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# Ornamental Hedges For Idaho

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A hedge will do much for your home grounds if used correctly and kept neat and attractive. Since hedges require care, they are generally omitted from low maintenance landscapes.

Hedges are trees or shrubs growing close together in a line with their branches touching or interlacing so that individual plants are not distinct. It may be called a foliage wall. Hedges may be planted in straight lines, curved, or angled according to the dictates of the site. They may be clipped or allowed to grow naturally.

Hedge plants may be deciduous or evergreen. Climbing vines are sometimes trained on fences or trellises to act as substitutes for hedges.

Hedges are either formal (clipped) or informal (unclipped). Unclipped hedges are really just shrub borders.

Texture, important in hedging, is the degree of coarseness of twigs and foliage. A coarse-textured (large-leaved) hedge like a villosa lilac, for example, would be harsh in a small area because it would tend to decrease the space. A fine-textured shrub like boxwood or Peking cotoneaster would be more appropriate for low hedging or edging than a coarse texture like lilac.

The coarse texture of catalpa and others like it would be fitting for a very high hedge.

You should use an intermediate texture such as spirea or privet in an intermediate-sized hedge.

Use a medium texture such as privet rather than too fine a texture for a rose garden. A neatly-trimmed, fine-textured hedge can be carefully aligned and decorated with niches for statues.

## Hedges may be used to:

- Screen unsightly areas
- Hide unsightly objects (such as fuel tanks)
- Insure privacy
- Divide areas
- Serve as a living wall between adjacent properties
- Exclude animals
- Confine traffic to definite walks

- Prevent wearing of paths across lawns and flower borders
- Shelter small areas from wind, sleet, and snow
- Enclose gardens and protect them from drying effects of strong winds
- Provide a background planting for low-growing shrubs or flower beds
- Serve as things of beauty when combined with other landscape plantings

## Planting

Purchase young disease-free, vigorous plants that are uniform in age, size, form, and root development.

Generally one-year-old plants are best for vigorous growing species. For others use two-year-old plants. Three- to four-year-old plants are best in a coniferous hedge. Use balled and burlapped older conifers for quick results.

Plant in early spring before growth starts for best results. Fall planting is practiced in the Boise valley and areas of similar climate.

**Remember, do not plant too close to a wall, driveway, or walk.** As the hedge plant grows taller, it also grows in width. Spacing varies with the species. Unclipped hedges require more space for spreading than clipped hedges of the same species.

The average clipped hedge 3 to 5 feet high is 3 to 4 feet wide. Therefore, you should set plants 18 to 24 inches from the walk, property boundary, driveway, or wall.

Very dwarf plants used as edging require 6 inches of in-row spacing. Space medium-height hedge plants a foot apart. You should space small trees and large shrubs for high, clipped hedges 18 to 30 inches apart.

Generally, you should space shrubs for unclipped hedges 2 to 3 times farther apart than for clipped hedges. Space tall screens of large trees such as spruce and pine to be grown with little trimming 6 to 8 feet apart.

If you use vines for a hedge effect, place the slow growers 4 feet apart and the rapid growers 6 to 8 feet apart.

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Dig a trench the length of your intended hedge keeping the top soil separate from the subsoil. Some people get a straight hedge by making one side of the trench straight then setting plants against this straight side. Others use a cord down the center of the trench.

Set plants 2 inches deeper than they were in the nursery to bring the bases of the plants underground.

Spread the roots carefully with the hands and work the soil (use the topsoil first) well around the roots until the trench is three-fourths full. Firm soil with hands to eliminate air pockets. When you have set all the plants in this manner, fill the trench with water.

After letting the water soak in, straighten any plants that have settled out of line and fill the trench with the remaining soil. You may plant widely-spaced trees, shrubs, and vines in individual holes instead of a trench.

Don't put fresh manure into the trench or holes at planting time because it will burn the roots. Allow the hedge to get established before fertilizing. Apply any needed fertilizer to the surface of the soil after the hedge is planted so it may be carried to the roots by rain or irrigation.

## Pruning

When you trim a hedge, keep the low branches in good health so that the base will always be dense and green and will fill out to full width.

