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Your Options Are Limitless When It Comes To Hedges

Five Best Plants for a Free-Flowing Hedge

If you are looking for a less formal hedge, you should look at plants that are free flowing. They are different from the formal boxwood shrubs; free-flowing plants are not as shapeable.

Some beautiful plants can be clipped into hedges and screens. Flowering or foliage color, which fits best into your landscape plans for your lawn? You can choose hedge plants that will range from two to three feet tall, all the way up to 20 feet. You will want to choose plants that will give you the desired effect or appearance, fit in the space available and adapts to sun or shade.

Several types of shrubs can be mixed to form a hedge with various flowering plants. We're going to look at the five best plants for free-flowing hedges. Following are some recommendations for beautiful hedges made of hedge plants. Forsythia, Lilac, Spirea, Barberry, and Azaleas are among the top five.

Forsythia bushes are one of the first signs of spring. They are a deciduous shrub and blossom in the early spring. They are fast growing shrubs that have an upright and arching form. They have beautiful, vibrant yellow flowers and herald the coming of spring. Forsythia plants grow best in full sun and a well-drained soil. They are beautifully decorative and are often used as a living wall for summer and fall. Forsythia bushes are also used for erosion control on slopes.

Walking in my neighborhood I see the beautiful yellow flowers and know that spring is here. Pruning is not compulsory and the plant can go several years without pruning. The best time to prune is just after their flowering in the spring. Prune up to 1/3 of the oldest branches right down to the ground. This encourages new growth in your plant. Annual pruning is not mandatory but if you choose to prune, after flowering is the best time as it is easier to tell which the newest branches are. Only the older branches will have had blooms.

Lilac Bushes are my favorite flowering bushes to see in the spring. I love the soft scent it puts out and have one growing right beside my deck and the swing I like to sit in. These are also deciduous shrubs and heights vary, but the most common reaches a height of about six feet. Wedgwood blue and soft purple are the primary colors in rich thick clusters. They bloom in late spring and are said to have the most unforgettable aroma in the world. The leaves are dark green, but lilacs are planted for their flowers and aroma and not their foliage.

Lilac bushes prefer full sun and a rich well-drained soil. The soil should also have a neutral pH. Pruning should be done after blooming for good air circulation and cut dead flowers off when they are done blooming. This will promote even more flowering the following year. I think nothing beats the sweet smell of lilacs in the spring.

Spirea is another choice for free-flowing shrubs. It can range in size from two foot to six foot; one of the most popular is the Japanese Spirea. Leaf colors range from chartreuse, blue-green,

bronze, red, orange and burgundy. It produces clusters of pink flowers that are at the tips of wiry branches. The Japanese Spirea leaves will turn either a beautiful red or rusty gold in the fall. This kind of Spirea will grow in almost any soil including soil that is more alkaline. Spirea will grow in partial shade but full sun will promote better flowering and better leaf color. It does best in climates that have distinct winters, which makes it a good choice for the Midwest.

Barberry shrub variations are many. Japanese barberry is a hardy shrub with thorns and beautiful yellow flowers. It can grow to about nine feet in height and spread up to eight feet. Flowering begins in mid April and continues to flower through the winter. Barberries will grow both in full sun or partial shade and in most any soil type. Pruning is needed to keep it in good shape and should be done immediately after it flowers or in later winter. Both male and female plants should be kept together to produce ornamental berries.

Azalea is another popular flowering shrub. They're over 800 species with over 10,000 named varieties. They have brilliant colors such as white, pink, opal, red, watermelon pink, snow-white, orchid, and lavender. Azaleas need to be fed regularly for maximum growth. Immediately after blooming, again June 1, again in August and the middle of September is the best time to fertilize.

Five Favorite Flowing Hedges for Your Home

When there is talk of flowing hedges, the first thing that comes to mind is beauty. The five favorite flowing hedges all happen to be flowering varieties. Flowering hedges are perhaps so popular because they add brightness and instant beauty to your property. They typically bloom in spring and summer seasons. Although they are all considered flowering, they do range in size, fragrance, and colors. If you are looking for lovely flowing hedges to add to your existing landscape, consider one of these five favorites.

Bonica Rose

The Bonica Rose has nationally been named the world's favorite rose in the past. This beautiful plant is so popular because it looks wonderful and also provides the benefits of a hedge. The species is very easy to grow, making it a favorite of gardeners of all skill levels. The hedge is also very hardy and rarely gets diseased. Although they are not overwhelmingly fragrant, the species does put off a soft scent. With bright pink blooms, this hedge is likely to stay on the top of many "best" lists for years to come.

Spiraeas

If you want to enjoy the beauty of your hedge, but are also interested in attracting wildlife to your area, try the Spiraeas. This lovely hedge is great for attracting butterflies. They love the varying colors of the hedge, which range from white to yellow and pink. The blooms are indeed lovely and the true attracting point for butterflies, however they are only slightly fragrant. The butterflies love them most because the blooms will start to appear in June and continue to come and go throughout the entire summer. Although these types of flowering hedges are some of the most gorgeous, they do not get very tall. The average height for a mature

Spiraeas hedge is between two and four feet.

Texas Scarlet Flowering Quince

If you are looking for a lovely early blooming hedge, the Texas Scarlet Flowering Quince is what you need. This hedge will always be one of the first to bloom in your yard. The interesting thing about this plant is that bright red blooms appear first, followed by green foliage. Another great aspect is that they bear apple-like fruit, which tends to attract local wildlife. These hardy plants are lovely to see and add brightness to your yard at the beginning of blooming season. They are the perfect way to get things started.

Burning Bush

One of the most popular and familiar varieties of flowering hedges is the Burning Bush. This bush, named properly for its red color, is a great choice for any yard or property. The fun thing about the Burning Bush is that it changes color through the seasons. In the summer, the Burning Bush is dark green. In the fall, the bush is crimson. The Burning Bush is one of the easiest hedges to grow. It spreads quickly and can thrive almost anywhere. You can find these hedges in regular and dwarf varieties, making them as versatile as ever.

Rose Of Sharon

Last, but definitely not least, is the Rose of Sharon. This amazing hedge can provide excellent coverage for your property while adding beauty at the same time. The Rose of Sharon begins to bloom its wonderful double blooms in August. The blooms can be red, white, blue, or pink. The blooms are such a welcome in late summer and early fall because so many plants will have already bloomed by this point. The Rose of Sharon may be one of the only bloomers in your yard at this time. This hedge can grow to be 8 feet tall and works well in both sunny and partial shaded areas.

