



## Shrubs for a Miami-Dade Hedge

John McLaughlin



Installing a barrier around the perimeter of a residential property is usually for privacy and/or security. A chain link fence can provide a degree of security, but by itself affords no privacy, and is aesthetically the least attractive option. A wooden fence can be less of an eyesore, though as the photo illustrates, privacy could still be an issue! A more attractive, green option is the use of a row of evenly spaced shrubs or small trees grown as a formal hedge or informal screen – the latter can even be the solution to hiding a chain link fence. As well as providing security and privacy, a hedge can offer several other benefits. These include

acting as a windbreak, muffling outside noise, separating different elements within the landscape (e.g., screen off a patio or pool), and serving to unify yard and residence. A hedge can also attract



### There several types of hedge:

**Formal hedges** are close clipped with the outline of the individual shrubs indistinguishable. Low branching, densely foliated shrubs with small leaves are suited for this purpose.

**Semi-formal hedges** are not as dense and use coarser shrubs (often flowering types); rather than being clipped individual stems are cut back to maintain an acceptable size and height.

**Informal hedges** (screens) consist of a row of usually similar shrubs each maintaining their own distinct outline. Only occasional pruning is needed to keep shrubs at a similar shape and height.

wildlife, especially birds, providing both food and habitat. There is no fixed size as to what constitutes a hedge, though a row of shrubs less than 18" (e.g., Mexican heather) would generally be referred to as edging.

There is a limited choice of shrubs suited to use for formal hedges in South Florida. The choice is somewhat more extensive for semi-formal hedges, both hibiscus and ixora having been frequently used (but see below for caveats). There is a far greater range of material available for informal hedges including large shrubs/small trees used as perimeter screens and/or windbreaks. A review of the shrubs and small trees available for use in a Miami- Dade hedge will be found at the end of this publication. In making a

choice, think about using more than a single species of shrub especially for a continuous perimeter hedge which could be divided into several contiguous sections. If more than one hedge is to be installed consider its' purpose, e.g., a low clipped hedge around a pool (green buttonwood) ;a tall perimeter screen (weeping podocarpus) to act as a windbreak.

### Installation

Before you install a hedge consult with your neighbor(s). You may be able to agree on sharing the cost and upkeep, otherwise at a minimum be clear about your intention to take full responsibility for limiting its size (especially important for fast growing items such as ficus). Before digging any holes, be mindful of the location of underground service lines: water, sewer, electric, telephone and cable tv. Never place a hedge, especially one composed of plants having aggressive roots (e.g., *Ficus*), near a septic tank drainfield,. Enquire of local ordinances regulating the height of a hedge, particularly for corner lots.

**Spacing** - depends on the shrubs chosen, though as a rule of thumb for a **formal or semi-formal hedge**, a fifth to a quarter of their natural spread is accepted. This usually translates to **1 – 3'** between plants. For a formal hedge allow a depth (inner to outer edge) of up to 3', more for an informal screen where pruning is far less aggressive.

**Preparing the ground** - first remove any grass/ weeds from a 3' wide strip of ground where the hedge is to be installed. Allow for a 6 – 12" border between the projected base of the hedge and adjacent turf grass. The border can be kept mulched or used for low growing bedding plants or a non-invasive groundcover. **Planting holes** should have sloping sides and be spaced at intervals appropriate for the shrubs that will make up the hedge. **For an informal hedge/screen** there is no need to clear a strip of ground, just dig holes at regular intervals (usually 3-4'). The screen will filter out more light as it grows, especially the north side of one placed east to west. Mulch the area and/or replace thinning turf grass with a shade tolerant ground cover.

In most instances 3 gallon container plants are adequate - using 7 or 10 g size plants will significantly increase the cost. The larger size plants may be warranted for a wind break where tall shrubs/small trees are used and spacing is not as close. For every 10 plants, purchase two extra as replacements for those that fail to thrive.

### Pruning

Once installed, pay particular attention to training the shrubs that will form the hedge. Induce denser growth by cutting back lateral stems by up to 6". Do not remove top growth until the hedge reaches its' requisite height. On attaining the desired height the top of the hedge

### Important site considerations when installing a hedge

**Exposure:** If exposed consider what would be most effective as a windbreak. For coastal sites take into account the effects of salt spray and wind-blown sand.