## Deciduous Hedges

As soon as the plants are planted, cut them almost to the ground so that many side branches develop close to the ground. This may be the only pruning for plants grown as an unclipped hedge, except for corrective pruning later. Don't cut out healthy low branches, thereby avoiding the creation of leggy plants.

In late winter, cut back to within a few inches of the ground the shoots of the clipped hedge. This pruning forces secondary branches close to the ground.

Pinching or clipping the tender tips occasionally during the following growing season will cause side branching and make the top dense.

In about 3 years the planting will look like a hedge. Then you should clip it to a definite form. Shear your hedge as often as necessary. You will have to often shear edgings, hedges in formal gardens, and fast growing hedges to keep them looking neat and trim. Constant shearing at the top and sides results in neat compact hedges. If you wait until the shoots are too long, the cut stubs become evident. You may find it helpful to stretch cord or set up guide stakes to help you trim uniformly.

When first starting to trim hedges, cut the sides first and then trim the top. You will find the softer the growth, the easier shearing in even lines is. Deciduous hedges that have become too large can be rejuvenated by cutting the hedge back to within 6 inches of the ground in early spring before the leaf buds have opened.

You may use either the standard hedge shear or electrically operated clippers for trimming formal hedges.

## Evergreen Hedges

Unless the coniferous plants have low branches when planted in the hedgerow, the hedge will never be tight. If you wish a low or medium height hedge, cut the plant back to promote bushiness. No further pruning is necessary for informal coniferous hedges except for removal of dead branches, broken branches, or shoots grown out of bounds.

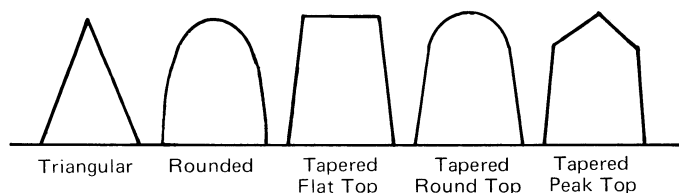
You can shape formal hedges of conifers in the same manner as deciduous hedges. Shaping arbovitae, juniper, and similar plants is done by shearing or pinching the growth during the growing season.

You can clip back the new shoots or "candles" of pines, spruce, and other evergreens before the new needles develop. Avoid pruning conifers back beyond the green foliage, otherwise those branches are likely to die. Because of this, shaping the hedge and controlling its size as the plants grow are important.

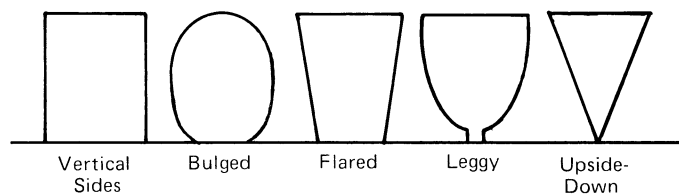
## Shearing to Definite Shapes

You can prune a hedge to almost any shape you desire, provided that the bottom is the widest part of the hedge.

### GOOD HEDGE FORMS



### POOR HEDGE FORMS



Some forms to which hedges may be pruned

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## Hedge Plants For Idaho

You can trim hedges to triangular, rounded, or tapered shapes. The tops may be flat, round, or peaked.

The triangular-type appears best since it has the least surface to be sheared and is especially desirable in a heavy snowfall area. Snow will pile up on broad flat-topped hedges and the weight may deform the hedge and break the branches. Generally landscape designs call for hedges having the massive effect of walls, braced at the top as well as at the bottom. Such hedges can have a slight slope on what appears to be the vertical side without detracting from their appearance. A blocky hedge 5 feet high may have a top 6 inches to a foot narrower than the bottom and not be readily distinguishable from a hedge with vertical sides.

This taper guarantees that the lower branches will get enough sunlight to insure a dense growth of foliage to the ground. If the top of the hedge is wider than the bottom, the hedge will soon lose its lower branches and become open or "leggy" at the base.

### Topiary

Some people shear hedges into forms representing birds, automobiles, animals, and other objects. This is not considered good landscaping for small home grounds. Since skill and patience are required for this, it is not recommended for the non-professional.

Plants are limited by soil and climate. Most of the hedge plants listed in this publication will grow in all kinds of soils. Extremely acid or alkaline soils require special plants that will be discussed in another publication.