If you are looking to add flowing hedges to your home, strongly consider these flowering varieties. They are among the most beautiful hedges available and will not only provide all of the same benefits of a traditional hedge, but will also provide color and beauty for you and your family to enjoy. So, check out these five favorites and see which one suits your tastes and the style of your yard the best! Once you see the results of adding them to your property, you will likely want to add more each year.

Thinking Outside the Box – The Box Hedge, That Is

If you love the idea of having a hedge on your property, but have very little sun, you may want to consider using a box hedge, also called a boxwood hedge. Boxwood hedges are defined as being evergreen upright shrubs. They are mostly formal in style however if you choose not to prune them, they can look more informal in style. The great thing about them is that they can grow in any area. They thrive in full, partial, or no sun. Box hedges can be added to any area of your property, without worry. They make the perfect addition to an already shady yard.

The shape of a box hedge depends completely on its species. Many box hedges grow to be spherical. Some species will grow upward and be skinnier than others. Almost all species, being evergreens, will provide a green look all year. This is perfect for those who want their hedge to maintain its look, even in the winter months. The protection will also last throughout the winter as well. With a thick coverage of leaves throughout the box hedge, birds and other forms of wildlife will enjoy this type of hedge greatly.

Not only will birds and wildlife flock to the hedge in the warm seasons to eat, rest, and nest, they will also find it warm and comforting in the cooler months. Many animals that do not hibernate or migrate in the winter need a place to call their home. Box hedges are the perfect solution for these animals. If you are interested in attracting wildlife to your yard or property, adding the box hedge is a great way to do so.

Boxwood hedges are known for their long life spans. The typical life span for a boxwood hedge is three hundred years or more. This is an incredible amount of time. When adding a box hedge to your property you can think about how the plant will provide wildlife in your area with protection and comfort long after you are gone. It will also provide beauty and enjoyment to the yard for many years to come. These hardy plants are great investments. You will certainly get enough use out of them and will come to rely on their hardiness.

Many species of box hedges offer small blooms in spring times. Most of the blooms are so small however that they are virtually unnoticed. Depending on what species you are dealing with, these hedges can vary a lot in size and height. The differences are drastic, with some getting only one foot tall and others getting over 15 feet tall.

If you are looking for a particular height, be sure to research the species you are considering. You may also want to fork over cash for a more mature box hedge because they grow very slowly. The average box hedge will only grow a few inches a year. So, if you want a tall hedge immediately, you may want to visit a nursery for a mature plant.

Like all other hedges, the box hedge is very easy to maintain. Once it is planted and initially watered after the planting, there is very little to do. You can simply watch your hedge thrive on its own with the help of natural sunlight and rainwater. You can choose to prune the plant as often as you like. Experts typically suggest pruning it once a year at least. However, if you prefer a messier look, you can leave it growing naturally.

Some species of box hedges will grow in harsh climates, while others may be able to grow throughout only mild winters. If you live in an area where below freezing temperatures are very common in the winter months, be sure to get a species that can handle those temperatures. The plants are very hardy but some species do have their breaking points.

Again, if you are looking for a great way to add green to your yard all year long, a box hedge is a great choice. You can choose from many different sizes and heights. This hedge works well in style with existing plants as well. You can count on the box hedge to add beauty and life to your yard even when there is snow on the ground.

Tip Topiary Shapes for Your Hedges

Do you remember those bushes shaped like animals in “The Shining?” You know the bushes that moved around when no one was looking? Those shapes are called topiary. Topiaries are pruned or sheared into different decorative shapes or animals. The English used them in their formal gardens and they are still popular for English gardens. English boxwood shrubs are the most common as they have a rounded growth habit and slow growth rate. Mazes were a pleasant way to spend an afternoon in a formal English garden. Made of hedges and shaped into pathways, finding your way in and out of the maze was popular with young adults.

Hedges and topiaries go further back than the English. The early Greek society is credited with starting the trend of topiary, the Romans soon adopted the new trend, and symmetrical designs were soon found among the homes of the early Romans. Boxwood shrubs can easily be pruned into well-behaved shapes. They were used to section off parts of the estate and to keep order in the garden and estate lawns. Topiary art, the art of shaping shrubs into animals began during this time. Hedge gardens depended on the beauty of the shape of the hedges, rather than the bloom of bright flowers.

During the Romantic Movement in literature and art, the formal gardens of England with its structured walkways and sharply clipped shrubs and topiaries were softened in tone. This was largely because of the influence of the Romantic artists including Claude Monet. He not only painted beautiful and serene pictures of informal gardens, he also was noted for his beautiful informal garden. Informal gardens continued their popularity but small formal “knot” gardens remained.

Topiary shapes include, squares, circles pyramids and animals. The key to good-looking topiary shapes is they should be perfect. If it isn't perfect, it isn't topiary. One reason Boxwood shrubs are so popular is they are easily cut and sheared into shapes. They are softer than some of their counterparts and when they start to grow out, still hold their original shape and fine flowing lines.

It's recommended that you don't try to take on topiary shapes yourself. It would be just like cutting your own hair. If you aren't a professional or don't have a natural sculpturing talent, then don't try it. If you are going to hire a professional landscaper, be sure that one of their specialties is topiary work. This should be someone trained in shearing the shapes and correctly cutting to the proper height. Don't trust your topiaries to amateurs. Nothing looks worse than a topiary that isn't perfect.

Topiary can be any height, from the huge animals found in “The Shining” to the small neatly clipped hedges that line walkways. The most popular in my part of the world are the hedges that are used between properties to give privacy, or the smaller ones that are found under the windows of many of the homes in my area.

I have noticed an increase in small topiary shapes in the front of newly erected business buildings. One of the most unusual I have noted is in front of a new insurance office. Two small trees, one on each side of the sign is shaped like those spiral lit Christmas trees that are popular during the holidays. The trees are the same height as the sign and give it an air of elegance and formality.

In some of the newer neighborhoods, I see the trend toward using small topiary hedges along the walk and the driveway to the house. I also see larger trees and shrubs used as privacy fences and windbreakers. In the more historical part of my town, topiary hedges are still widely used to surround picture windows framing them with large bushes on the sides, and smaller hedges trimmed to fit under the window.

