

Arboretum Review



ARBORETUM

No. 8—Revised 1980

MERVIN C. EISEL*

Formal hedge plants



Wares arborvitae (see description under "*Thuja occidentalis* 'Wareana'").

Trees and shrubs occasionally are planted together in rows to form a living wall or hedge. In an informal hedge, plants are allowed to grow naturally without pruning. In a formal hedge, the plants are pruned.

Maintaining a formal hedge requires regular pruning. The hedge should be wider at the base than at the top to allow light to reach the lower leaves. It may be necessary to shear the plants several times each season to maintain the proper height and density.

We have started a collection of formal hedges in the arboretum. When completed, this hedge area will contain 90 species and cultivars. Sixty-six are planted now. The following show the greatest promise.

Acer ginnala (amur maple)—This very hardy shrub maple, which tolerates some shade, makes an excellent clipped hedge. Space plants about 2 feet apart. The brilliant orange to red fall color is especially striking. A compact form and a form with red fruits also are being propagated and are available in the Twin Cities area.

Aronia melanocarpa (black chokeberry)—This is the best of the chokeberries for hedge purposes. Its natural growth habit is a dense mound; therefore, little pruning is required. The white flowers in early June are quite showy. The black fruits in September will attract birds. The glossy dark green foliage in summer is followed by a brilliant display of red autumn coloration. Space plants about 2 feet apart. Suckering may be a problem if space is limited.

Berberis koreana (Korean barberry)—This is a tall and very hardy species of barberry. Without pruning it would reach a height of 6 to 8 feet, but with regular shearing it can be maintained at a height of 4 to 5 feet. Yellow flowers, red fruits, and red autumn foliage are features of this species. Space plants about 18 inches apart.

Buxus microphylla koreana (Korean boxwood)—This is one of the few broadleaved evergreens that will survive our winters. We have been quite successful with this variety in sheltered locations. Individual plants 20 or more years old on favorable sites are still attractive. This hedge can be maintained easily at a height of 12 to 15 inches. Avoid planting in exposed sites or in areas much north of the Twin Cities. Not suitable on alkaline soils. Space plants 1 foot apart.

Caragana arborescens (Siberian peashrub)—This old-time favorite grows into a tall hedge. The yellow flowers are showy in

late May. It is subject to leaf diseases and may defoliate in early fall. This hedge prefers dry, well-drained soil. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Caragana frutex 'Globosa' (globe caragana)—This cultivar of the common Russian peashrub was selected and introduced by the late Frank Skinner of Dropmore, Manitoba. It is very hardy and makes an excellent low hedge that requires little pruning. Space the plants 12 to 15 inches apart. Other caraganas that show promise as dwarf hedges include *C. brevifolia*, *C. aurantiaca*, and *C. pygmaea*.

Chionanthus virginicus (white fringetree)—This close relative of the lilac has a compact growth habit that readily can be maintained at 4 to 5 feet with shearing. The foliage is rather coarse but the white flowers in early June are extremely fragrant and delicate. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Cornus sericea 'Isanti' (Isanti redosier dogwood)—This new cultivar, introduced by the arboretum in 1971, is a very desirable hedge plant. The natural growth habit is compact; little pruning is required. The red twigs in winter contrast nicely with the snow. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Cotoneaster lucida (hedge cotoneaster)—This hedge cotoneaster is often sold under the name of *C. acutifolia* (Peking cotoneaster). The glossy green leaves that turn red in the fall make this an attractive clipped hedge. The only problem is oystershell scale. This insect can be very troublesome if it is not controlled. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Euonymus alatus (winged euonymus)—This is one of our very fine hedge plants when properly pruned. The red autumn color and the winged stems offer seasonal interest. A variety from Korea is dense and especially good for a clipped or informal

*Originally written by Leon C. Snyder, former director of the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and revised by M.C. Eisel.

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

hedge. The cultivar 'Compacta' lacks hardiness in Minnesota. Rabbits and mice can be a problem in the winter. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Forsythia 'Arnold Dwarf'—This forsythia makes a low, compact hedge that is easy to train. It produces few flowers, but the foliage is attractive. Space plants 1 foot apart.