**Trees:** shade and root competition could affect hedge height and density – make allowances for future tree growth. *Polyscias*, *marlberry* and most native stoppers will adapt to partial shade.

**Soil:** must be free draining especially for items such as *Pittosporum*, sea lavender and *bougainvillea*. In most instances use native soil as backfill, though for some shrubs such as *hibiscus* and *ixoras* it needs to be enriched with additional organic matter.

**For formal/semi-formal hedges higher than 3' prune so that they slightly taper in from the base. This will prevent thinning of the bottom of the hedge due to insufficient light exposure.**

can now be cut flat or rounded (domed or more cuspidate). For a professional finish string a guide line at the desired height between two stakes to ensure a level top. A square or rounded (inverted U) plywood template can be placed across the top of the hedge to act as a guide. Above all use sharp hedge clippers to avoid stems with shredded cut ends.



An established hedge must be routinely cut to maintain the desired height, width and taper. A formal hedge should always be clipped before new growth hardens (while it is still green). A semi-formal hedge, especially one grown for its flower display, should not be sheared but individual stems hand pruned from within the hedge. Frequent pruning will severely limit flowering. For hedges made up of large leaved shrubs, cutting back individual stems is also advisable. Fortunately close clipped seagrape

hedges, which were for a time quite common, are now seen as frequently. They were most unattractive, their leaves torn and tattered. The same untidy fate has also been observed where Hibiscus is used as a close clipped hedge.

### Hedge Plants

A list of shrubs (and small trees), for use in Miami-Dade hedges is presented in Table 1 at the end of this publication. First a few words on the pros and cons of some familiar hedge plants plus less familiar items that warrant more widespread use.

Apart from **Ficus**, two other shrubs frequently used for clipped formal hedges in local yards have been **orange jasmine** ('Lakeview') and **Surinam cherry**. Both produce crops of messy fruit leading to numerous seedling volunteers in the landscape (the reason they are controlled near native plant communities in Miami-Dade). If regularly clipped, especially when flowering, fruit set can be limited. Orange jasmine presents a more serious problem; the potential for aiding in the spread of citrus greening, a lethal disease of citrus. As a result, strict regulations governing its propagation and sale have lead to the virtual disappearance of orange jasmine from most Florida nurseries.

**Podocarpus macrophyllus** (**yew podocarpus**) is becoming increasingly popular for use in local hedges, both clipped and as a screen/windbreak. An evergreen tree (up to 30-45'), *P. macrophyllus* has closely spaced stems bearing linear to lance shaped, pliable leaves, light green at first becoming darker. The roots are non-invasive, permitting use near a driveway or sidewalk, and resistance to wind damage affords utility as a tall protective screen/windbreak. Exhibiting a moderate rate of growth, frequent pruning is not required – can be close clipped as a tall hedge, but hand pruning produces a softer outline. The **var. 'Maki'** (see photo below) has more compact, upright growth with shorter leaves and can be used for a hedge not exceeding 8', while **var. 'Pringles Dwarf'** is an excellent choice for a low clipped hedge (to 3'). Both varieties are slower growing than the species.

#### **Ficus Hedges: be aware of the problems:**

**Most hedges use *Ficus benjamina* or *Ficus microcarpa* (syn. *F. nitida*). Without pruning these would rapidly develop into large, fast growing, tropical trees**

**Growth habit:** both provide a dense, clipped hedge, but frequent pruning is essential to control size. Highly aggressive root-system is potentially invasive, especially if the hedge is allowed to grow out of bounds. Do not install near foundation walls, drain fields, water or sewer lines.

**Insect pests:** [thrips \(leaf distortion\)](#) and [Ficus whitefly](#) (severe leaf drop, may be some stem dieback) of most concern – latter expensive to control on a large hedge.

**Disease:** usually less of a problem than insect pests, and the result of too much shade/ water. Both aerial and crown galls are occasionally found –infected plants should be destroyed.