If you want round shapes, then start with naturally rounded shrubs. Some of those choices are; arborvitae, hibiscus, boxwood, maple and pear. These are easily shaped and pliable. Other types of free-form plants will resist rounding and squaring. They are beautiful, like the azalea and the star jasmine but not good for topiary shapes.

Three Trees That Make the Perfect Hedge

Are you looking for the perfect hedge? Many trees can make a perfect hedge. To choose one, you need to look at your climate zone, what type of soil you have and how much moisture it will get. Some of these trees are Arborvitae, Emerald Green, Green Giant Cedar, Arizona cypress, Frasier fir, and the Colorado blue spruce. Let's explore three trees that will make a perfect hedge. The trees are each beautiful in their own way and can be used as windbreaks or hedges.

The first is the Canadian hemlock; it's classified as a tree and plant type as evergreen. They have a moderate growth rate and do well in full sun, partial sun, and shade. The botanical name for it is *Tsuga canadensis*. They can be grown in zones 4, 5, 6, and 7. At their maturity, they can stand 30 to 50 feet tall. To make a good hedge, they need to be planted about four foot apart in a row.

Canadian hemlocks are soft and have a pyramid shape with a tapering trunk. It's a beautiful conifer, makes a great hedge, and is an excellent choice for moist, well drained, and sandy soils. The Canadian hemlock has graceful foliage and can be used as a stand-alone tree or as hedge or windbreak. It's best if they are transplanted when the plants are four years old.

The Norway spruce is another popular conifer for use as hedges and windbreaks. They are found throughout much of the United States and Canada. They adapt easily to low moisture and various soil types. They have a fast growth rate, classified as a tree and are consider an Evergreen plant type. They are good for planting in zones 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. At maturity, they will grow to a height of 50 to 75 feet.

When they are first planted, they are approximately 10-16". This conifer has branches that grow densely into one another. They are good for windbreaks and should be planted 6 feet apart to be used in that way. As the tree matures, the side branches become horizontal and begin turning up at the tip. The secondary branches hang down from the main branches making it an attractive ornamental tree with graceful flowing branches.

The Douglas fir is a versatile and popular tree. It can and is used as a Christmas tree, it also is popular as a windbreak tree, and it can be sheared to form a beautiful hedge. The mature

shape is in the shape of a pyramid and it will grow to a height of 50-60 feet high. It spreads naturally outward 20-30 feet. The Douglas fir needs full sun and is adaptable to a wide variety of soil types and moisture content.

You can plant Douglas firs in loam, clay, and sandy soil and it will still grow well. The trees are a beautiful blue green color and remain that color all year long. It can be planted in zones 3-6. The botanical name for the Douglas fir is *Pseudotsuga menziesii glauca*. Douglas fir, Douglas, Oregon pine, yellow or red spruce and interior fir are the names it is known by most commonly. The needles are flat with a pointed tip and the needles appear to stand out around the main twig. The Douglas fir also produces cones that turn from green to gray as they mature.

The bark on the Douglas fir is smooth, with a gray-brown color. It has resin-filled blisters when the plants are young and after the tree has aged the bark becomes deeply grooved.

Many animals use the Douglas fir as a source of food. Squirrels, chipmunks, mice, winter wrens, and crossbills eat the fir seeds. Bears will scrape off the bark to reach and eat the layer of sap on the layer beneath the bark. The tree is also highly valued because of its dense wood. It is hard, stiff, and durable. The wood makes it perfect for heavy construction such as trestles, bridge parts, piers, and commercial buildings.

When you choose the trees you want on your property, investigate thoroughly and your local extension office is a good source of information. You need to be sure the trees you choose are good for you climate zone and for your soil conditions.

Get In Shape—With the Perfect Hedge

You have decided to take the jump and plant hedges to increase the beauty of your lawn. You've chosen the plants, trees, and shrubs that grow well in your zone and you have followed all planting instructions. So how do you train them into the perfect hedge? That's what we're going to look at in this article. Some of the shrubs and plants you have chosen are barberries, boxwoods, and yew. Deciduous shrubs can also be pruned and trained to become perfect hedges. Formal hedges are clipped and formed into shapes that enclose spaces, and define garden rooms.

Barberries are a popular choice for hedges and here are a few tips to their care. Pruning should be kept to a minimum. Recommendation is two times a year. They grow best in partial sun and prefer poor soil. They will bear more fruit if they are grown in poor soil. They can be easily trimmed and shaped into a lovely hedge. Barberries are sensitive to salt and solid fertilizers can kill the plant.

Pruning is started immediately after planting and recommended you prune the plant by at least one third and it can be trimmed to half its planting size. This will help new growth from the base of the plant. Once your plant has grown to the height you want it, then pruning is only necessary to keep it looking neat. Use sharp hedging shears, or electric hedge trimmers. It's also helpful to use a string line to help you keep your hedge even.

Training a hedge begins early. Some people allow the hedge to grow too tall before they start pruning. Every time your plant has a new growth of 12 inches, you should prune it back about six inches. The sides of the hedges should also be trimmed. Never let the top of the hedge to become wider than the base. If tops are left wide, they shade out the lower branches and they can become weak. Snow buildups are also less of a problem when the tops are narrower. Hedges can be trimmed either straight across, or softly rounded.

Narrow-leaved evergreens need slightly less pruning. Fine twigged plants such as arborvitae, hemlock, and yews need to be trimmed heavily. Pines, spruces, and firs should have their buds or new shoots at the tip of the branch broken off each year. Then they can be shaped into their formal shape with a pair of pruning shears.

Cutting your hedge plants back when you first plant them will encourage branching and denser growth. This will make for a beautiful full hedge. As the hedges age, they can be cut back by smaller amounts each year. When they have reached the height you want them to be, you only need to keep trimmed to look neat. Don't forget to use a plum line so you can keep your hedge straight.

What happens when you move into a new home and the hedges have not been properly cared for? There are ways to rejuvenate hedges. If they aren't badly overgrown, you can cut back the sides and tops to six inches below the height you want your hedge to be. This minor cutback lets a new growth begin, which can then be pruned and trimmed into the shape you want.

