

CEDAR HEDGES

A well-maintained hedge is attractive, offering privacy and forming a backdrop for the landscape.

PLANTING

The best time to plant is in the spring. A mature cedar hedge can be 1–2 meters (3'-6') wide, so allow sufficient space from the property line for the hedge to mature. Most soils need little preparation before planting because they are sufficiently fertile to support growth of cedar. If the soil is clay or very sandy, you can amend it with compost, well-rotted manure or peat moss. Bone meal is normally sprinkled into the bottom of the trench before planting.

- If you are planting many cedars, it is easier to prepare a wide, shallow trench than to dig individual holes. The trench should be 0.5 to 1 meter (1 1/2'-3') wide, and 15–30cm (6-12") deep, depending on the size of the cedars.
- Place plants 0.5 to 1 meter (1 1/2' – 3') apart for 1 – 1.3 m (3 – 4') tall cedars. (Note: these small plants are a good choice for establishing a hedge as they are easy to prune and grow quickly).
- Water immediately after planting, then water daily for the first 2 weeks. Apply enough water to thoroughly wet the root zone. For the remainder of the establishment year, apply 2.5 cm of water per week. In the second season ensure that the hedge is receiving 2.5 cm every 2 weeks.
- Prune the leader (5-10 cm off the top) after planting or in early spring to encourage a thick, dense hedge. Keep the hedge low for the first few years.

MAINTENANCE

Fertilizing: Apply an organic mulch of compost or well composted manure, or mix a general-purpose fertilizer (i.e. 7-7-7) into the top 2.5 – 5 cm of soil in late May.

Mulching: Use a 5.0 – 7.5 cm layer of shredded bark as mulch to reduce weeds and to preserve soil moisture.

Watering: An established cedar hedge (more than 3 years old) does not require watering under normal conditions. If it has not rained for over a month it will need watering. Cedars, like all other evergreens, continue to photosynthesize and transpire during the winter. These processes require water so beginning in September, water 2.5 cm (1”) a week until the soil freezes.

Pruning: Prune at least once per year. Shear the outside hedge (2-3 cm) in early July when it is semi-dormant. At this time it will not re-grow quickly.

Shearing twice a year creates a thick, dense hedge. Prune from late May to early June and then again in early to mid August.

Prune cedars so that they are slightly wider at the bottom so that the sides receive sufficient light to grow. A rounded top will reduce snow load damage.

Note: If you cut the branch back beyond the foliage it is unlikely it will regenerate new leaves.

Cedar leaf miners are tiny moths whose caterpillars tunnel between the surfaces of cedar foliage. Their feeding causes the tips of cedar foliage to turn brown. This damage is in a random pattern over the plants (winter damage typically

follows a regular pattern, on the windward side of the plant or above the snowline for example). If you hold damaged foliage up to a strong light, the feeding tunnels will appear transparent. The caterpillars remain in cedar foliage until early June in the Ottawa area so if Cedar Leaf Miner is a problem, prune your hedge prior to this. Gather and destroy infested branch tips.

Winter Protection: If there is danger of your hedge being affected by salt spray from a road, erect a burlap fence 7.5 – 10 cm from the hedge, between the hedge and roadway. The burlap will stop the salt from damaging the hedge. Flush the area with plenty of water in the early spring to remove the salt from the soil.

Pyramidal Cedars

There are a few ways to preserve the shape of an ornamental pyramidal cedar when putting on winter protection:

- Wrap with twine
- Wrap with netting fastened with clothes-pins
- Wrap with burlap, leaving the top open to allow warmed air out during sunny winter days.