*Podocarpus* will grow on a range of moist but free draining soils, preferring those that are slightly acidic. Once established drought tolerance is moderate; supplemental water may be necessary during periods of hot dry weather. Organic mulch is beneficial, both conserving soil moisture and slowly enriching the soil. Apply a complete slow release fertilizer containing at least 4% magnesium 2-3x per year for an annual total of 2-4 lbs per individual plant (upper level where podocarpus is grown as a tall screen).

*Podocarpus* is especially prone to develop magnesium deficiency symptoms (seen as a broad yellow band across the middle of the leaf). Iron deficiency may also develop on local calcareous soils. The podocarpus aphid and an eriophiid mite can both occasionally cause leaves to become distorted and stunted (aphids are a conspicuous dark red to purple). *Podocarpus gracilior* (weeping podocarpus) has pendent branches and finer leaves; finds more use as an informal screen/windbreak.



**Small leaf Clusia** (shown below) is rapidly growing in popularity as a semi-formal hedge. Branching



close to the ground, it produces a densely foliated barrier of stiff, leathery leaves. Growth is slow to moderate to 20- 25', though hedges can be maintained as low as 5'. Scale insects are potential pests, otherwise small leaf Clusia provides a low maintenance, salt and drought tolerant hedge, well suited to poor rocky soil and coastal sites. Often listed in the nursery trade as '**Clusia guttifera**', the name is of uncertain scientific standing, being absent from major plant taxonomic data bases.

*Pittosporum tobira* (variegated and all green cultivars) will quickly produce an attractive semi-formal

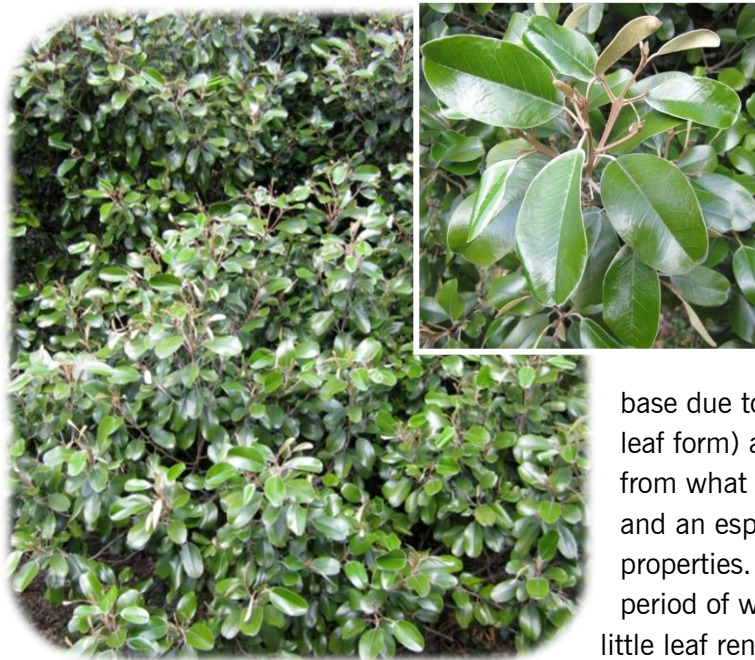
hedge, and is especially useful in coastal locations. It must be provided with perfect drainage, being very susceptible to root rots. Added to this, it is also highly susceptible to damage from root knot nematodes, several leaf spotting diseases can cause leaf drop, and local high pH soils can result in pittosporum developing trace element deficiency symptoms. In Miami –Dade the use of *P. tobira* is controlled near native pinelands.

**Privet** can be used as a fast growing, formal hedge or screen, though choose *Ligustrum japonicum* as *L. sinense* and *L. lucidum* are listed as category one invasive plants in Florida. Ligustrums are often infested with scales/whitefly and associated sooty mold, and in late

summer/fall cercospora leaf spot can cause significant leaf drop. Not as familiar, native **Florida privet**, *Forestiera segregata* is a far better choice, relatively pest free and not invasive (where planted a few seedlings may volunteer). For a low hedge (4') the more compact cv. 'Pineland' with smaller leaves is an excellent choice.

