when your hedges begin to thrive, be sure to maintain them properly. Chances are that your neighbor will not mind the hedges as long as they are properly taken care of. This may mean that you need to prune them regularly so that they don't spill over into the neighboring property. Be sure to take care and avoid this happening to maintain a positive relationship with your neighbors. Keep in mind however that as long as every part of your hedge stays within your property line, your neighbors can complain all they want. Most cities will allow you to maintain your hedge as you wish, as long as it is on your land.

Six Things that Hedges Provide for Property Owners

Hedges are beautiful additions to any landscape. They provide a lovely look and require very little maintenance. In addition to these things however, hedges provide property owners with many other benefits. If you are thinking about adding hedges to your property, take a look at these benefits you may be able to enjoy.

Durability

If you are using your hedge as a boundary on your property, then you will be happy to know hedges are great at enduring all types of weather. Many property owners construct fences for boundary purposes, however fences are not as durable. They tend to break, crack, or even fall down in strong winds and cannot tolerate rain either. Most fences will begin to warp from wet weather, even when the wood is treated. Hedges on the other hand tend to take these things in stride. There is rarely an act of nature that will ruin a hedge.

Privacy

If you are looking for a beautiful way to get privacy from your neighbors, a hedge is the perfect solution. You can forgo unnatural looking fences and use tall hedges instead. Be sure to choose dense species for the best protection. You can also use evergreen species if you would like the privacy to be effective all year long. Overall, in addition to adding privacy to your property, hedges will also add beauty for a homeowner to enjoy.

Wildlife Enticer

If you are a property owner that enjoys the local wildlife, you will be happy to know that many hedges attract wildlife to your property. Nice dense hedges can be sources of food, shelter, and nesting for insects, birds, and other small animals. You will enjoy seeing more wildlife in your area and the animals, birds, and insects will appreciate their new home. If you are specifically interested in this benefit, be sure to choose appropriate species for the local wildlife in your area.

Security

If you are worried about people sneaking into your yard, a hedge may offer security for you. Many property owners complain endlessly about the neighborhood children riding their bikes through their yard. While this may not be your problem at all, a prickly hedge would certainly deter anyone from trying to enter your yard. You won't even need a fence with something as aggravating as this. Anyone who has tried to go through a spiky hedge will likely not try to do it twice.

Savings

The average fence costs twice as much as a nice hedge for your property. Therefore, by choosing to add a hedge to your property instead, you are saving a bundle. The great thing is that the hedge will continue saving you money in contrast with a fence. Hedges last for up to 100 years or more, meaning that you will never need to put more money into the project. They are also rarely in need of repair. Overall, hedges offer homeowners a great deal of savings initially as well as throughout their lives.

Protection

Experts state that dense hedges offer much more protection from the elements than solid barriers. When you choose to surround your home or an area of your property with a dense

hedge, you will be protecting it better from wind and other natural elements. This may help your garden stay intact during a strong windstorm or even protect windows in your home if they are shielded by a hedge.

Overall, a beautiful hedge will add to your home and property and create a lovely part of your landscape. If you are looking only to add a hedge for beauty, you will be happy to know that you are also getting many of these other benefits. Durability, privacy, wildlife, security, savings, and protection are only a few of the many benefits hedges provide for homeowners.

Once you plant your hedges, you will begin to reap these rewards immediately. Before long, you will be telling everyone you know about the benefits and beauty of adding a hedge to your property. Simply do research to find the best hedge for your location and area and start planning the planting today! You will certainly be glad you did when you begin seeing these benefits in action.

Are You in the Zone? How to Choose Hedges for Your Neck of the Woods

When you are deciding what plants to choose for your hedge, you need to be sure the plants you choose will grow well in your planting zone. What is a planting zone?

The country is divided into different growth zones to allow you to choose the flowers, plants, and vegetables, which will grow best in your neighborhood. Zones provide timelines for planting because different areas of the country warm up at different times.

The United States has eleven gardening zones. They range from cold being number one to eleven, which includes the most Southern area of the States. Here is a recap of those zones. All temperatures quoted are the lowest temperatures reached in that area.

