

gardening Hedge landscape

Know your soil

Soils are as different as people, says Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food horticulturist R.F. Gomme. Some are easy to get along with and some are difficult, but with a little extra effort, even the difficult ones become less of a problem. Adequate drainage and

organic matter are necessary for an ideal garden soil mixture. Good soil structure promotes active growth, retains moisture well and provides sufficient nutrients for the plants. He says the two extremes, heavy and light soils, present some

challenges to gardeners. For example, if heavy clay land is cultivated when it's wet, it puddles and dries out later into hard lumps. Heavy soils are easier to work with and more useful for plant growth when plenty of peat moss, coarse sand and manure are added to them.

Hedges can be very useful tools in home landscaping.

They're used as dividers in garden areas, as screens from view and noise of busy roads, to prevent trespassing and provide privacy and to provide backgrounds for flower borders.

Decide on the purpose of the hedge, whether it's to be formal or informal, and the type of species to be used before you start, says Ontario ministry of agriculture and food horticulturist R.F. Gomme.

"In selecting a hedge, a gardener must decide on how much maintenance it will receive. If it is to be a formal hedge, it may require trimming annually, or depending on the species chosen, even

more frequently. "Hedges allowed to grow in a more or less natural manner, with some removal or shortening of branches to prevent straggly growth, are informal in appearance and in upkeep," says Gomme.

In selecting a hedge for the garden, remember spacing will have an effect on the final growth of the plants. The higher you want the hedge to grow, the further apart each plant must be spaced.

For hedges of four to five feet, an 18-inch spacing is ideal.

The steps for planting are simple. Use a line as a guide in digging a straight trench, about one and one-half feet deep and one and one-half feet wide.

While digging, try to keep the topsoil and subsoil separate. If drainage is poor, mix coarse sand in the bottom of the trench.

Plant your hedge in a single straight line, using a stick cut to size to measure uniform spacing.

Mix peat moss and compost into the topsoil and firm it around the roots, then water the

plants thoroughly when you're finished.

A newly planted hedge will require pruning from the start to remain thick and bushy from the ground level.

Deciduous shrubs such as privet and alpine currant must be cut back to within six inches of the base.

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Schedule regular care for roses

From the time the leaves begin to appear on roses, home gardeners should start a regular spraying or dusting program. R.A. Fleming, a horticultural specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, says that such a program is the only way to combat black spot and powdery mildew, two of the most common rose fungus diseases.

"Preparations are available through garden supply centers that will give a good deal of protection if applied according to the manufacturer's directions. Proper use of rose sprays or dusting mixtures that contain fungicides during May and June is particularly important to prevent black spot infection," he says.

He recommends captan or Benlate as excellent fungicides, either alone or in rose sprays or dusts. Dusting or spraying should be done either in the early morning or in the evening, when the air is quiet.

Best results are obtained if a protective film of spray or dust is present on the foliage when it is moist from rain or dew, since damp conditions increase the likelihood of black spot infection.

In addition to their fungus-controlling properties, many rose sprays and dusts also contain an insecticide to control rose chafers and aphids. Malathion, which has proven effective in controlling these pests, is often found in these formulations.

Coming up roses

Gardeners who are fond of the delicate appearance of roses often choose several types for displays in their flower beds.

Because rose types vary in their shape, habits and growth, they must be pruned differently, says horticulturist R.F. Gomme, of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

"Most types can be pruned just before spring growth starts.

"Proper pruning at the proper time encourages more growth and has a beneficial effect on the quality and quantity of blooms in the upcoming season," he says.

Each rose plant should be considered individually and pruned according to its growth habits. Severe pruning for some types can weaken plants and shorten their lives.

The hybrid teas and floribundas can be pruned back to within eight inches of the soil, but canes of the grandifloras should be left slightly longer. Shrub roses need little pruning, except to remove weak or dead growth.

The climbing types of roses vary greatly according to the variety and should be pruned accordingly. Since they usually flower on the previous season's growth, they are pruned in early autumn.

Gomme states that gardeners can prune old canes of climbing roses in the spring, leaving about four healthy canes per plant.

Regardless of the type of rose, he indicates that it is important to use sharp pruning shears to avoid damage to the stems.

He also recommends that gardeners wait until all danger of frost is over before removing mulches from rose beds.

Pruning shapes up your hedge

Hedges can be beautiful — especially when they're thick and green right to the ground as the result of regular trimming.

Two of the most common hedge plants, privet and yew, make excellent hedges because they can be renewed very easily, says R. A. Fleming, a horticulturist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

"Privet hedges can be trimmed back severely in late winter or early spring, and within one season they will return to a sleek, trimmed condition. The yew is one of the few evergreens that will also withstand severe

pruning and recover easily," he states.

Rejuvenating a privet hedge is a drastic procedure.

Hedge plants should be cut hard back to 12 to 15 inches from the ground in the spring before growth starts.

Side branches of the plants should also be cut back proportionately at this time. The horticulturist says that new growth will soon appear, producing a thicker, vigorous and more manageable hedge.

Proper watering and fertilization may also help the development of new growth.

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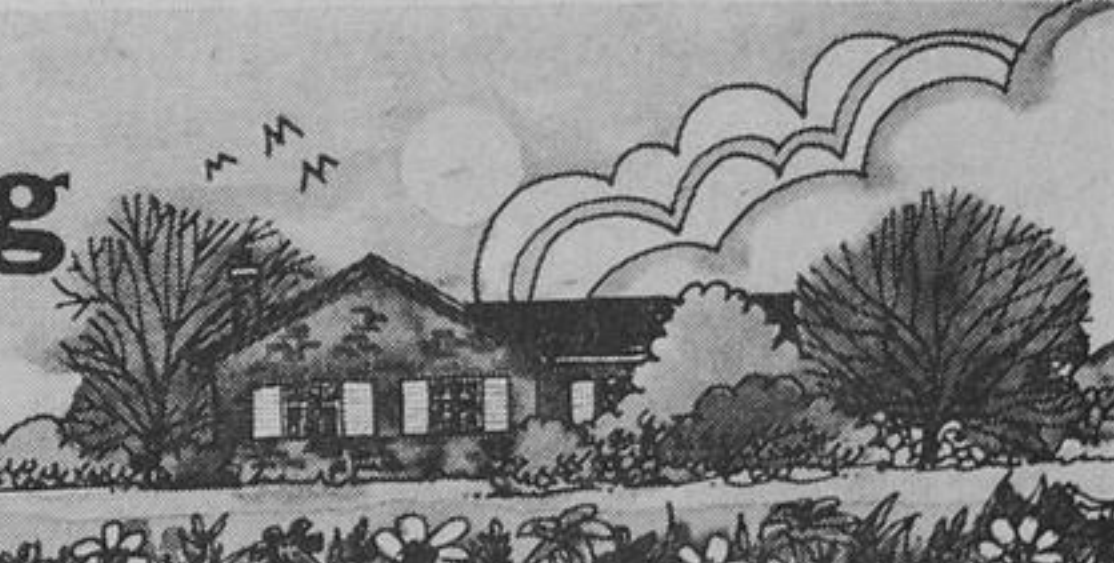
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