**Other native species used as hedge material** include **red tip coccoplum** *Chrysobalanus icaco*, frequently seen in Miami-Dade as a 3-4' sheared box hedge. Although branching is infrequent, constant year round leaf renewal ensures a dense growth habit. The leathery rounded leaves (up to 3 x 1½") are really too large and stiff for a formally sheared hedge, and as a result often appear tattered. Red tip coccoplum is far more attractive if allowed to grow as an 8 – 10' informal screen, with occasional hand pruning as necessary, when both the foliage and attractive (edible) fruits can be fully appreciated. Coccoplum is host to lac scale and the recently introduced gumbo-limbo spiraling whitefly, though neither appears to inflict serious damage. The less common, low growing cv. 'Horizontal' is a salt tolerant coastal form of coccoplum (height 3-4') that is easier to maintain as a short hedge. Although coccoplum will take some shade, growth is denser in full sun (desirable when part of a hedge).

**Jamaica caper**, *Capparis jamaicensis* (shown below) is a large, low- branching, native shrub with a spreading canopy of attractive shiny leaves (see inset). Where there is sufficient space it can be used to create an impressive, broad, 15' flowering screen.



**Green buttonwood** *Conocarpus erectus* (and the silver leaf form) is another Florida native sometimes grown as a hedge. Buttonwood hedges often loose density at the

base due to insufficient light (more so the silver leaf form) and misplaced sprinklers. This detracts from what can otherwise be an attractive hedge, and an especially good choice for coastal properties. Buttonwood experiences a prolonged period of winter dormancy during which there is little leaf renewal at which time the hedge may lose some density. If installing green buttonwood as a

hedge, look for 'Momba' a more compact growing cultivar.

**Native stoppers** (small trees/large shrubs in the Myrtaceae) are excellent choices as low-maintenance, salt-tolerant, medium to tall screens, accepting full sun or partial shade (growth denser in full sun). Growth is slow to moderate, but patience will be rewarded as they mature into definite landscape assets. All have striking foliage, new growth often tinged red to pink, and (if not heavily pruned) produce colorful fruit (attracts birds). **Spanish stopper** (*Eugenia foetida*) develops a narrow canopy (useful where space is limited) and makes an attractive tall screen. **White stopper** *E. axillaris* is tolerant of more shade; it also develops a narrow canopy and can be used as a screen.

The leaves have a musty odor which some may find disagreeable. **Simpson stopper** *Myrcianthes fragrans* (shown right) has eye catching, reddish tan, peeling bark, and is preferably used as a large screen when both the sweetly fragrant flowers and colorful orangey red fruits can be fully appreciated. The cultivar '**Compacta**' is a better choice for use as a low to medium hedge. The related **spicewood**, *Calyptanthes pallens* is suited to use as a close clipped hedge; frequent forked branching of the outer shoots ensures a dense growth pattern. The pleasantly aromatic foliage is an added bonus.



If security is a top priority there are several shrubs that come armed with prickles or spines. For a living barbed wire fence look no further than **cat's claw** (*Pithecellobium unguis cati*) a native, multi-stemmed, shrub/small tree that is well suited to open sites with dry sandy or rocky soil. Avoid the weedy non-native *P. dulce*. Cat's claw has a pair of sharp spines at the base of each bifoliolate leaf, insignificant flowers but the coiled pods are colorful once they split revealing small shiny black seeds embedded in a red aril. Cat's claw is easily pruned to form a hedge, but if allowed to grow out of bounds the spines render it a challenge to manage. Of more ornamental value, *Bougainvillea glabra* grows as an 8-10' shrub and has a more compact habit than the sprawling *B. spectabilis*, forming a dense impenetrable hedge. Remove long wayward shoots as they appear then prune as necessary to shape. If you wish to maximize flowering, curtail pruning in early October (flowers form on new growth in response to shortening day length and dry soil).

**Carissa macrocarpa** **Natal plum** (below) is a close-branching 5-10' shrub with thick glossy ovate leaves, bifurcate spines and attractive jasmine-like flowers that withstands close clipping as a rounded hedge. It performs well in full sun to partial shade, is highly salt and drought tolerant and should be used more in local landscapes – it was once far more commonly seen.



Less spiny, the familiar golden **dewdrop** (*Duranta repens*), a multi-stemmed shrub growing to 12 – 14', bears intermittent spines and sprays of blue flowers. Cutting back the long stems will make for a more bushy appearance. This however detracts from its'

natural graceful habit, and it is better left uncut and used to form a tall, informal, flowering screen – remove entire stems to ground level to restrict spread and prune out fruits as they set (poisonous). The cultivar '**Alba**' has white flowers, while '**Sapphire Showers**' (Geisha Girl) is more compact with picotee flowers (petals violet blue, edged white).