If the hedge is overgrown, you can cut back some plants to within 6-12 inches of the ground. Don't just assume that you can do this to all shrubs. Ripping out the entire hedge and planting new plants can only repair some shrubs.

Two of the more popular types of plants for forming formal hedges are the Boxwood and the Privet. Both are excellent choices for the straight lines that are needed in a formal hedge.

Privet hedges grow quickly and are more easily shaped than boxwood shrubs. Privet hedges will tolerate the heavy pruning that is needed to shape the shrubs into formal hedges. Privet shrubs will reach a height of 4 to 15 feet. In late spring and early summer, they produce white flowers, when the flowers are done blooming then berries appear. Privet hedges prefer partial shade and a moist soil. They are not troubled by smog and pollution that can hurt plants in urban settings.

The Basics of Forming Your Hedge Shapes

When you want to form your hedges into a particular shape, the task may seem difficult, if not impossible. Rest assured, forming the shape of your hedges is not all that difficult, and can be accomplished with both time and effort. The following paragraphs will take a look at some basic tips to follow when attempting to form the shape of your hedges.

The first thing you should realize when attempting to form the shape of your hedges is shearing

is different from pruning. Shearing, also known as trimming, can involve the shaping of each individual branch in the hedge. Pruning, on the other hand, selectively removes certain branches to maintain shape and form, and promote healthy growth and appearance of the hedges. Shearing is what needs to be done to begin to shape your hedges and then regular pruning sessions should be performed in order to maintain a perfect shape.

Next, when attempting to form the shape of your hedges, you should consider the type of hedges, and determine the proper time of year that your hedges should be sheared or pruned. Knowing which type of hedge works best for shaping and asking at your local garden center will help you get the best start. Be sure to let your garden provider know what you would like to do with your hedges so they can best provide you with the correct information to get you started.

When you shear your hedges to form their shape at the appropriate times of year, you will see the best results. Hedges that flower in the spring are best shaped after their flowering stage. If you shape your hedges before the flowering stage is finished, you will be shearing off buds, thus giving you less flowering. Hedges that bloom in the summer are best shaped in the late summer, after the flowering stage is complete. Most varieties of evergreen shrubs that do not flower in the summer or spring can be shaped just about any time of the year. Before you begin to form the shape of the hedges, research the variety of hedges to determine the best time of year to shape them.

Using the right tools will also help form the shape of your hedges. While using electrical hedge trimmers can be done, professionals claim it is best to use a pair of hand held hedge pruning shears to form the shape of your hedges. Hand held hedge pruning shears will give you a closer cut, and will be able to reach places that electrical hedge trimmers cannot.

Some varieties of hedges cannot be pruned with electrical hedge trimmers. It is important to research the variety of your hedges before you attempt to form their shape with electrical hedge trimmers. If you do decide an electrical trimmer may be best for you, you may want to consider using hand held hedge pruning shears for the first cut of the shaping, and then use the electrical hedge trimmers to maintain the shape in later pruning sessions.

When forming the shape of your hedges, there is something else you should take into consideration. When shaping your hedges, you should first thin out all of the dead branches, by cutting them completely off. Depending on your desired shape, you should then cut out any crossed branches, or any branches you find unsuitable for your desired shape.

Next, you should trim the top, taking no more than six inches off the top. You do not want to overdo it on the first cut; you will eventually reach your desired size and shape. Finally, when you shape down the sides, you should always remember to leave the bottom just a bit wider than the top. This will encourage leaf growth from the top to the bottom of your hedges, as opposed to leaf development from the bottom to the top of your hedges.

Forming the shape of your hedges is not all that difficult, but it does take time and effort. You likely will not achieve the shape you want after the first shearing, but that is normal. Sometimes it takes several seasons to achieve the desired shape of your hedges.

Shaping Up – Secrets to Growing a Healthy Hedge

There is really nothing to growing a healthy hedge. A hedge is one of the easiest plants to attempt to grow on your property. They really require no more attention than most trees. This is in general of course. There are a select few hedge varieties that are a bit picky and require a little more attention and love than others. Overall however, a hedge is the best thing you can do for your yard, even when you have no or very little time to dedicate to its growth. If you are thinking of planting a hedge on your property, be sure to check out these secrets to growing a healthy hedge before you begin.

Property Location

When choosing a hedge species, be sure the first thing you note is what areas the hedge grows best within. Most plants will have the areas marked off by “zone”. Locate your zone and see which species to begin with. Most hedges are very hardy and will thrive in almost any location, even during the winter months. If you live in a location that experiences harsh and extreme winters or summers however, you may want to take care in choosing an appropriate species for your property. Choosing the right species of hedge for your property location is a key to growing a healthy hedge. If you choose an inappropriate species, it could be more difficult to deal with or even die after the first year.

Planting Area

The next secret to growing a healthy hedge involves picking a great planting area. There may be an area you have in mind before you even choose a species. This is fine but you should note the amount of sun the spot gets before choosing a species. If you have already chosen your hedge plant but are unsure of where it should go, consider a few things. First, be sure that the area you choose is large enough to handle the hedge once it reaches maturity. You will not want to plant a really tall hedge beneath an electrical line for instance. You will also want to make sure other plants that may be around the hedge will have plenty of room to continue their growth as well. Hedges can quickly take over other plants around them.

How to Plant

Once you have the perfect plant and the most appropriate spot, you are ready to plant your hedge. One secret, that few planters know, is that a hedge should only be planted a few inches underground. You should always allow a sufficient amount of room on each side of the plant, but the depth of your hold should only be a few inches deep. Make sure it is deep enough to house the entire root system however. Hedges grow best when they get more air from above the ground. Again, the most important thing to remember is to give the plant as much room as needed for the root system to expand.

Aftercare

After planting your hedge, give it a little drink of water. After this initial water, you really don't need to do much to maintain your new plant. If you are planting in a dry season, you may want to water it a bit for the first week or so. Once the season stabilizes however your plant

will be able to thrive on rainwater alone. As far as pruning goes, it is really up to you with most species. If you want a more formal hedge, you can prune it accordingly. If you like a more natural look, leave your hedge to grow as it wishes. Remember however that some species require more pruning than others. So take note when purchasing your plant.