Zone 1 has a temperature that drops to 50 degrees below zero; this will include the Northern part of Alaska and of course upper Canada.

Zone 2 is slightly south of Zone 1 and will include the lower parts of Alaska and the Northern portion of Minnesota. The lowest temperature can get to 40 to 50 below Fahrenheit in this zone.

Zone 3 includes cities such as International Falls, Minnesota and Sydney, Montana. The average lowest temperature is 30 to 40 degrees below.

Zone 4 has an average lowest temperature of 20 to 30 degrees below and is found in the upper portions of Minnesota, Nebraska, and Montana.

Zone 5 with the average lowest temperature of 10 to 20 degrees below zero includes the states of Iowa, upper portions of Illinois and Missouri.

Zone 6 includes the lower portions of Illinois and the Midwest states going all the way down to Branson Missouri and Nashville Tennessee. Temperature in this area generally do not drop to

more than 10 below zero and then only rarely and for short periods.

Zone 7 takes a swing through Georgia, Arkansas, and Virginia. Their average low temperature is 0 to 10 degrees.

Zone 8 includes parts of Texas to the upper portions of Florida. Temperatures in each zone increase ten degrees each time you go to a higher zone level.

Zone 9 includes the lower portions of Texas and Florida with temperatures rarely getting below 20 degrees.

Zone 10 includes the lowest portion of Florida as well as the southern part of California.

Zone 11 would encompass the state of Hawaii.

Some shrubs are good for nearly all zones and you'll find them listed below. I will give these to you in their commonly known names, not their botanical names. The list below is just a few of the shrubs and plants. Many more can be found on the Internet or a store that specializes in plants can be very helpful in making your choice.

- Canert Juniper
- Amur Maple
- Siberian peashrub
- Winged Euonymus
- Japanese barberry
- Gray-stem Dogwood
- Northern sun
- Privets (except for zone 4)
- Ninebark
- Alpine currant
- Arrow wood viburnum
- Dwarf ninebark
- Potentilla
- Blue leaf arctic willow
- Anthony Waterer
- Dwarf viburnum

As you can see, you have a large variety of shrubs and hedge plants that will grow in any area. For information that is more precise, contact your local extension office. They are always glad to answer questions. They can tell you what zone you are in and offer advice on what type of plant you can use in your climate zone.

You will also find very good information on the Internet. A few good sites that are available online are:

www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html

National Arboretum - USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

www.arborday.org/treeinfo/zonelookup.cfm

The National Arbor Day Association

www.thegardenhelper.com/hardiness.htm

Gardening and Plant Hardiness Zones for the United States

www.ahs.org/publications/heat_zone_map.htm

Publications - American Horticultural Society - Heat Zone Map

www.treehelp.com/tools/hardiness-zones.asp

TreeHelp.com: Tools: Hardiness Zones

Try these websites for much more information on not only the climate zone you live in but will also give you much more detailed information on what type of plants are good for your zone. They also will give you a list of hardier plants, those that are more likely to survive in the climate zone you are in.

Get in the Zone – Knowing When to Plant Your Perfect Hedge

If you are just a beginner in the garden, you may have just come across the use of “zones”. The terms may seem confusing at first, but once you become familiar with it, you will find it to be extremely helpful in planting a successful and healthy garden or hedge. The basics of the system are that by labeling each area of the world (more specifically North and South America), you will be able to easily identify plants that are most appropriate for your area.

Each area is given a zone number. When looking to purchase plants, you can look for your area’s number to ensure the plant will thrive on your property. Many gardening companies will devise their own versions of planting zones, so be sure that if you are purchasing from these companies, you are choosing the right plants for your area. Most are based upon the universal USDA Plant Hardiness Map however. There are approximately 20 zones on the USDA map; however again, many companies will simplify these zones to fit their consumers’ area.

When trying to figure out when to plant your hedge, you will need to refer to your area’s zone. This will help you determine the appropriate planting time. If you cannot find a USDA Plant Hardiness Map, contact your local agricultural extension office and they will be able to assist you with information. They will also be able to tell you about your specific hedge species and characteristics about it that will help it grow healthy.