There are several other low branching shrubs that are suited for use as tall flowering screens;

**Panama rose or bush pentas**, *Rondeletia leucophylla*<sup>1</sup> (shown below) provides an excellent example. Drought tolerant and well suited to Miami-Dade limestone, it is related to the familiar pentas (as can be seen the rosy pink inflorescence is similar), but grows locally as a woody 8-12'



shrub with attractively furrowed

bark. Apart from the showy winter to spring flowers, new growth is willowy, with narrow 4-5" lance shaped leaves with silvery underside. For a medium density screen, place shrubs at 3'

intervals in full sun. Prune out spent flowers to extend

blooming, and then cut back as needed in late spring to maintain desired size, and apply a slow release fertilizer. Panama rose withstands brief exposure to frost with at most some leaf discoloration (see inset) but nominal loss of leaves.

No serious pests or diseases have been reported.

**Hamelia patens**, **firebush** can be used as a flowering screen, though the related **Bahamas firebush**, **Hamelia cuprae** (opposite) is more effective, with denser growth and lacking the former's weedy tendencies. Salt tolerant and highly drought tolerant, Bahamas firebush grows to 15-20', with smaller more lustrous light green leaves, and small, bell-shaped flowers, opening yellow then becoming increasingly tinged with orange. During winter there is some leaf drop, increasingly so further inland where colder overnight temperatures are experienced. For coastal locations leaf loss is not usually as noticeable.



Both **Chinese hibiscus** *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and **ixora** *Ixora coccinea* have been widely used locally as hedges. Damage from root knot nematodes, plus nutritional problems (iron deficiency) can affect ixoras grown on sandy and calcareous soils respectively. For hibiscus insect pest problems, in particular various scale insects and mealybugs, as well as leaf spots and root rots can be a concern. Hibiscus also suffers from trace element deficiencies and exhibits limited drought tolerance. Both ixora and hibiscus are easier to maintain as landscape specimen shrubs rather than hedges.

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities refer to this taxon as *Arachnothryx leucophylla*

**Table 1. A Selection of Shrubs and Small Trees for Miami-Dade Hedges and Screens****Key for Table 1**

**Size:** range to be expected locally is shown in feet

**Growth Rate:** **s** = slow; **m** = moderate; **f** = fast

**Features:** **Coastal** = good choices for coastal locations (combination of salt tolerance and wind resistance); **a** = showy flowers; **b** = spines/prickles; **dr** = drought tolerant; **sa** = salt tolerant.

Unless stated otherwise under 'Comments' all listed shrubs and trees are best grown in full sun.

<b>Scientific name (Common name)</b>	<b>Size Growth</b>	<b>Soil</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Acacia pinetorum</i> (Pineland Acacia)	5-10 m	Calcareous to Sandy	<b>a, b, dr</b>	Makes an excellent spiny barrier.
<i>Ardisia escallonooides</i> (Marlberry)	10-20 m	Sandy to calcareous	<b>dr</b>	Useful as a screen preferably where there is partial shade.
<i>Argusia gnaphalodes</i> (Sea lavender)	3-6 m-s	Sandy	<b>a</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Low barrier plant; usually performs poorly inland.
<i>Calyptanthus pallens</i> (Spicewood)	5-25 s-m	Calcareous	Aromatic leaves; fragrant flowers.	Useful either as a large screen or close clipped hedge. Prefers light to partial shade.
<i>Bougainvillea glabra</i> (Paper flower)	6-10 m	Broad range must drain freely.	<b>a,b,dr,sa</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Forms an impenetrable spiny barrier
<i>Capparis cynophallophora</i> (Jamaica caper)	6-15 s-m	Calcareous to sandy	<b>a dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Eventually forms an excellent tall, broad screen.
<i>Carissa macrocarpa</i> (Natal plum)	5-10 m	Broad range including limestone; must drain freely.	<b>a,,b, dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Adapts to partial shade; useful for both coastal and inland sites. Can be close-clipped.
<i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i> (Coccolplum)	3-15 m	Evenly moist, calcareous to sandy	<b>Coastal</b> (Applies only to cv. 'Horizontal').	Often used as a clipped hedge; more attractive as a tall screen. 'Horizontal' is a low growing salt tolerant cultivar.