Ligustrum vulgare 'Cheyenne' (Cheyenne privet)—This is the hardiest of the privets. For a dense hedge, the privets are hard to beat. Unfortunately, most of the privets have not proven hardy. Even 'Cheyenne' may sometimes die back some years. It is not recommended for northern areas. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Lonicera korolkowi 'Zabeli' (Zabel's honeysuckle)—This is the best of the tall honeysuckles for hedge purposes. The red flowers and red fruits are attractive. The leaves persist throughout the summer and fall. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Lonicera maximowiczii sachalinensis (sachalin honeysuckle)—The spreading honeysuckle has been overlooked both for hedge plantings and for informal plantings. The foliage is dark green and leathery. Unlike most honeysuckles, the leaves turn a gold-then yellow in the fall. The flowers are purplish-red and quite showy. This plant can be maintained at a 4 to 5 foot height with little pruning. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Lonicera tatarica 'Nana' (dwarf tatarian honeysuckle)—The mature height is about 5 feet. The flowers are pure white and the foliage is clean. Unfortunately, it is not commercially available presently. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Lonicera xylostoides 'Clavey's Dwarf'—This is a dwarf form of a hybrid species resulting from a cross between *L. tatarica* and *L. xylostemum*. It is very compact. With a little pruning, this plant makes a dense grayish-green hedge. Occasionally it is bothered by red spiders.

Lonicera xylostemum 'Emerald Mound'—This is even more compact than Clavey's dwarf. The mature size is about 3 feet and the color is emerald green. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Physocarpus opulifolius 'Nanus' (dwarf ninebark)—This is much better than the species for hedge purposes. It requires regular shearing to remain dense. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Picea glauca (white spruce)—The white spruce is one of the better evergreens for hedge purposes. Space the plants about 3 feet apart and start shearing before the plants reach the desired height. Prune just as the new growth is starting each spring. *P. glauca densata* (Black Hills spruce) is denser than the species and is preferred for hedge purposes.

Pinus banksiana (dwarf)—Our dwarf jack pines have grown from seeds collected from a witches-broom. With very little pruning, this plant is shaping into a beautiful evergreen hedge. Plants are not commercially available.

Potentilla fruticosa 'Jackmani'—This is one of the best of the potentillas for hedge purposes. The dark green foliage and yellow flowers make this plant attractive throughout the season.

About the only pruning required is an annual shearing to remove faded flowers and fruits. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Prunus 'Cistina'—This hybrid cherry-plum was developed in South Dakota. The purplish-red leaves are attractive all season. This plant requires regular pruning to keep it dense. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Prunus tomentosa (Nanking cherry)—Seedling plants of the Nanking cherry grow quickly into an attractive hedge that requires little or no pruning. The pink to white flowers in early May are followed by bright red fruits in early July. The fruit makes excellent jelly if you can pick it before the birds eat it. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Rhamnus frangula 'Tall Hedge'—The tall hedge buckthorn is an upright selection of the glossy buckthorn. It grows to a height of 8 feet with little pruning required to keep it dense. Its glossy foliage and upright form are distinguishing characteristics. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Ribes alpinum (Alpine currant)—This is a popular hedge material good for a shady location where a low, dense hedge is needed. The dark green leaves and dense form make this an attractive plant. Leaf spot can be a problem late in the season. Space plants 15 to 18 inches apart for a dense hedge.

Rosa sp. (Hansen's hedge rose)—Of all the roses we have grown, this is the best for hedge purposes. With a little pruning, this hedge can be kept at 4 to 5 feet. Suckering may be a problem where space is limited. The bright red fruits are attractive to birds. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Salix arctica (Arctic willow)—This low, dense willow makes an attractive hedge. It is fully hardy in winter, but occasionally there may be some tip injury. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Spiraea nipponica 'Snowmound'—This compact cultivar of the Japanese spiraea is relatively new to this area. It seems perfectly hardy and makes a dense hedge that will be covered with white bloom in mid May. Space plants 18 inches apart.

Syringa chinensis (Chinese lilac)—This nonsuckering lilac is excellent for a tall hedge. Bloom will be best if grown as an informal hedge. Oystershell scale can be a problem. Space plants 2 feet apart.

Thuja occidentalis 'Hetz Midget'—This dwarf arborvitae makes a very dense hedge only about 12 inches tall. Space plants about 10 inches apart.

Thuja occidentalis 'Wareana' (Ware arborvitae)—For a taller evergreen hedge, the Siberian arborvitae is excellent. Space plants about 3 feet apart. (See photo on first page.)

Viburnum dentatum (arrowwood)—This is the best of the viburnums for hedge purposes. Space plants 2 feet apart. With a little pruning, this shade-tolerant plant can be maintained at 4 to 5 feet.

Viburnum opulus 'Nanum' (dwarf highbush cranberry)—This is a very low compact hedge that can be maintained easily at a 12-inch height. It tolerates shade. Space plants 12 inches apart.