Choosing and planting a hedge is really a very simple task. You cannot go wrong with hedges on your property. They add beauty, protection, and are perfect for attracting local wildlife to your yard. They are much more attractive than fences and can work in the same manner. The benefits are numerous and you will see them almost immediately. Just use these secrets when completing your task and you will have a healthy and lovely hedge that all of your neighbors will admire.

Ornamental Hedging – Cool Designs for Your Yard

If you are one of the thousands of people who love to see an interesting hedge in a yard, you may want to consider adding great ornamental hedging sculptures to your own yard or garden. Although it may seem incredibly difficult to construct, you can sculpt your own hedges in no time with a little guidance. There are a few things you should consider however before you jump into hedge sculpting. Start with making a rough sketch of your yard or garden to get an idea of where the hedging would look best and work most efficiently.

Experts would tell you that there are certain species of hedges that work best with ornamental hedging. Although you can try to work with any type of hedge, these varieties are easiest to work with and maintain. Chamaecyparis, Artemisia, Azara, Berberis, Buxus, Caryopteris, Cassinia, Cephalotaxus, Chaenomeles, Corylus, and Cotoneaster are all recommended types of hedges to use when participating in ornamental hedging.

Although some may feel this type of sculpting is best when the whole world can see it, you can put these works of art almost anywhere. One thing you should consider when planning where to place your ornamental hedging is the style of the hedging. If you are trying a more traditional hedging style such as boxed hedging or a sculpted wall design, you can put it almost anywhere. These types of hedging are elegant and can even be used in the front yard without taking away from your home's elegance.

If you are more interested in causal shapes for sculpting, you may want to limit them to your backyard or garden area. Many people love to include fun shapes or hedges in shapes of animals in their yard décor. While these things are interesting and fun to look at, you may want to think about whether or not you want them to be the first thing guests see when they arrive to your home. While the more modern shapes works for some people, if you are more traditional in style, you will want to keep them at the minimum.

The best way to get the most professional results in ornamental hedging is to hire a professional. There are professionals that specialize in topiary and ornamental hedging. They have been trained to work in these forms of art. There are people however who would rather try this task themselves. If this is the case, you should strongly consider taking a class on the art form. Many local community colleges will offer topiary classes from time to time for small

fees. You can also check with your local expert or nursery to get contacts for instruction.

One great thing to think about is starting small. Many people will go at their largest hedge with clippers. Choosing to attack the largest hedge in your yard can end in total disaster. If you take it too far, the hedge must be replaced. Instead of taking the risk with these results, you can start a little smaller. Consider buying a small, inexpensive hedge that you can work on inside. You can also work on it outdoors, if the weather permits. Try different approaches on this "tester" hedge before moving on to something larger. Once you have mastered the smaller hedge, you can try to move on to more permanent hedges in your yard.

If you enjoy looking at sculpted hedges, you can also visit gardens such as Green Animals, a topiary garden in Rhode Island. Some of the world's most talented artists have worked building and maintaining sculptures in parks such as these. They are perfect places to take your family or to enjoy a relaxing picnic on your own. No matter what the reason, they are amazing places to get inspiration for your own ornamental hedging project at your home. Pay attention to details and how each hedge is constructed to get the best ideas and put them to use at home.

Remember, before beginning to sculpt you should always develop a plan. Make sure the plan includes practicing or perhaps taking a class or two. There is nothing worse than ruining an old hedge because you did not take the time to plan and research ahead. Once you have all of the information you need however, you can create beautiful art work that will add nicely to your home.

Ever Considered Evergreen Hedges?

The advantage of using evergreens for hedges is they are "ever green." That means they can be used as windbreaks during the winter. They must be properly placed to keep snow from piling up on the driveway or walks. They are especially pretty when the ground is snow covered. They look lovely with Christmas lights and snow covering them. The lights glow on the snow and make a beautiful scene.

Deciduous plants lose their leaves during a portion of the growing season and therefore leaving gaps in your hedges, evergreens have year-round foliage. They can be found in different heights and colors and most need little maintenance. Arborvitae, juniper and holly are three examples of tall, medium and small shrubs of evergreen for privacy fencing.

The tall evergreen shrub called Emerald Arborvitae will grow to a height of 15 to 20 feet and needs little maintenance from you. It has flat long-lasting needles and had a dense growth. It has a spread of 4-6 feet and is narrow and upright in form.

The Irish Juniper is also used for privacy screens. It grows in a narrow, column form and stand together to for a colonnade of loose border evergreens. They will help to keep out unwanted sights, sounds, and nosy neighbors.

For smaller privacy fences, use "Little Red" holly. This can be used when the taller privacy trees are not practical. These practical little shrubs are great for privacy even though they are

compact in nature. They grow into plants about 5' x 5' and will grow in partial shade or full sun. It is great to use around pools or hot tubs because there are no leaves or needles to clean up.

Some trees that usually grow to great heights in the forest can be kept trimmed to the height you want on your property. Eastern Hemlock and Eastern White Pine are two examples of trees that can go to 100 feet or more in their natural habitat, but can also be trimmed into a neat hedge. They look great and form a dense hedge with their feathery evergreen foliage.

A beautiful example of an evergreen that can be used as a privacy screen or windbreaker is the Colorado Blue Spruce Tree. They can be grown in zones 3-7 and they have a delicious smell. They are prickly in texture and should be planted so they will have partial sun with moist and fertile soil. They are popular as Christmas trees for indoor decorating and then for replanting outside after the holiday. You will want to dig the hole before the ground freezes and do not let the dirt fall inside the hole, keeping it loose so it is easily workable when you fill in around your newly planted tree.

Other examples of evergreen hedge shrubs are Holly plants. They look more like boxwood shrubs and bear small, oval leaves. They can be allowed to grow tall enough to serve as privacy screens.

Boxwoods are the true formal hedge plant. Used extensively by the aristocrats in Europe for centuries, they are designed for formal garden design. They easily hold their shape when designed into topiary shapes and are perfect for the cut lines that are needed in a formal garden. They are used for mazes in the more formal gardens of Europe and can be pruned to nearly any shape you want them to be including animals or geometric shapes. Pruning is recommended two times a year, once in spring and another time in August. That will keep your boxwood fuzz-free.

Yew bushes are the classic hedge plants. They are needle bearing, tolerate shade, and grow tall enough to act as privacy screens. Their drawback is they are slow growers. They will grow about 9 inches a year.