<i>Clusia guttifer</i> <sup>2</sup> Small leaf Clusia	5-25' s-m	Adapts well to rocky calcareous/sandy soils.	<b>dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Provides a dense, low maintenance, semi-formal hedge.
<i>Coccoloba diversifolia</i> (Pigeon plum)	12-35' m	Evenly moist sandy to calcareous soils.	Attractively patterned bark.	An erect tree that can be used as part of a tall screen. Weevils may disfigure leaves.
<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i> (Seagrape)	8-40 m	Sandy to calcareous	<b>dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Best as a screen /windbreak. Edible fruit – needs both male and female plants. Various insect pests.
<i>Cocculus laurifolius</i> (Laurel- leaf snail seed)	12-18 m	Wide range but must be evenly moist	Leaves softly coriaceous, dark green with three prominent veins. Limited drought tolerance.	Use as a tall semi formal hedge; appreciated for the striking glossy leaves. Leaves and fruit are poisonous.
<i>Conocarpus erectus</i> (Buttonwood)	5-40 m	Calcareous to sandy	<b>dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Clipped/ informal hedge or screen. Root weevils (marl based soils) and scale insects.
<i>Cordia globosa</i> (Bloodberry)	4-9 m -f	Evenly moist calcareous soils.	<b>a</b>	Use clipped as a low hedge – base prone to thin.
<i>Cordia lutea</i> (Yellow cordia)	12-20 m	Broad range including limestone; must be free draining.	<b>a</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Showy yellow flowers; use as a large screen – shrubby if grown from air layers, more tree-like if grown from seed. Leaves not chewed by Geiger tree beetle.
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> (Varnish leaf)	6-18 m	Sandy	<b>dr</b> <b>Coastal</b> Shiny lacquered leaves, decorative seed capsule.	Can be used as an attractive screen.

<sup>2</sup> Species designation widely used in the trade but of questionable scientific validity

<i>Duranta erecta</i> (Golden dewdrop)	6-12 m-f	Wide range including limestone	a, b, dr, sa	Takes hard pruning but is best as a tall screen. Several cvs. including 'Sapphire Showers' (more compact with picotee flowers); and Alba' with white flowers.
<i>Eugenia foetida</i> (Spanish stopper)	8-15 m	Evenly moist sandy to calcareous.	sa Growth not as dense in shade.	Narrow canopy – useful tall screen where space is limited.
<i>Eugenia uniflora</i> (Surinam cherry)	6-10 m	Wide range including limestone	a Edible fruit (of variable quality).	Makes an excellent close clipped hedge but can be weedy; use in Miami-Dade controlled near native plant habitats. Foliage turns red during cold weather.
<i>Fagraea ceilanica</i> (Ceylon fagraea)	8-20 m-f	Thrives in nutrient poor soils	a, sa Will accept light shade; fragrant, large, white trumpet shaped flowers.	A large, sprawling, low-branching shrub with light green coriaceous leaves. Needs plenty of room and control of root suckers.
<i>Ficus 'Green Island'</i> Green Island fig	4' s	Wide range of free draining soils	Accepts part shade. Eventually forms a dense, low- mounding shrub.	A non-invasive <i>Ficus</i> for a low, compact hedge. Resistant to <i>Ficus</i> whitefly.
<i>Filicium decipiens</i> (Japanese fern tree)	20 m	Wide range	Highly decorative leaves; non- invasive roots. Becomes more drought tolerant with age.	A small low branching tree with a dense canopy that can be used as a highly ornamental screen.
<i>Forestiera segregata</i> (Florida privet)	10 m	Calcareous to sandy	dr, sa Drops leaves as new growth flushes.	Low growing form available as 'Pineland' or var. <i>pinetorum</i> .
<i>Garcinia livingstonei</i> (Imbe)	15-20 s-m	Sandy or rocky calcareous soil	dr, sa edible fruit, crop heavier with multiple trees.	Low branching trees with striking angular growth habit makes an unusual informal hedge.