A convenient way to list the hedge plants is by adaptation to key cities. Select the plants listed for a community which is closest to your locality. Hedge plants listed in one zone may grow on favorable sites in numbered zones where they have some protection.

Because weather conditions are not the same every year and extreme cold weather may occur periodically in any of the zones, a foolproof classification of plants according to hardiness is impossible to provide. Hardiness also varies with type of care provided.

### Summary

Privet and Peking Cotoneaster are good hedge plants for trimmed hedges in zones 1 and 2. Box is good in zone 1 if planted in partial shade but will suffer winter injury during severe winters.

Peking Cotoneaster is the best choice for a clipped hedge in zones 3, 4, and 5.

Idaho cities and towns arranged in zones based on their adaptability to growing the hedge plants include:

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
Boise	Bliss	Aberdeen	Arco	Cascade
Caldwell	Bonnars Ferry	American Falls	Ashton	Donnelly
Eagle	Buhl	Blackfoot	Bancroft	Driggs
Emmett	Burley	Cottonwood	Challis	Irwin
Fruitland	Cambridge	Firth	Dubois	McCall
Garden City	Council	Grangeville	Fairfield	New Meadows
Glenns Ferry	Coeur d'Alene	Idaho Falls	Georgetown	Paris
Grand View	Gooding	Iona	Grace	Soda Springs
Hagerman	Hope	Kellogg	Hailey	Tetonia
Hammett	Jerome	Malad City	Hill City	Victor
Homedale	Kamiah	Moscow	Idaho City	
Juliaetta	Kimberly	Nez Perce	Mackay	
Lewiston	Kooskia	Pocatello	Montpelier	
Marsing	Mesa	Preston	Mullan	
Meridian	Oakley	Rexburg	Paris	
Mountain Home	Rupert	Richfield	Soldier	
Nampa	Shoshone	Rigby	Wallace	
Notus	Twin Falls	Ririe		
Orofino	Wendell	Rockland		
Parma		St. Anthony		
Payette		St. Maries		
Riggins		Salmon		
Star		Sandpoint		
Weiser		Shelley		
Wilder		Sugar City		
		Teton		

Plant Variety (Species)	Height (Feet)	Hardiness <sup>1</sup>	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
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**Some Deciduous Hedge Plants for Idaho**

**For Low Hedges or Edging (1 to 4 feet)**

Periwinkle (Vinca Minor)	1	H	X	X	X		
Dwarf Viburnum (Viburnum opulus nanum)	2	H	X	X			
English Box (Buxus sempervirens suffruticosa)	1-3	T	X				
Canby Pachistima (Pachistima canbyi)	1	VH	X	X	X		
Lodense Privet (Ligustrum vulgare var. Lodense)	1-3	H	X	X			
Chenault Coraberry (Symphoricarpos chenaulti)	4	VH	X	X	X	X	
February Daphne (Daphne mezereum)	1	H	X	X	X		
Rose Daphne (Daphne cneorum)	1	H	X	X			
Shrubby Cinquefoil (Potentilla fruticosa)	3	VH	X	X	X	X	
Crimson Pygmy Barbary (Berberis thunbergii nana)	1-2	T	X	X			
Anthony Waterer Spirea (Spiraea bumalda)	2	H	X	X	X		
Peking Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster acutifolia)	1-3	VH	X	X	X	X	

