

Hedges and screens!

A good hedge won't require pruning too often, will grow at a reasonable rate, and will be dense enough to block the view. If you're in a hurry, consider installing a fence extension and planting a fast-growing vine while you wait for the hedge shrubs to grow. Here are some of our favorite shrubs for hedges and privacy!

* *Abelia x grandiflora*

Glossy abelia

Upright growing shrub with nice shiny foliage and a profusion of white flowers. Often clipped, but looks more graceful when left to grow naturally. Drops some leaves if the winter is cold, but mostly evergreen. Grows 3 – 4' a year to 8'+. The pink version, Edward Goucher, is attractive to hummingbirds. Stays lower: 5 – 6', with equal spread.

* Bamboo

Bambusa and *Phyllostachys* species

Bambusa species are non-invasive, large, well-mannered shrubs. *Bambusa multiplex* 'Alphonse Karr' is one of the best; *Bambusa oldhami*, *ventricosa*, *vulgaris*, and *tuldoides* are also useful. Slow to make a hedge; either buy several and plant close together, or dig clumps every year or so and divide them.

Phyllostachys species are the familiar invasive bamboos. They can be planted as a hedge if the roots are confined with a barrier and the grove is monitored annually for escaped rhizomes! Golden bamboo (*P. aurea*) and Black bamboo (*P. nigra*) are the best-known runners. Use with caution.

* *Buxus microphylla japonica*

Japanese boxwood

The classic slow-growing clipped hedge. Easily kept as low as a foot, but naturally grows to 3 – 4' plus. Sun or light shade, average watering, somewhat drought tolerant.

* *Callistemon citrinus*

Bottlebrush

Fast-growing, somewhat rangy shrubs with showy red flowers that attract hummingbirds. Prone to iron chlorosis when irrigated. Very drought-tolerant.

* *Ceanothus* species and hybrids

Wild lilac

'Concha' and 'Ray Hartman' are two of the best for hedges.

California natives with attractive shiny leaves; pretty blue flowers in spring. These two varieties get big enough to provide privacy, but *Ceanothus* don't like to be pruned. Water deeply and very infrequently in summer, or not at all. Grow 3'+ a year.

* Citrus

Citrus and *Fortunella* species

Many citrus make excellent hedges.

Kumquats (*Fortunella*) are especially ornamental and hardy. Sweet smelling flowers off and on at any time, with fruit year-around. Fruit has sweet skin, tart flesh. Grows 2 – 3' a year to 8 – 12' +

* *Cotoneaster lacteus*

Red clusterberry

Very graceful shrub with arching growth habit, masses of white flowers in spring, and heavy crop of bright red fruit in winter. Grows 3 – 4' a year to 10' +, but easily kept lower. Good examples in front of the DMV, corner of 5th and Pole Line, where they are pruned to about 4'.

* *Dodonea viscosa* 'Purpurea'

Purple hopseed bush

Great for quick screen. Bronze foliage turns dark purple, almost maroon, in winter. Fairly open habit, but can be sheared for greater density. Fast-growing (3 – 5' a year) to 10'+. Very drought-tolerant.

* *Elaeagnus x ebbingei* 'Gilt Edge'

Upright growth habit. Silvery leaves with bright golden margins. Flowers attract beneficial insects; edible fruit attracts songbirds. Grows 3 – 4' a year to 10'+. Very tough, drought tolerant.

* *Escallonia rubra*

Red escallonia

Big shrub with dark, glossy green leaves and dark red flowers. Leaves have a resinous odor. Flowers attract hummingbirds. Grows 2 – 3' a year to 8'+. The more widely planted *Escallonia* X 'Frades' (Pink princess shrub) is subject to iron deficiency if it gets watered regularly.

* *Feijoa sellowiana*

Pineapple guava

Edible flowers! Fuzzy grey-green leaves make a nice contrast with red-leaved or shiny-leaved shrubs. Tasty fruit, plant named varieties if you want reliable fruit production. Very drought tolerant. Grows 2 – 3' a year to 10'+, easily kept lower. Or grow as a small tree.

* *Laurus nobilis*

Bay laurel

Grecian bay is a kitchen herb, but it's also a tough, upright, dense tree that can be pruned as a hedge. Will grow in full sun or considerable shade. Grows 2 – 3' a year to 30'+, but easily kept at 10'.