Here is a warning about evergreen hedges. A heavy snowfall lying on top of your hedge can cause serious damage to your plant. When you receive a heavy snowfall, brush off the snow as soon as possible to keep the added weight off your evergreens. Avoid locating your evergreens where snow will drop from rooftops to give added weight to branches.

Evergreens are good for nearly all zones and can tolerate cold weather. They are beautiful to look at throughout the year.

Don't Hedge Your Bets: Winterize Those Shrubs

Once fall hits, many people think it is time to give their green thumbs a rest. But that is definitely not the case. Even though the blooms may be gone from your garden, there is still a great deal that needs attending to. Doing the proper work in the fall ensures that your plants

will survive the dangers of winter disease and damage and that you will be rewarded with a healthier garden come spring.

If you do not have an extensive knowledge of plants and shrubs, you may find it difficult to know which plants need winterizing and how you should go about it. For example, many people wonder if evergreen shrubs even need to be winterized. Most feel that evergreens are an important part of the winter landscape and that any attempt to winterize them would take away from their visual impact. These kinds of shrubs can be damaged by winter weather, so unless you are willing to risk losing your evergreens all together you should do a few basic things to protect them from snow and ice.

While you may be focused on protecting your perennials and roses, your trees and shrubs need a little TLC as well. During the fall, there is a great deal of root growth for your trees and shrubs so you need to continue to be consistent with your watering. On average you should be watering a tree that is eight to ten inches in diameter, at least twenty to forty minutes of soaking, just to ensure that all the root areas are reached. You may also want to apply a slow-release fertilizer to your shrubs – though you will want to test your soil level first to see what nutrients are needed.

To winterize evergreens, you should start with pruning. The ideal time to prune is later in the fall, after the leaves have fallen. If too much snow or ice builds up on the branches they will break. Remove any small or weak branches to avoid this kind of breakage. Your shrub will be much more likely to withstand the winter snow and ice without them.

Next, you should place a wire cage around the shrub. You can use chicken wire attached to poles in the ground to build this kind of cage. Once this cage is in place, you want to cover the plant with burlap. This will keep out the wind and the moisture. If you have a row of your shrubs, you can build a tent-like or tepee structure over them using plywood and bamboo.

You want to make sure to place mulch around the base of the shrubs. This will help to prevent any moisture loss during the winter. Shrubs rely primarily on stored water during the winter months so you want to do as much as possible to ensure that the stored water stays in place and that browning does not occur. Mulch will ensure that the plant retains its stored water. It will also help to regulate the temperature around the shrub. Extreme changes in temperature can put a great deal of stress on your shrubs and disturb the root system.

All of these steps will winterize your shrubs and ensure their health and safety during the long winter months. The steps are simple (watering, pruning, covering and mulching), but they will make a huge difference to your shrubs and really reduce the risk of winter damage such as breakage and browning.

If you are not partial to the idea of covering up your evergreen shrubs, then you should try some preventive protection in the fall. The damage that sometimes occurs to stems during the winter months makes it difficult for shrubs to draw water. If you water properly and consistently in the fall, then you will help protect your shrub during the long winter months. You can also spray shrub leaves with an anti-desiccant to help the leave retain moisture.

Taking a bit of time and care in the fall months to protect your shrubs will ensure a healthy

spring for them. Though a garden full of burlap sacks may not sound that appealing, consider the beauty you will be guaranteed during the other three seasons of the year.

Deciding on Deciduous Hedges

Deciduous hedges are a beautiful informal way to mark boundaries, give depth to landscape and create privacy. They are beautiful and flower in season, and correctly planted can be exactly what you are looking for. Deciduous hedges do lose their leaves at the end of the growing season and go dormant. Pruning these hedges on a regular basis over a long period will help them for a tangle of twigs at the base. This tangle of twigs will provide a screen during the winter.

Hedges will grow better and form a dense bushy growth if planted as small plants. If planted correctly they will overtake those hedges that were planted with larger pot grown plants. In fact, you may have gaps in your hedge with starting out with larger plants, thinking your hedge will be what you want faster.

Deciduous hedges that are formal will need to be pruned or reshaped at least twice during each season. The first pruning should bring them to the height you want, and then one more pruning later in the season should be sufficient. If you have planted faster growing plants, you may choose to prune more often to keep them at the desired height.

When planting deciduous plants, make sure they are well watered throughout the season. New plants should be watered regularly even if it looks like rain. The soil should be well drained and if it isn't, tile or drain coil should be placed around your hedge line. Mulch is needed after planting to keep the moisture in the ground. Mulch doesn't need to be replaced as it is only used at the beginning of the plant life to ensure proper moisture and promote growth. Usually, deciduous plants will be planted from small plants in a straight line. If you want a denser hedge, planting them staggered in two rows will give you the effect you want.

The Japanese anemone is a beautiful flowering shrub that produces flowers in late summer and in early autumn. They are simple, but pretty borders and need lots of sun. They have blooms of white or pink.

The Butterfly Bush is a medium to large shrub that is fast growing and is covered with fragrant with different colors available. White, lilac, dark purple and even some orange colored varieties are available. They bloom during the summer and are a natural attraction for butterflies. You will frequently see each cone shaped bloom covered in butterflies.

Forsythia is a beautiful deciduous plant that blooms early in the spring and has brilliant yellow flowers. It can be formed into a nice shrub with heights from 3-8 feet. You will love looking out your window and seeing the yellow flowers telling you, spring is here.

Barberries also are an excellent choice for low hedges and are deciduous. These lovely looking shrubs are available with green or red foliage and can be grown both in shade and in sun. They produce attractive red berries that often last through the winter.

Dogwood, Spirea and Lilacs are also excellent choices for hedges. Lilacs also bloom in early spring and have a delicious fragrant aroma that is popular in many areas of the country. They keep their green color throughout the season and can easily be pruned to produce a thicker, denser hedge at the bottom.

Azaleas and barberry shrubs are also excellent choices for flowering deciduous shrubs. They both have many different varieties and bloom at different times.

If you plan carefully and mix your shrubs you should have a beautiful hedge line that will provide blooms and color throughout most of the year.

Burning bush is a lovely shrub that will give you a fall display of color. Interspersed with the other plants we have talked about above they provide beautiful color when other shrubs are beginning to lose their blooms.