After figuring out which zone you reside within, be sure to check the labels on your hedge plants to see if it is best for your zone. These container tags may tell you a great deal about

your plant, including the best time to plant it. They frequently also include how much sun the plant needs as well as water and soil needs for the particular species.

Most hedges should be planted in mild weather. If you live in an area where you experience all four seasons, this should be in the spring or late fall. You don't want the weather to be too cold or too hot. If you can choose a mild time of year, your hedge will likely do better. If you want to stimulate growth, consider the late fall. You should always plant before the first snow however. When the leaves begin to change colors, it is probably a good time to plant. This way, by the time spring and summer arrive, you will be able to see your hedge thrive. Many plants will require this colder period to stimulate growth. Be sure that the hedge plant you choose is hardy enough to withstand your winters.

Knowing your frost date zones and times are helpful as well. Along with the hardiness zones, they will help you know when to generally expect frost in your area. This is important because you would not want to plant something too early in spring and have it damaged by frost or too late in the fall so that you miss the opportunity before the frost comes. Knowing your zone is not only knowing the number but also noting key dates in the year when generally the front occurs and ends.

Unless you are planting a hedge that doesn't need much water, you should always be sure to avoid planting in an extremely dry time as well. Hedges don't typically require additional watering and can thrive quite well on rainwater alone. However, if you plant during a dry time, you will have to water the new plant often until the natural water returns.

Overall, to know when the best time is to plant a hedge, you need to begin with your zone number. Research your zone and frost date zones in order to know when to plant. Also, research your specific plant species and note whether the plant prefers to be planted before or after winter. This will help you plant appropriately and get the best results available. Do this with each type of plant to grow the healthiest plants around. It might take a little time at first, but after you get the hang of it, it will seem natural to you.

Five Tips for Choosing the Perfect Hedge for Your Yard

So you've decided to plant hedges. They do serve many important purposes. Hedges can mark your property boundaries, provide a windscreen and also give you more privacy in your yard. They are also a nice alternative to fencing if you prefer a more natural look for your garden.

Once you've made the decision to go with hedges, you need to choose the right one for your yard. When selecting the perfect hedge for your yard, there are important things like purpose, size and climate to keep in mind. Here are five tips for choosing just the right hedge for your garden space.

1. Figure out Your Purpose

The first thing you need to decide is what purpose your hedges are going to serve. Are they for privacy? Are they to keep pesky creatures out of your yard? Are they to act as a windscreen?

Or are they merely to outline your property boundaries? Your purpose might be a mix of these things or all of these things.

You need to take the time to consider why you're planting hedges. The purpose is important because it will determine the types of plant you can use for your hedges. Certain plants are effective for all of these purposes so to purchase and plant the right hedge, you need to know what you need or want from your hedges.

2. Assess Your Climate

Your location and climate will also have an impact on what kinds of plants you can use for hedges. Your garden center should be able to advise you on what sort of plants will do best in your climate. You can also research different planting options online. You'll be amazed at how much information you can find on shrubs and plants if you spend a bit of time browsing the Internet.

3. Consider the Look of Your Garden

You will need to choose the right kind of hedge depending on the look you are going for in your garden. If you are hoping to mold your hedges into different elegant architectural shapes, then you will need to choose a hedge plant that will allow you that shaping flexibility. On the other hand, if you want something simple and not so ornate, you can choose a dense plant that responds well to clipping, but which does not suit the complex shapes of architectural hedges.

4. Think Outside the Box

In the past, there were only a few plants that could be used for hedging. You can create your own informal hedges with a mix of plants that are not commonly used in hedge planting. You can also mix the formal, clipped hedges with older, more flowing looks.

5. Be Realistic

While you may have the best intentions when planting a new hedge, you need to be realistic about the amount of time and energy you can devote to this new addition to your garden. Hedges have many benefits, but they do require care and maintenance. Unlike fences, you will need to stay on top of caring for and trimming your hedges. If you don't have the time to maintain your hedges properly, you might want to look at other fencing options.

