

Hedges and Screens

The information provided in the following pages is for general guidance only. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive or detailed guide. However our staff are always be happy to give further advice as necessary. Please ask.

As well as making an excellent physical barrier, a hedge may also provide a valuable haven and food source for birds and other wildlife, protection from weather and noise, many will also provide a rich variety of colour and interest throughout the year. There is a hedge to suit every purpose and, while broad suggestions are offered below, please do ask about any particular requirements you may have.

Some useful information on hedges is available from www.rhs.org.uk and www.rspb.org.uk

Farm Hedges and Woodlands

Typical farm hedges and woodlands are made up of mixed indigenous species, mostly deciduous, although holly may be included in a new hedge to provide an evergreen element. However, even during the winter, an established deciduous hedge can still make a good physical and visual barrier.

Plants for farm hedges are mostly field grown, rather than container grown and can therefore only be planted between November and April. See pages 7 to 9 for details of these plants

Which species?

Choose plants that are suitable for the site. Typical hedges mixtures are described on page 7. A good starting point is to look at what is growing naturally nearby. The table below gives general guidelines on preferred conditions for common hedging plants and native trees and shrubs.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Soil Preferences				Tolerances		
		Sandy	Clay	Loam	Chalky	Wet	Exposed	Shade
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>		●	●	●	●	●	
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	●		●	●		●	●
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>				●	●		●
Buckthorn, Alder	<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>	●	●			●		●
Cherry, Wild	<i>Prunus avium</i>		●	●		●		
Crab Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>		●	●	●			
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	●	●	●	●			
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>		●	●	●		●	
Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>		●			●		
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	●	●	●	●		●	
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>		●	●			●	
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>		●	●				●
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>		●	●				●
Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>		●	●		●	●	
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	●			●		●	
Rose, Dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>		●	●	●		●	
Rose, Field	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>		●	●	●			
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	●					●	
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>		●	●				●
Wayfaring Tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>				●			
Wild Service Tree	<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>		●	●				

Farm Hedges and Woodlands (continued)

How many?

New mixed hedges are usually planted at between 4 and 8 plants per metre but most often 5 plants per metre in 2 rows. See the sketch below.

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-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X---
X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X
    
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Double row – typically 30cm (12") between the rows with plants spaced at 40cm (16") along each row, requiring 5 plants per metre

New deciduous woodland planting will typically be at spacings of between 1.5m x 1.5m (4500 per Ha) and 2.5m x 2.5m (1600 per Ha).

Which size?

This will depend on a number of factors including site conditions, method of protection and cost. Smaller plants are generally quicker to get established on exposed or difficult sites. The cost of protection against rabbits and deer can be greater than the cost of the plant and is often therefore the determining factor.

Tree guards

Smaller plants are vulnerable to damage by rabbits, deer and farm livestock and will usually require some form of protection. The ideal is to exclude the animals by appropriate fencing but where this is not feasible plants can be protected individually using a suitable guard. There are many different types available and we hold a wide range in stock at all times. The most commonly used methods are shown below:

	Rabbit proof fence	Tree shelter 60cm with stake	Tree shelter 1.2m with stake	Tree shelter 1.5m with stake	Shrub shelter 60cm with stake	Net-type guard	45cm spiral guard with cane	60cm spiral guard with cane
Hedging plants 40-60cm	◆						▼	
Hedging plants 60-125cm	◆						▼	▼
Shrubs and multi-stem plants	▼				◆	▼		
Beech up to 60cm	▼					◆	▼	
Broadleaves for Woodlands 40-60cm	▼	◆	▼	▼			▼	
Broadleaves 60-80cm	▼	▼	◆	▼			▼	▼
Whips 80+cm	▼						▼	◆
Christmas Trees	◆							
Conifers 40-60cm	▼				▼	▼		
Fallow Deer protection				▼		▼		
Roe Deer protection			▼	▼		▼		

◆ = preferred ▼ = satisfactory

Garden Hedges

While a mixed farm hedge may be suitable for the rural garden, a neater hedge is often preferred for the more formal garden. For easier maintenance these hedges are usually formed with either a single species (e.g. Box) or mixed species with similar growth rates (e.g. green and purple Beech). Hedges may be evergreen or deciduous but remember Beech and Hornbeam, although deciduous, do hold on to some leaf through the winter.

General characteristics of the most common hedge types are set out below. Please note that the number of plants required per metre for a new hedge will be determined in part by the size of plants. For bigger plants these quantities can be reduced.

Most of these plants are available in a range of different sizes and on difficult or exposed sites it may be safer to start with a smaller plant than a larger one. Larger plants require more care and maintenance until established and, particularly on exposed sites, are likely to require staking or support.

