

## Choosing a Hedge

When thinking about planting a hedge you should first consider exactly what you are looking to accomplish. How tall do you want the hedge? Do you want something that will flower? Are you looking for privacy or do you want to create a boarder? After you have answered these questions you then have a few options for trees and shrubs from which to choose. Cedar, hemlock, yew, PJM Rhododendrons, holly, roses, Peking cotoneaster, and boxwood are some of the plants that can be used.

The most common hedges are cedar, either Brandon or Smaragd. Cedars are evergreen and will fill in very nicely if trimmed and maintained properly. There is very little difference between Brandons and Smaragds. Brandons will grow slightly faster and are a bit bushier. Smaragds are more cone shaped and will always grow to a point, where as Brandons have wider tops. Both will grow up to 22ft tall if never trimmed. Cedar hedges are the most cost effective hedges for the size.

Hemlock hedges are another excellent option. They have the ability to grow up to 50ft tall, but will look much nicer if trimmed regularly as they also can get too wide. Hemlocks are fast growing and an attractive hedge once it is filled in. They do have a tendency to look somewhat scraggly when they are young. Hemlocks are in the moderate price range.

Yews make a nice hedge especially if you are planning to put it in a shady location. They are slow to moderate growing with nice red berries. They will get up to 12ft tall. Yews, however, are a more costly hedge as they are double that of cedars.

If you are looking for something that is around the 5ft size then PJM rhododendrons or holly are good choices. PJM rhododendrons are evergreen and they flower in the spring. They're slow growing and can be tedious to prune. They do have a bit of fall color as they do lose some leaves. (Not enough to make a big difference.) Holly makes a very unique hedge. They are evergreen with red berries. Make sure that you purchase both male and female plants if you want the berries. Both PJM rhododendrons and holly are an expensive hedge to install, but either one would make a nice statement.

Roses are a good option for a hedge if you are looking for something flowering. A rose hedge is very high maintenance and moderately costly, but if properly pruned and taken care of make a very attractive hedge. Roses range in size from 3ft and up. They are not evergreen so using them for privacy is not a good choice, but for borders within the yard roses are great.

The Peking cotoneaster is a nice hedge if you want a formal look. They have nice fall color and get black berries. Once they are mature they are easy to prune and keep looking nice. Peking cotoneaster will grow between 3-4ft tall and are one of the more inexpensive hedge types.

The shortest hedge variety is the boxwood. They are perfect for lining pathways, driveways, or gardens as they only get 1-2ft tall. Boxwoods are very slow growing so you will need to be patient with these guys. They're evergreen and have nice color and shape. However, they are expensive for their size.

As you can see there are many options when considering putting in a hedge. It all depends on what exactly you are looking for and the feel you want to create.