If you do really want hedges, but don't have a lot of time to devote to your garden's upkeep, then choose a variety that requires minimal care and exertion. Trimming can be the most time consuming part of hedge care so if you know your time is limited, choose a hedging option that only requires a clean line trimming and not an architectural hedge.

When you do go to choose your hedge plants, choose small plants because they will grow and establish themselves more quickly than more developed and expensive plants. This will also mean a denser and more compact hedge than the open hedges that are often the result of starting with larger plants.

All of this might seem like a lot of prep work for choosing a hedge, but doing this research and considering all of these factors before you plant your hedges will save you a lot of time in the long run. Knowing things like your needs or purpose, your time limitations, your climate and the look you are going for in your garden, will really help narrow down your hedge choices.

Hedges as a Crime Deterrent: Which Varieties Will Discourage Burglars?

As many people know hedges can keep out all sorts of pests. A hedge acts as a wind and privacy screen so you are able to protect your yard from unwanted drafts and the prying eyes of your neighbors. A hedge can also keep out certain pests and animals. But hedges as a crime deterrent, you ask? Can hedges really keep out burglars?

Though it may sound surprising, there are some hedges that will deter potential burglars. Prickly hedges will make any burglar think twice about invading your home.

There are many things you can do to minimize the risk of having your home burglarized. Having proper locks in place and having outdoor lighting at both the front and back of your house are two of the main things you can do to reduce the risk of being burglarized.

On the one hand, hedges can provide a hiding place for burglars, particularly if they are not trimmed and maintained properly. Hedges should be kept at a height of two feet. You want to make sure that you do not have really tall and untrimmed trees and hedges at the front of your house. Burglars will see these as a natural hiding place.

The last thing you want to do is provide a place where these thieves can conceal themselves. You want to make sure that your house is visible to your neighbors and anyone else passing by. Because burglars need to conceal themselves, they will move on to an easier target if your entryways are too visible for their liking.

On the other hand certain varieties of hedges can actually deter burglars. More and more police departments are telling people in their areas to practice this kind of crime prevention landscaping. Plants that are prickly and thick hedges will help keep away those people considering breaking into your home. Thorny hedges are particularly effective for this. While these types of hedges might look attractive, they will be a sharp reminder that your home is off-limits to them.

The more thorns on your hedges the better if you're trying to deter burglars. Hawthorn hedges will keep animals at a minimum and will prove somewhat effective against burglars. *Berberis darwinii* and *B. thundergii* are two of the best varieties to keep burglars at bay – their razor-sharp thorns will keep most unwanted visitors at bay.

There's also the Robin Hood rose. With this rose shrub, the thorns don't just scratch the skin; they actually break off into the skin so your would-be burglar will be left with a very unpleasant reminder of their folly.

Because burglars try to be as inconspicuous as possible, you should consider planting these types of hedges in places that might appeal to potential intruders. Making it as difficult as possible to access your home is your goal. Planting these kinds of sharp and prickly hedges in places where burglars can gain easy access to your home will help keep them out and make them think twice about trying to enter your property.

In terms of your overall garden design, you want to avoid large rocks or boulders. Really large boulders pose the same problem as tall and untrimmed trees and bushes – they are a natural hiding place for potential burglars. Medium sized rocks are also dangerous because burglars wanting to gain access to your house can use them to break windows. It is best to use small pebbles in your garden to avoid these kinds of problems.

Planting prickly hedges can be an important part of your overall home security and burglary prevention plan. That doesn't mean, however, that it should be your only barrier against home invaders. You need to invest the proper money and energy into protecting your home from burglars by installing proper locks and lighting. The key is visibility. If there is nowhere for them to hide, your would-be burglars will move on to someone else. Prickly hedges will act in much the same way. If a prickly and painful obstacle is placed in a burglars' way, odds are they will leave and seek out a much less difficult target.

A strategically placed *Berberis darwinii* or Robin Hood rose may not be an absolute guarantee that your home will never be robbed, but its vicious thorns will make even the toughest burglars think twice before approaching your home.

