WHY REPLACE BUCKTHORN AND HONEYSUCKLE IN YOUR YARD?

Woody invasive plants, such as common and glossy buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica and Rhamnus frangula) or Eurasian bush-honeysuckles (Lonicera spp.), form dense thickets and reproduce aggressively, shading out other plants and disrupting ecosystems in forest preserves and other natural areas. In woodlands, they can completely replace young trees and understory plants, including native wildflowers. Buckthorn also causes long-lasting damage to the soil and wildlife habitat where it grows. Unfortunately, they are also commonly found in residential landscaping. This guide suggests shrubs that can be planted to replace invasive hedges or screens being removed.

HOW TO GROW A SCREEN OR HEDGE

Freeform screening – Shrub species can be grown without “formal pruning” using their natural structure.

Formal hedges – Start with 18”-24” plants, cutting back to 6” to cause low branching. Cut off half the new growth over the next two years. Start shaping the hedge the third year, making the base broader than the top. Formal hedges must be sheared 2 or more times each year.

Naturalistic hedges – Informal hedges grow best when plants are kept at about ¾ of their full size. Start with shrubs that will get a little bigger than the size of the hedge you want. Once a year, these hedges need a light overall pruning and a renewal pruning (cutting ⅓ of the older canes off at ground level).

HEALTHY HEDGES

Healthy Hedges is a collaborative campaign to reduce the damage caused by invasive woody plants in the Chicago Region. As of 2010, invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle made up 30% of all the trees in the seven county region. Land managers in the region fight a constant—and expensive—battle to protect our shared natural areas from the effects of these woody plants. Help them protect our forests and prairies by replacing invasive hedges in your yard with shrubs from this guide!

Learn how to identify and eradicate invasive species and where to purchase replacement shrubs at: ChicagoRTI.org/HealthyHedges

Join the conversation on social media with: #HealthyHedges

Do I have buckthorn on my property?

Common buckthorn Rhamnus cathartica (8-25ft)

Buckthorn is a large shrub or tall tree with glossy oval leaves that can easily be recognized in fall, when it remains green after most other leaves have fallen. Buckthorn has berries that are spread by birds. Under the Illinois Exotic Weed Act, buckthorn cannot be sold in Illinois.
Non-Native, Evergreen Shrubs

Alpine currant
Ribes alpinum
(6-8 ft)

Clove currant
Ribes odoratum
(10-16 ft)

Photo Credit: John Hagstrom

Manchurian lilac
Syringa pubescens subsp. patula
(6-10 ft)

purple basket willow
Salix purpurea
(8-10 ft)

Hedge cotoneaster
Cotoneaster lucida
(8-10 ft)

Sargent’s crabapple
Malus sargentii
(5-8 ft)

Photo Credit: Richard Webb, Bugwood.org, CC2

Bayberry
Myrica pensylvanica
(4-10 ft)

Spreading cotoneaster
Cotoneaster divaricus
(5-8 ft)

Photo Credit: Agnieszka Kwiecien, creativecommons.org

Boxwood hybrids
Buxus sempervirens
(3-5 ft)

Photo Credit: Phillip Merritt

Healthy Hedges

Recommended privacy screen replacements, following removal of European woody invasive species.

Non-Native, Deciduous Shrubs

Canadian serviceberry
Amelanchier canadensis
(8-25 ft)

Common boxwood
Buxus sempervirens
(3-5 ft)

Photo Credit: Melissa Custic

Bridalwreath spirea
Stephanandra incisa
(4-7 ft)

Japanese yew
Taxus cuspidata
(5-40 ft* )

Photo Credit: John Hagstrom

Common flowering quince
Chaenomeles speciosa
(8-12 ft)

Common boxwood
Buxus sempervirens
(3-5 ft)

Photo Credit: Melissa Custic

Fragrant snowball
Viburnum x carlcephalum
(8-10 ft)

Siebold’s shrub-ginseng
Eleutherococcus sieboldianus
(6-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Phillip Merritt

Golden vicary privet
Ligustrum x vicaryi
(6-12 ft)

Japanese yew
Taxus cuspidata
(50-70 ft*)

Photo Credit: Phillip Merritt

Oakleaved hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia
(4-10 ft)

Vernal witchhazel
Hamamelis vernalis
(6-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Breuil Aroche, CC BY-SA 3.0 creativecommons.org

Spreading cotoneaster
Cotoneaster divaricus
(5-8 ft)

Sargent’s crabapple
Malus sargentii
(5-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Gardens

Sargent’s crabapple
Malus sargentii
(5-10 ft)

Vernal witchhazel
Hamamelis vernalis
(6-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Richard Webb, Bugwood.org, CC2

Siebold’s shrub-ginseng
Eleutherococcus sieboldianus
(6-10 ft)

boxwood hybrids
Buxus sempervirens
(3-5 ft)

Photo Credit: Phillip Merritt

Smooth arrowwood viburnum
Viburnum dentatum (6-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Melissa Custic

Manchurian lilac
Syringa pubescens subsp. patula
(5-8 ft)

Manchurian lilac
Syringa pubescens subsp. patula
(5-8 ft)

Photo Credit: Melissa Custic

smooth arrowwood viburnum
Viburnum dentatum (6-10 ft)

Photo Credit: Melissa Custic

** Plants shown are not to scale and represent various seasonal characteristics.

1. Although the standard form of this species is a large, single-stemmed tree, it can be trained from a young age to form a hedge at a smaller height.