Bittersweet plants are also something that gives incredible color in the fall. They produce berries that are green in the summer and turn into yellow husks in the early fall. Later into the fall, these husks peel back and a bright orange berry is revealed. Not only that, numerous leaves will turn a bright yellow. This is truly a fall plant to keep the color in your hedge during the fall season.

Creating Hedges for the Local Wildlife

Have you ever wanted to take the time to sit and watch the birds in your yard, only to realize there were none to watch? Many people think local wildlife will simply appear in their yard on a daily basis with no added catalyst. The truth is however that local wildlife will typically visit the "best" yard in the area. This does not mean the prettiest yard will reap the rewards, but the yard that provides the best accommodations for the wildlife itself.

If you want to draw birds and other local wildlife to your area, consider creating an inviting space for them to utilize. Using hedges is a great way to offer an inviting area and also a great way to begin.

Hedges can be used in many ways when trying to landscape a home. A hedge is typically defined as a row of trees and shrubs. They can be pruned to sit at almost any height, allowing the homeowner to create "walls" with them or shorter "fence" styles as well. Many times hedges are used to contain a garden area. They are planted around the fielded area and are used decoratively. They can add a classic and professional look to any home garden and give a home instant beauty.

In addition to adding beauty to a home however, a hedge can also be a great way to attract wildlife to your yard. Hedges are so attractive to wildlife because they provide basic needs for the wildlife. Animals can use hedges for food. Birds will feed on the hedge's seeds and if the hedge contains berries, others animals will indulge as well. Hedges are also great sources of shelter for wildlife. Birds will utilize them all year long for shelter. In the summer they provide

safety from storms and predators while in the winter they provide warmth. Squirrels will also find hedges to be a good place for keeping safe and warm.

Another thing animals may utilize hedges for is nesting. Some species would rather nest closer to the ground and will love keeping the young safe in a nice hedge. This may be even truer if your area has few trees. If an area is without an abundance of trees, birds will likely find places such as hedges to nest.

When trying to attract wildlife with hedges, choosing the right species of hedge can play a significant part. The size of the hedge is not as important as the type of hedge you choose. A small hedge can still provide an attractive location for animals in your area. To stay with hedges that are familiar to the wildlife in your area, strongly consider using native plants. Those like hazel, holly, and dog rose are very popular in most areas.

By providing the wildlife with species of plants they are familiar with, they will be more likely to enjoy your hedges. Choosing hedges that are dense is also a great idea. Animals will feel safest when the hedge is dense and will be more likely to visit your yard.

If you have planted hedges, but still want to do something extra to attract wildlife, there are options for you. Experts say animals will be more likely to visit your hedges if you encourage grasses or flowers to grow at the bottom. Creating a “cushioning” at the base is an easy way to add more beauty to a hedge as well as invite wildlife into your area. Animals love this “cushioning” because it gives them a lower place to hide and nest if they like.

If you are interested in building a more inviting place for your local wildlife, one of the easiest things you can do is provide the wildlife with hedges in which to enjoy. You can visit your local nursery to find out which hedges are best for the wildlife in your area. You can also gather information about pruning or other planting advice. Adding hedges to your area is not only great for attracting wildlife however, but will also make your home look more elegant than before. So, begin planning right away and you will be enjoying local wildlife in your yard before you know it!

Bamboo: The Unconventional Hedge

If you're looking for a low maintenance hedge, then bamboo might be for you. Though not a traditional hedge, bamboo is an ideal low-maintenance hedge. If you're looking for something a little different or just something that will not drain your time, energy or wallet, then bamboo might be the ideal solution for you!

Bamboo is a very fast growing plant so you will have a hedge much quicker than with other hedge plants. Within two years your bamboo should reach about seventy-five percent growth and then reach one hundred percent in only another two or three years. Bamboo is also less expensive. If money is a factor, you can plant the bamboo far apart. Over a year or two the bamboo will fill in. This might take longer than planting more bamboo plants closer together, but it is a cost-effective solution for those strapped for cash.

If you need privacy or a windscreen right away, you can purchase and plant bamboo that is anywhere from ten to fifty feet tall – an instant hedge! Because it does grow so quickly, you may want to install some type of barrier to control the bamboo's spreading.

When considering a bamboo hedge, you need to think about things like height requirements and your ground space, as well as the reason for planting the hedge in the first place. There are different varieties of bamboo you can choose depending on your space and needs.

Bamboo can be used as a sound barrier. If you have a problem with noisy traffic or noisy neighbors, you can drown out some of that sound with bamboo screening. Your bamboo hedge will need to be dense (at least eight feet wide) if your main reason for putting it in place is soundproofing.

Bamboo can also be used as a barrier against wind. It is really important though that you select a bamboo that is suited to your climate because of the different types of winds and some varieties of bamboo may be unable to withstand extreme hot or cold winds.

A bamboo hedge can also act as a privacy screen. If you're having a problem with prying neighbors, then you might consider planting a bamboo hedge that will shield you from their prying eyes.

Bamboo can also be a security fence for keeping animals or would-be burglars off your property.

Because of the way bamboo can grow and spread, you'll want to think carefully about the placement of your new hedge. If you plant clumping bamboo close to a neighbor's fence you may end up with a plant that peeks through and goes over that neighbor's fence. To avoid any neighborhood spats, you may want to install a fibro board between your new hedge and your neighbor's fence.

Bamboo can be planted most times of the year in mild climates, but in colder areas the bamboo plants should go in well in advance of the winter so they have time to establish themselves and harden enough to survive the first winter.

When you plant bamboo, it should be done in evenly spaced rows. Depending on the shape, size, species and look that you are going for, the bamboo plants should be spaced anywhere from one to five feet.

For bamboo to thrive, it should be planted in full sun – that's where the plants grow quickest and do their best. New plants need to have enough water, fertilizers and be well protected from weeds and too much wind.

Once in the ground and properly established, bamboo needs little more than water and fertilizer.

Though bamboo is low maintenance, you will need to do some pruning from time to time. About once each year you should remove any dead or unattractive branches. You may also need to take out larger bamboo clumps so that newer branches have enough room to grow and

thrive. You can also trim bamboo in a topiary design or boxwood shape as people do with more traditional hedge plants.

If you are considering bamboo hedging, you may want to consult an expert. There are companies out there that specialize in the planting of bamboo hedges. Because clumping bamboo can be difficult to control it might be best to look to an expert if you are unsure about how to plant and control your new bamboo.