Hedges - An Alternative to Fencing

In a world of increased industrial activity and an overabundance of "manufactured" beauty, people are becoming more and more interested in the natural world. It is only natural then, that when considering how to divide their property from others. Consumers are skipping past the chain link fencing and going directly to the garden center.

The idea of using trees and shrubs as enclosures or to mark off space is not a new one. Hedges were used in 16th century Italian gardens to make avenues for travel within the garden, and hedgerows, which are simply lines of bushes or trees of the same species planted close enough for their limbs to intertwine, have been in use in England for more than seven hundred years.

Hedges used as an alternative to fencing fulfill many more purposes than simply serving as a property line. They can keep wind and erosion to a minimum, cut out noise from traffic, and helps keep the neighborhood kids from running through your newly laid grass. Hedges also help to restore native plant life, which may have been dwindling because of construction and development. Also, as a natural habitat for all manner of insects, you will hear more songbirds early in the morning as they catch breakfast. Financially speaking, a hedge fence is usually less expensive than chain-link, won't rust and break, and rarely needs replacing.

If you've made the decision to use hedges as an alternative to traditional fencing, there are a few things to keep in mind before you go in search of shrubs to plant. First, confirm in your

mind that you will have the time to work with the hedges after work or on the weekends.

Newly planted flowers or shrubs of any kind need a lot of initial attention so that they can spread their roots and settle into their new homes. You may have to water them more often and perform a lot of "routine maintenance," such as weeding out invading species and pruning those plants that aren't growing well. Just remember that the time you put into your hedge fence initially will come back to you in the way of a healthy and attractive landscape down the road.

Once you're sure that you can provide the time and energy needed to establish your hedge fence, you will have to do a bit of research to determine what your native plants and shrubs are. You certainly don't want to plant any kind of shrub that won't survive the local climate. Native plants, those that are found growing wild in your area, are best to use as a foundation to your hedge fence because they have already proven themselves, they're sturdy and well suited to the soil. Check with your local nursery to find an appropriate foundation species if you are unsure of the native plants in your area.

Finally, the time has come to plant your hedges for your fence. It is at this time that you will want to remember the advantages of the fencing you have chosen rather than the work you will have to do to put the fence together. A little bit of planning now can save a headache later. Consider the final, mature size of the shrub or hedge that you are planting, not how close you can get them right now, and plant "extra" shrubs or flowers along the front or in between the row of foundation hedges, not in place of them.

Replacing a section of a hedge fence because of disease is one thing; having to buy a hedge to replace a plant that didn't belong in the fence to begin with is quite another. More than likely you'll never have to deal with replanting or replacing once the fence is established and growing well.

Hedges serve as a wonderful alternative to traditional metal or wood fencing, because they increase the aesthetic value of your home in addition to inviting natural beauty into your neighborhood. As the world begins to slow down and realize the importance of preserving nature, hedge fences will overrun all of those old, rusty remnants of the industrial age and reveal the gentle potential of the future.

Screen Out Your Neighbors with the Perfect Hedge

Unless you live in the country, you likely have at least one neighbor close to your home. When you live in the city or suburbs, you will likely have at least two to five neighbors that can see directly into your yard from various homes near yours. Although living in a populated area has its perks, privacy is not usually one of them.

New homes are being built so close together that you can barely fit something as wide as a lawnmower between homes. Builders are enjoying more profits and homeowners love the fact that they can mow their lawn in fifteen minutes or less. Homeowners do crave extra privacy however. Many homeowners are adding fences to their property in order to create more

privacy for their yard.

While fences are lovely, they can cost a great deal in materials and labor. Even if you install a fence yourself, you are looking at massive costs and incredible amounts of labor. A great alternative if you are looking for a little more privacy is to use hedges as barriers. You can add the perfect hedge to your property and no longer need to worry about that costly and difficult fence. There are many different varieties to hedges you can use for this task. By definition, a hedge is a row of trees or shrubs that are planted in a row. They are easy to use, care for, and offering great protection and privacy.