* *Ligustrum japonica* 'Texanum'

Texas privet

This very common allergy plant in the olive family reseeds prolifically. I detest privet. Nevertheless, it is very tough, and makes a dense hedge to about 6 - 8'.

* *Myrsine africana*

African boxwood

Outstanding shrub for hedge, similar to the more common Japanese boxwood, but with a redder coloration. Grows 1' a year to 4' or more, can get to 6'+.

* *Myrtus communis*

Common myrtle

Outstanding old landscape shrub. Clean, shiny foliage; dense growth habit. Can be clipped, shaped, trained as a small tree. Sweet-smelling flowers; shiny black fruit. Excellent hedge, but even more attractive when allowed to grow naturally. 'Compacta' is tighter growing with smaller leaves and can be kept as a hedge from 1' – 6'. Drought tolerant.

* *Nerium oleander*

Oleander

The incredibly tough shrub that grows all along California's freeways. 'Sister Agnes' is white, fast, and biggest of all. 'Sealy Pink' is medium pink, 'Crimson Red' is dark red. Disease and pest problems in other areas have reduced availability, but still a good choice for difficult, hot, dry locations here in the Valley.

* *Photinia fraseri*

Fraser's photinia

The shrub with bright red new growth. Very popular, fast-growing shrub that makes a great screen or hedge. Can even be trained as a small tree. Fireblight and lace bug are becoming serious pests to the point that I'm not recommending these anymore. Avoid pruning in spring to prevent fireblight. Light oil sprays or systemic insecticides can help control lace bugs.

* *Pittosporum tobira*

Mock orange

A landscape all-star! Grows in full sun or considerable shade. Prune as a hedge, train as a tree, or let it grow naturally. Dark, shiny leaves look good all the time. Flowers smell like orange blossoms. Grows 3' a year to 10'+ 'Variegatum' has creamy-colored margins on the leaves; somewhat slower-growing (2' a year).

* *Podocarpus gracilior*

Fern pine

Very graceful, useful evergreen tree that we usually use as a large shrub or espalier. Shiny, narrow, dark green leaves. Will take all but the hottest sun, as well as considerable shade. Grows 3' a year to whatever height you let it.

* *Rhamnus alaternus*

Italian buckthorn

Fast-growing with dark green, dense foliage. Flowers attract beneficial insects; small berries attract songbirds. Great for a quick hedge for privacy. Very drought-

tolerant but sensitive to overwatering.. Grows 3 – 5' a year to 10'+.

* *Rhaphiolepis x 'Majestic Beauty'*

Indian hawthorn

A very large variety of Indian hawthorn, with very showy pink flowers in spring. Dark green, shiny leaves. Grows 2 – 3' a year to 8'+.

* *Rosmarinus officinalis*

'Blue Spire', 'Tuscan Blue' are upright forms for hedges. Rosemary is tough! This familiar kitchen herb tolerates drought, some shade. The dark blue blooms in winter and spring are a nice bonus. More familiar varieties are ground covers, but these two grow upright at 1 – 2' a year to 4'+

* *Viburnums*

Viburnum suspensum

Sandankwa viburnum

Big shiny leaves on a plant with an open growth habit. Can be clipped for greater density. Flowers are fragrant--odd, musky/fruity scent. Prefers at least some shade. Drought-tolerant.

Viburnum tinus

Laurustinus

One of the few *Viburnums* that can take direct sun and grows very well here. Attractive buds in fall, flowers in winter, shiny blue berries in spring and summer. Great for beneficial insects and songbirds. Can be pruned, but looks especially good if allowed to grow with only light clipping. 'Spring Bouquet' grows 2 - 3'/year to 6'+. 'Robustum' grows fast to 10' +.

* *Xylosma congestum*

Shiny xylosma

One of the toughest landscape shrubs around. Tolerates heat, even reflected off a west wall, but also takes shade. Can be trained into a beautiful small tree, clipped as a formal hedge, or trimmed for an informal screen. Very drought tolerant. Grows 3' a year to 10'+. 'Compacta' is a denser variety which grows 2' a year and has thorns.