Everything's Coming Up Roses in Hedges

If you are looking for a nice hedge to provide you with privacy and functionality, but are a little uninterested in plain green varieties, think about choosing a rose hedge for your task. Rose hedges are basically like normal hedges, only they flower during certain times of the year. When they are not flowering, they still offer green foliage that can be quite dense.

Rose hedges are among some of the most beautiful hedge species. They are great for wildlife in your area and will also deter anyone from trespassing on your property. No one will want to go through a prickly hedge of roses! When considering a hedge for your property, be sure to take a look at these beautiful varieties of rose hedges.

Bonica Rose

In 1997, the Bonica Rose hedge was named the world's favorite rose. This is no small award considering there were hundreds of species to consider. People love the Bonica Rose hedge for many reasons, which obviously include its amazing beauty. The species is great for hedges because it is easy to grow and maintain. It requires very little attention and rarely becomes diseased. You may want to prune it occasionally, especially after the blooming season. It is slightly fragrant for those that love to stop and smell the roses. This bright pink rose is simply one of the most elegant in its class. They are very hardy and can withstand winter weather well.

Rose Of Sharon

One of the most common rose hedges is the Rose of Sharon. This beauty is an upright deciduous shrub found in many yards across the country. It is appropriate for a hedge for many reasons; including the fact that it grows up to 12 feet tall in most areas. It is multi-stemmed, offering a dense coverage. The Rose of Sharon comes in many different colors with pink, red, and white being the most popular colors available. It has diamond-shaped leaves that are somewhat toothed. It spreads nicely, so you can start with a small amount and build your shrub over time if you wish.

You will be shocked at how fast your plants will spread. There is rarely any need to prune the Rose of Sharon. You may want to cut away broken stems from time to time. One of the best things about this rose hedge is that the blooming period is long and lasts from spring to early fall.

Crimson King

If you are looking for a rose hedge that looks like a traditional rose bush, consider the Crimson King variety. This gorgeous plant grows to be about six feet tall. It contains large clusters of roses that can be as large as 3 inches. The flowers are obviously a lovely shade of crimson, which the bush is notably named after. The bush is amazing in that it blooms in late spring and continues to re-bloom until mid fall.

The Crimson King is a fast growing species, and requires very little time to establish itself. It is very hardy and can withstand cold temperatures. As far as pruning, there is little need. However, if you do plan on shaping this species, you may find yourself pruning quite often as it does grow so quickly. Growing it naturally however offers a more natural and lovely look.

Robin Hood Rose

This interesting species, which is commonly also referred to as Mediterranean Musk Rose, is one of the best kept secrets. If you are trying to find a rose with a more feminine appeal, certainly consider this species. The hedge produces delicate flowers that last throughout the summer. They grow in clusters, much like a typical rose bush. The clusters are very lovely, with approximately 20 perfect roses in each one. They are extremely fragrant, offering a lovely smell for all to enjoy.

This graceful plant is easy to deal with as it grows nicely and predictably. The Robin Hood Rose matures around six feet tall. It prefers at least partial sun, but will withstand extreme warmth or cold as well. Its name is very appropriate as the look it offers is very "fairy tale-like". If you want a magical styled rose hedge, this is certainly one to try.

Height-Challenged Hedges – What These Short Shrubs Add to Your Landscaping

If you visit your local nursery you may come across many types of hedges. Some of the most interesting types you will find are of the short variety, also called dwarf hedges. If you are looking for a fence substitute, dwarf hedges may not be the best option. However, if you are simply adding to your landscape and want to use them ornamentally, height-challenged hedges can be just what you need.

One of the main reasons consumers purchase dwarf hedges is because they are perfect for small areas. If you want to add substance to your landscaping but already have a lot of the area planted, you can do so with short shrubs. Typically the dwarf variety will only grow to be a few feet high. Many other varieties of shrubs and hedges will grow to be around twenty feet high. You can add them in with your existing landscape to provide an updated look without being too fussy with your style. These petite hedges can be used in the same way their taller counterparts can be used. They are only on a smaller scale.

One popular use for a dwarf shrub is in the front of a home. If you have low windows that you would like to place landscaping in front of, you can use these without worry. They will not

grow so big that they will cover the entire window. They may however grow just enough to provide extra shading and added curb appeal. You can use them along the sides of your home as well. Any place in which you don't want a tall hedge, a dwarf hedge can be used instead.

A great thing about dwarf hedges is that they come in lovely varieties, some of which are very pretty to view. One type, the ninebark dwarf, is among the most popular species. Like all other dwarf shrubs, it is small and can be used anywhere in your yard. It has small green foliage and contains small white flowers in the spring. One interesting thing about this type of shrub is that its bark peels in the winter. This hardy shrub loves full to partial sun and will grow almost anywhere. Small birds love it for its protection and you will love it for its cute flowers and hardy attitude.

The dwarf blue leaf Arctic willow is also a very popular option in this short variety. It is probably so popular because it grows extremely fast compared to others. This type of hedge will grow even in the wettest soil conditions, which makes it perfect for marshy or wetland areas. The stems are skinny and will gracefully sway in the wind. The hedge gets its name due to its bluish green coloring.

If you want to add a little "wall" to your home, dwarf shrubs are perfect for this task. You can use them like full sized shrubs and create a barrier between your property line and your neighbor's. Of course, they won't grow as tall as the regular variety, but they will be just as beautiful. Just like their taller versions, dwarf hedges require very little maintenance. They do need to be planted with plenty of room for their roots to grow. They should be planted only a few inches into the soil however. Just like regular hedges, they do not require extra watering and will thrive on rainwater. They do need to be pruned occasionally, especially if you want them to maintain a specific shape.

Another great way to use these petite hedges is to build them around an existing flower garden. You can enclose any garden with these hedges to offer a more private and professional look to your yard. Place a lovely sitting bench in the middle and you will feel like you have your own secret garden.

Dwarf hedges are also a great way to attract small wildlife to your yard. Although they will not bring in the amount of wildlife the larger hedges will, you will still see an increase in bird activity and other small wildlife activity in your yard when you use these lovely little hedges. Overall, if you are looking for a way to add the appeal of hedges to your home, but would rather work on a smaller scale, dwarf shrubs are the best way to go.