If you do want to screen out your neighbors, you should know that hedges could do the same job a fence can do for this task. If you choose a tall and dense hedge, you can even get more privacy. Hedges are great noise barriers as well as vision barriers. Much like a fence, a neighbor would need to get directly upon the hedge in order to get even a peek at your yard. Of course, as mentioned, they could do the same to peer through a fence's cracks.

One of the best things about hedges however, is that they rarely need repairing. A fence will likely get broken and cracked from time to time and require a little maintenance. However, when you choose to use a hedge instead of a fence, you will not need to worry with repair. Very rarely does a hedge become diseased and require replacement. So, in addition to providing privacy, it is also much more durable than other options.

If you are interested in using a hedge as a barrier between your neighbors and yourself, you will be glad to know that they are extremely easy to use and to care for. Basically, you choose the variety of hedge and the location in which you would like it to be planted. Then you plant the hedge a few inches deep in the soil. You should leave enough room on the sides for the root system to expand; however the hedge should not be planted very deep. After planting, you should water the hedge.

When the hedge is in place, it will require very little maintenance. You will not need to water it like you might do for other plants and flowers. Rainwater will be sufficient enough for your hedge. You may want to prune your hedge from time to time however. Certain hedges will need to be pruned in the late winter, while others can be pruned in spring or early winter. You can use pruning times to shape your hedges in the manner in which you prefer.

When you properly place and prune your hedges, they can add great beauty to your home. You may find that they add a more natural look to your home than a fence might. You can place them to act as a barrier around the entire perimeter of your home or you can just add them to one side.

The first thing you should do however is to develop a plan for placement. Visit your local nursery in order to get an idea of what native types are offered in your area. Once you can envision the type of hedge you will be using, you can draw out a rough sketch of your yard and where the hedges might work best.

Preparing to Plant the Perfect Hedge: What You Need to Know

If you've never planted a hedge before, it can be difficult to know exactly where to start. Here are a few guidelines to simplify the hedge planting process for you.

The best time to plant is in the later autumn or early winter. If you can hold off till then, you really should.

The first thing you need to do is choose a hedge that is right for your needs and climate. Start by deciding exactly what purpose your hedge is going to serve. Are you merely using the hedge to outline your property boundaries or is it serving as a windscreen? Knowing all of this before you shop for shrubs and plants for your hedges will make it easier to narrow down your choices. You also need to be aware of what types of plants are suited to your climate. Your garden center should be able to provide advice in this area.

You also need to determine how much time you have to devote to your hedges. Hedges do require maintenance so you need to choose plants that fit your budget and your schedule. Fast growing plants aren't really the best option for hedges because of the frequent clipping that will be required. It is better to choose slower growing hedge plants that will require much less trimming and maintenance.

To prepare for planting, you want to figure out your layout. Knowing exactly where your hedges are going and the space you want them to take up will also help you determine how many plants or shrubs you'll need to get started.

When selecting material for your hedges, you should also try and go with young plants. Starting with older plants won't really save you any time. Older, more developed plants take longer to establish than new plants and they will not grow as close and dense as younger plants will.

Color is also an issue. Though colorful hedges may seem attractive at first, you may tire of them quickly. It is probably best to go with green hedges and then let the other plants in your garden add touches of color.

You need to map out your hedge line well before you start planting. Remember that your hedges will be there for a very long time, so you want to take your time and do this properly. Start by measuring and laying out your lines using string. This will ensure a straight line. Next you want to start digging. You should dig to one and a half times the width of the mature hedge. For example, you should dig a three-foot bed for a two-foot hedge. You want to add plenty of compost to the soil to provide your new plants with lots of nutrients.

When choosing a spot for your hedges, try to avoid areas where water collects. Bad drainage is not healthy for your hedges so you need to avoid these spots or implement some kind of system to improve the drainage.

Once the beds are dug, you want to layout the plants so you know exactly where each one will go. By doing this, you will ensure that your new hedge has even spacing all the way along. You also want to keep your taunt line in place to check that your plants are straight.