**For Medium Hedge (3 to 8 feet)**

Amur Privet (Ligustrum amurense)	6-8	H	X	X	X		
Common Privet (Ligustrum vulgare)	6-8	H	X	X	X		
Regel Privet (Ligustrum obtusifolium regelianum)	6-8	T	X	X			
California Privet (Ligustrum ovalifolium)	6-8	T	X				
Peking Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster acutifolia)	6-8	VH	X	X	X	X	
Multiflora Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster multiflora)	6-8	VH	X	X	X	X	
Common Box (Buxus sempervirens)	6-8	T	X	X	X		
Japanese Barbary (Berberis thunbergii)	4-6	VH	X	X	X	X	
Hedge Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster lucida)	6-8	H	X	X			
Red Twiggged Dogwood (Cornus stolonifera)	6-8	H	X	X	X	X	
Yellow Twiggged Dogwood (Cornus stolonifera flaviramea)	4-6	H	X	X	X	X	
Winged Euonymus (Euonymus alatus)	6-8	H	X	X	X		
Morrow Honeysuckle (Lonicera morrowii)	6-8	VH	X	X	X	X	
Tatarian Honeysuckle (Lonicera tatarica)	10	VH	X	X	X	X	
Siberian Pea (Caragana arborescens)	8	VH	X	X	X	X	
Common Ninebark (Physocarpus opulifolius)	8	VH	X	X	X		
Common Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica)	12	VH	X	X	X	X	
Dahurian Buckthorn (Rhamnus davurica)	15	VH	X	X	X		
Glossy Buckthorn (Rhamnus frangula)	12	VH	X	X	X	X	
Chinese Lilac (Syringa chinensis)	8	VH	X	X	X	X	

Plant Variety (Species)	Height (Feet)	Hardiness <sup>1</sup>	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
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Persian Lilac (Syringa persica)	6	VH	X	X	X	X	X
Villosa Lilac (Syringa villosa)	10	VH	X	X	X	X	
Common Lilac (Syringa vulgaris)	10	VH	X	X	X	X	X
Van Houtte Spirea (Spiraea vanhouttei)	6	VH	X	X	X	X	
Pyracantha (Pyracantha coccinea latandi)	15	T	X	X	X	X	
American Holly (Ilex opaca)	5	H	X	X	X		
Amur Maple (Acer ginnala)	4-15	H	X	X	X		

**Trees For Tall Hedges or Screen Plantings**

Smoke Bush or Tree (Rhus cotinus cogglygria)	15	H <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X		
Osage Orange (Maclura pomifera)	20	H	X	X			
Russian Mulberry (Morus alba)	30	VH	X	X	X	X	
Russian Olive (Elaeagnus angustifolia)	25	VH	X	X	X	X	X
Mahaleb Cherry (Prunus mahaleb)	20	VH	X	X	X		
Sweet Gum (Liquidambar styraciflua)	60	H	X				
American Hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana)	20	H	X				
Washington Hawthorn and other hawthorns (Crataegus phaenopyrum)	30	VH	X	X	X		
European Beech (Fagus sylvatica)	20	H	X	X	X		
Lombardy Poplar (Populus nigra var. italica)	50	H	X	X	X		
Bolleana Poplar (Populus boileana pyramidalis)	60	H	X	X	X	X	
Siberian Elm (Ulmus pumila)	60	H	X	X	X	X	X

**Some Coniferous Hedge Plants For Idaho**

Oriental Arborvitae (Thuja orientalis)	4-6	H	X	X			
American Arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis)	4-6	VH	X	X	X	X	
Japanese Yew (Taxus cuspidata)	4-6	H	X	X	X		
* Chinese Juniper (Juniperus chinensis)	4-6-15	H	X	X	X		
* Spiny Greek Juniper <sup>3</sup> (Juniperus excelsa)	4-6-15	H	X				
* Rocky Mountain Juniper <sup>3</sup> (Juniperus scopulorum)	4-6-15	VH	X	X	X	X	
* Eastern Red-cedar <sup>2</sup> (Juniperus virginiana)	4-6-15	VH	X	X	X	X	X
Mugo Pine (Pinus mugo mughus)	4-10	VH	X	X	X	X	X
* Scotch Pine (Pinus sylvestris)	4-6-50	VH	X	X	X	X	X
* Norway Spruce (Picea abies)	4-6-60	VH	X	X	X	X	X
* Engelmann Spruce (Picea engelmannii)	4-6-70	VH	X	X	X	X	X
* Colorado Blue Spruce (Picea pungens)	4-6-70	VH	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>1</sup> These trees can be used for unclipped tree rows that may be called hedges.  
<sup>2</sup> The designation VH means very hardy, H means hardy, and T means tender.  
<sup>3</sup> For unclipped hedge only.  
<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the spreading forms of junipers are sheared into rectangular and square forms eliminating their points. Some favor keeping the points. Square, rectangular, and oval shapes are preferred to the tub shapes so often seen. The spreading forms include Savin Juniper, Tamarscifolia Juniper, and Pfitzer Juniper.