Where rabbits or deer may be a problem see under Farm Hedges for methods of protection.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Approx plants per m	Growth rate	Low Hedge	Security	Formal hedge	Coastal area	Cold exposed areas
DECIDUOUS (pages 7 to 9)								
Beech, Green	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	5	M			●		
Beech, Purple	<i>Fagus sylvatica purpurea</i>	5	M			●		
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	5	F		●		●	●
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	5	M			●		●
Mixed Farm Hedge		5	F		●			
Privet	<i>Ligustrum</i>	5	F				●	●
Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	5	M	●				
EVERGREEN (pages 28 to 31)								
Bay Laurel	<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	2	M			●	●	
Berberis	<i>Berberis</i>	3	M		●			
Box	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	6	S	●		●		
Box, edging	<i>Buxus suffruticosa</i>	8	S	●		●		
Euonymus	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>	3	M	●		●	●	●
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	3	S	●	●			●
Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	3	F					●
Oleander	<i>Elaeagnus</i>	3	M				●	●
Photinea	<i>Photinea Red Robin</i>	3	F					
Portugal Laurel	<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	2	M				●	●
Pyracantha	<i>Pyracantha</i>	3	M		●			
Laurustinus	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	2	M					●
CONIFERS (pages 32 to 33)								
Goldcrest	<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i> Goldcrest	2	M			●		
Leylandii, golden	<i>Cupressus Castlewellan</i>	1	F		●	●	●	●
Leylandii, green	<i>Cupressus x leylandii</i>	1	F		●	●	●	●
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	3	M			●		●
Western Red Cedar	<i>Thuja</i>	2	M			●		

N.B. Yew and Box are not suitable for planting in poorly drained soil or positions which may get waterlogged

Taller Screening

We receive many requests for tall screening, typically to provide privacy from intrusive developments. While many of the garden hedges described above would be suitable given enough time for the hedge to grow, where a more immediate solution is required then it will be necessary to use plants that have already reached a good size and will transplant reliably at that size.

It is important that site factors are properly taken into account. On difficult or exposed sites it may be safer to start with a smaller plant than a larger one. Larger plants require more care and maintenance until established and are likely to require staking or support.

The following plants, mostly evergreen, will be the most likely candidates. Please ask for advice before making your final decision.

Common Name	Botanical Name		Page
Leylandii, green or gold	Cupressus x leylandii / Castlewellan	A very useful plant in the right situation given enough space. Fast growing and very tough, available in sizes up to 5m. Withstands regular trimming well but if left untrimmed will grow to a large size. If concerned about appearance consider planting more attractive trees in front. Plant at 60 to 150cm apart depending on size.	32 -33
Goldcrest	Cupressus macrocarpa Goldcrest	An attractive conifer with golden yellow foliage. Does not withstand hard clipping. Available in sizes up to 3 to 4m. Plant at 60 to 120cm apart.	32 -33
Laurel	Prunus laurocerasus	A useful shrub for many situations, developing a broad shape. Available in sizes up to about 2m. Fairly fast growth rates and can be trimmed. Plant at 40 to 100cm apart according to size.	28-31
Bay	Laurus nobilis	Another very tough plant with dark green foliage. Available in sizes up to 3 to 4m. Plant at about 40 to 120cm apart.	28-31
Bamboo	Bambusa	A useful and tough plant where space is available. Roots are vigorous but if necessary these can be contained with a root barrier. Needs plenty of moisture. Available in sizes up to about 4 metres. Plant at about 100cm apart.	28-31
Western Red Cedar	Thuja	A slower growing dense conifer that makes a neat hedge. Available at around 2m height and occasionally up to 3.5m height. Clips well. Plant at about 60 to 100cm apart.	32-33
Photinea Red Robin	Photinea Red Robin	A useful and very attractive shrub but not suitable for exposed situations. Available in sizes up to 2.5m. Plant at 60 to 120cm apart.	28-31
Pleached Trees		We have various trees available in pleached form. This is where the crown of the tree is trained onto a flat framework and when planted in a row the effect is like a hedge on stilts!	27
Mixed deciduous trees		Where space is available a mixture of different deciduous trees can create a very effective and attractive screen. There are many trees available at about 5m high.	19-27

Plants in the table above are all suitable for planting as a tall hedge, so that they form a continuous screen. Where an individual plant or a small group of plants is required, for example to hide a window on an adjacent property, then in addition to those listed above, the following may also be suitable.

Common Name	Botanical Name		Page
Evergreen Oak	Quercus ilex	Available as a tree with a clear stem of about 2m and a head above that. Overall heights up to 4.5m. A tough tree growing well in most situations but a slow grower. Will grow to large size.	19-27
Photinea Red Robin	Photinea Red Robin	Available as a tree with a clear stem of about 2m and a head above that. Overall heights up to 4.5m. Best kept trimmed. but can be left to grow to a small size tree.	19-27
Evergreen Magnolia	Magnolia gallisoniensis	A magnificent evergreen conical shaped tree with beautiful white flowers. Available in sizes up to about 4m. Grows to a medium sized tree.	28-31
Pine (various)	Pinus	Will grow in many exposed situations to a large size and is not suitable for clipping. Available in sizes up to 3.5m height.	32 -33
Cedar (various)	Cedrus	Suitable for planting singly or in small groups. Will grow to a large tree. Available in sizes up to 3m.	32 -33