You then plant as you would any tree or shrub. Try using a stake or shovel to ensure that none of the hedge plants are planted too deeply or not deeply enough.

As you work, make sure that the plants don't get too dry. If you are planting your hedge in warm weather, than you might want to try and keep your plants in the shade until the last possible second. You can also put some hessian over top of your plants if sticking to the shade is not an option.

After the hedge plants are in place, you should water them thoroughly and continue to water them well for about a year after planting.

Though it may be tempting to allow your new hedge plants to grow as rapidly and untouched as possible, you want to encourage dense and close growth and this can only happen by cutting them back a third in the first and second year. Not doing this may result in a hedge that is too open at the base.

Breaking Wind - The Best Hedges for the Job

For many years now, people have been using hedges to act as windbreakers for their gardens. Strong winds can cause irreparable damage to a beautiful garden, making the use of hedges as windbreakers even more popular. While all hedges can act as windbreakers to some extent, some hedges that are best for the job include:

- Cotoneaster lacteus
- Taxus baccata
- Blackhaw viburnum
- Rose of Sharon
- Emerald Arborvitae
- Ornamental grasses

First, cotoneaster lacteus, which comes from the Rosacea family, can serve as a very good windbreaker. These hedges yield red berries in the wintertime, white flowers in the summertime, and can grow to be very wide. As a matter of fact, they are often wider than they are tall. The foliage remains green year round, and they thrive in full sun conditions.

Cotoneaster lacteus can serve as the perfect wind-breaking hedge, as well as bring beauty to your garden year round. Planting this hedge around the edge of your property will block the wind from every direction, keeping your flowerbeds safe from wind damage. Yet this hedge will not grow high enough to block your view. This is one of the most popular wind breaking hedges offered.

Next, Taxus baccata, also know as English Yew, can be very useful as a wind breaking hedge. They can be closely trimmed, or can be left to grow very tall. They serve as great windbreakers year round, due to their thickness, and year round durability. These evergreens yield a poisonous red berry that is pretty to the eye, but dangerous if consumed by humans or

livestock. Birds and deer have been known to safely consume the fruit from the English Yew. This hedge, though beautiful, may not be your first choice if you have small children.

Another type of bush that can serve as a great wind breaking hedge is the Blackshaw viburnum. This shrub is similar to the Hawthorn, except this shrub has no thorns. These wind breaking hedges will bloom flowers in the spring, which will turn into edible berries by harvest time, in the fall. These hedges make great windbreakers because they are durable and can grow up to fifteen feet in height and twelve feet in width. This makes them not only a great wind breaker, but a great sound barrier as well.

The Rose of Sharon shrubs, when planted closely together, can also serve as great wind breakers. They can reach heights that exceed eight feet, and have grown to be up to six feet wide. Rose of Sharon blooms beautiful flowers throughout the summer, and will flourish from pruning. Rose of Sharon can make great windbreakers because of their sturdy, upright form. A row of these shrubs planted shoulder to shoulder not only forms a wind breaking barrier, but it also can serve as a colorful privacy screen. At its full width, it's also a nice sound barrier.

The Emerald Arborvitae is a tall evergreen shrub that is also well suited to form a great wind barrier. This shrub has a dense growth habit, and has long lasting needles that also aid in breaking the wind. These shrubs require very little maintenance, and grow to heights of twelve to fifteen feet and widths of four to six feet. In place of lined trees, this shrub makes a wonderful hedge.

Last are the ornamental grasses that can also serve as great wind barriers. Ornamental grasses have become popular in helping break the wind. Most ornamental grasses are easy to grow, and reach maturity quickly. They work well with other plants, and come in many sizes, colors, and shapes. Their heights range from one foot to twenty feet in height, which is one of the factors that can make them great wind breakers.

Hedges can serve many functions in your garden. They can be used to divide up a garden plot, as ornamental features, as privacy screens, as sound barriers and as wind breakers. Not only are hedges cheaper than fences, they are also friendlier to the environment. On top of serving your gardening purposes, hedges also provide a habitat for many insects, birds and other wildlife.

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