

Hedges for Every Garden

Hedges are very popular in landscape design. They can create an attractive barrier or edge, highlight garden and path shapes, lead the eye or the feet through a garden and provide brushstrokes of colour. They suit gardens of many different styles.

Growing a hedge can involve repeated planting of one species. A hedge can also be formed by a continuous planting of a variety of species with similar needs and form. Such a hedge is easier to repair, since a perfect match to the other plants is not required. Whichever style of hedge you are planning, plant all at once, since later additions will have a lot of competition to cope with and may not thrive.

The height, width and style of a hedge are determined by the part the hedge will play in your total garden plan. Is it to block out a view, to create a frame, to define an area, to outline a bed, to line a walkway? The function established, look to the realities of your climate and site to help you select a plant that will thrive.

Next, prepare the site. You need to make sure that all the planting sites along your hedge will provide similar good conditions for the whole hedge to grow apace. Dig the soil along the line to open it up, checking that there are no major roots from other plants, drains or pipes in the way. Mix compost (and rotted manure if not for native plants) into the soil, lay down a watering system and mulch along the length of the hedge.

Plant your hedge closer together than the width indicated on the label and water in with a seaweed solution. The secret to a full and healthy looking hedge is to tip prune it along the top and down the sides when it goes in, and quite often after that. The hedge should be a little wider at the bottom than the top, so that light can reach lower branches and promote leaf growth. Feed the hedge twice a year.

Cosset any plants that are looking unhappy. Ask yourself 'Why is this one looking a bit yellow?' While the health of the soil is important, other factors such as the amount of sun or shade, exposure to wind, or whether the position of a plant makes it more liable to damage by dogs or children, can the growth of individual plants. One of our curved hedges lost a plant – the one directly in line with the gate. At that spot there is a gap in the windbreak, so more wind and more western sun. A shade cloth protector on the west side and some extra water might have saved it.

Plants suitable for hedging grow many branches at the bottom of the plant and are amenable to being clipped and pruned. Look at the hedges in your area. Natives, such as callistemon, lilly pilly, correa, salt bush and westringea make excellent hedges and provide



The front plant has been pruned, the one behind has not.

good small bird habitat. Wormwood, lavenders, diosma, rosemary, roses, photinia, box, pomegranate, abelia and conifers are exotics which create wonderful hedges. Select the plant that meets all your needs and that you feel will add just the right touch to your garden.

Happy gardening, Christine Windle, Garden Gate of Inverleigh Nursery, 0403 267 286
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**Garden Design and Planning Workshop – Saturday April 22nd, 2017, 2 – 4.30 pm, \$30,
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Garden design principles, garden visit to see design ideas in action, step by step guide for how to design and plan part, or all, of your own garden. Suitable for new and more established gardens.

Phone to book - 0403 267 286 Garden Gate of Inverleigh Nursery, Corner of Inverleigh – Winchelsea Rd & McCallum Rd, Inverleigh, 3321.