

The Best Plants to Make a Hedge

Hedges are comprised of several shrubs planted in a row. Hedges are used to create barriers between property, to muffle noise, to control wind and to shape a space. Formal hedges are pruned as if the row of shrubs were one plant. Informal hedges are pruned to retain the shape of each individual shrub. The best plants to create hedges include the barberry, the yew and holly.

Barberry

There are more than 450 species of barberry. The barberry can be used as a formal or informal hedge. The shrub is easily transplanted, according to “All About Shrubs and Hedges” by Penelope O'Sullivan. Plant in well-drained soil and in full sun for the most fruit and fall color. The range of leaf color among cultivars includes glossy green, red, yellow and variegated. The shrub has thorns, which can collect trash. The color of flowers ranges from gold to orange to red, depending on the cultivar.

Yew

The yew tolerates urban pollution, severe pruning and moist soils. Classified as an evergreen, there are several different cultivars of yew available, including the English yew and Japanese yew and their hybrids. Regular pruning is recommended to keep the yew to its proper size, according to “Trees & Shrubs for Dummies” by Ann Whitman and the editors of the National Gardening Association, because the shrubs will grow into trees if left unattended.

Holly

There are more than 400 different species of holly, including the Chinese holly, Japanese holly, Blue holly and the inkberry. Hollies are found in every part of the country and some types are classified as evergreens deciduous shrubs, some are classified as trees and others as vines. Hollies generally prefer acidic soils. The shrub does not require extensive pruning, according to “Taylor's Guide: Shrubs” by Kathleen Fisher. Known for its berries, the holly needs both male and female plants to bear fruit.

“All About Shrubs and Hedges”; Penelope O'Sullivan; 1999

“Trees & Shrubs for Dummies”; Ann Whitman and Editors of the National Gardening Association; 2000

“Taylor's Guide: Shrubs”; Kathleen Fisher; 2000