

Living SCREENS

Whether you are in a new development, or an established neighborhood, everybody needs something to look at other than blank house walls, wide spans of fence, and apartment buildings. The answer is a 'screening strategy. Many different plants can make an effective screen.



LILACS FOR SCREENING

Proper screens borrow from the planting strategies to minimize wind and noise on farms and busy city streets respectively. There are many plants that can serve this purpose. For instance, Preston lilacs that are non-suckering can be planted very close to fences and trained to become mini-trees creating a beautiful 'lollipop' form – especially when in full bloom. This also eliminates any risk of a grafted form failing during an especially harsh winter. They can reach heights between 5 and 12 feet tall. French lilacs, such as Charles Joly work for a larger hedge. Charles Joly Lilac will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet.



TREES FOR SCREENING

The Amur Maple is a smaller maturing tree that turns a brilliant orange red in the fall. It can be grown in shrub form and shaped or grown as a smaller tree.

Parkland Pillar Birch is a dense, columnar tree with white bark and green foliage that turns golden in the fall. It matures at 30' high and 6' wide, making it a perfect taller screen.

A few other narrow trees that work well are Pyramidal Mountain Ash and Pink, Purple, or Emerald Spire Rosybloom. Of course Pyramidal Cedars and Upright Junipers are another very popular choice.



SHRUBS FOR SCREENING

Cotoneaster can be grown upright and natural or be pruned as a hedge. If you would like flowers and berries, then the elder offers some nice forms that can be understory medium shrubs that will punctuate your beautifully well-built privacy fence.

There are many other shrubs that can create a taller privacy hedge including dogwoods, nannyberry, cranberry, caragana and ninebarks.

Wisteria Vine, Scarlet Trumpet Honeysuckle, Virginia Creeper or Grapes can also be grown up a shed or old fence that needs covering.



PERENNIALS & ANNUALS FOR SCREENING

Even large perennials and annuals that reach up to four feet tall (or more) can offer some privacy if you are trying to hide an area on a site-line that is not especially attractive (shed, chain link fence, pool filters, etc.). Some perennials that give height include fleecflower, goatsbeard, ligularia, grasses, joe pye weed, sunflowers, indigo, delphiniums, and hollyhocks.

Fast growing annuals vines such as Cup & Saucer Vine can grow 20 feet high in one season!