<i>Hamelia cuprae</i> (Bahamas firebush)	15-20 m	Calcareous to sandy.	<b>a, dr</b> <b>Coastal</b> Some leaf drop in winter, more so inland.	Makes an attractive, tall flowering screen especially for coastal sites.
<i>Hamelia patens</i> (Firebush)	5-15 m	Sandy to calcareous	<b>a, dr, sa</b> Evergreen but leaves discolor/drop in winter. Becomes leggier with shade.	Brittle stems; tends to be weedy.
<i>Ixora casei</i> (Giant ixora)	5-8 m	Moist, acid, organically enriched soil.	<b>a</b> Also sold as 'Super King'. Best grown in dappled shade. Leaves discolor in cold weather.	Produces a very showy flowering hedge. More tolerant of calcareous soils than other ixoras but still necessary to correct trace element deficiencies. Scales and root knot nematodes.
<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> (Japanese privet)	5-15 m	Wide range.	Many cultivars, some with variegated leaves.	Scale insects, whitefly and associated sooty mold. Cercospora leaf spot can cause leaf drop in summer.
<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i> (Simpson's Stopper)	6-20 s	Evenly moist sandy or calcareous.	<b>a</b> Aromatic leaves and fragrant flowers; accepts part shade but growth becomes more open.	Use as a perimeter screen; cv 'Compacta' can be used as a 5-10 hedge.
<i>Pithecellobium unguis-cati</i> (Cat's claw)	10-18 m	Evenly moist sandy soil – must be free-draining.	<b>b, dr, sa</b> Fragrant flowers	Makes an impenetrable spiny barrier, but spines can make pruning difficult; wood weak.
<i>Pittosporum tobira</i> (Japanese pittosporum)	3-8 m	Evenly moist sandy soil – must be free draining.	<b>a</b> <b>Coastal</b> 'Wheeleri' a compact, low growing form.	Can be close-clipped. Various pests and diseases especially root rots and root knot nematodes. Potentially invasive.

<i>Podocarpus macrophyllus</i> (Yew podocarpus)	10-30 m	Evenly moist slightly acidic soil	Wind tolerant; non-invasive roots. Best with light or partial shade.	'Maki' and 'Pringles Dwarf' are two more compact, slower growing, dwarf forms. May need to correct symptoms of magnesium deficiency.
<i>Psychotria nervosa</i> (Wild coffee)	4-6' m	Evenly moist calcareous soil	Best with light to moderate shade.	Use as a low informal barrier. Occasionally prone to scale insects.
<i>Polyscias</i> spp. (Aralias)	6-10 m	Broad range; must be free draining	<b>dr</b> Adapt to shade or full sun.	Several species and many cultivars; leaves may be variegated and vary widely as to shape. Prone to mites also scale insects and mealybugs.
<i>Rondeletia leucophylla</i> <sup>3</sup> (Bush pentas)	6-15 m	Broad range including limestone	<b>a, dr</b> Willowy growth habit. Showy rosy pink flower heads winter – spring.	Most effective as a tall airy flowering screen.
<i>Schaefferia frutescens</i> (Florida boxwood)	10-30 s-m	Evenly moist calcareous soils.	<b>dr</b> (where there is some shade).	Use as a tall screen in shady areas
<i>Suriana maritima</i> (Bay cedar)	6-12 m	Sandy or calcareous	<b>a, dr</b> <b>Coastal</b>	Useful barrier plant for ocean front properties. Difficult to grow inland.
<i>Tetrazygia bicolor</i> (Florida tetrazygia)	6-12 m	Limestone	<b>a, dr</b>	Makes a large, showy flowering barrier; especially suited to Miami limestone, otherwise can be difficult to establish.
<i>Viburnum suspensum</i> (Sandankwa viburnum)	5-8 m	Evenly moist slightly acidic	Limited drought tolerance; best where there is some partial shade.	Useful as a semi-formal hedge or screen; control size by hand pruning rather than shearing.

[John McLaughlin, PhD](#), Miami-Dade Extension Office, Homestead, FL 33030

<sup>3</sup> Some references list this taxon as *Arachnothryx lueucophylla*