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# Front, Back & SIDE

When she's not designing gardens for others, Patricia Fox enjoys the privacy of her own garden — defined by good use of hedging. By **Jackie Herald**

**P**atricia Fox's garden is a balance of traditional and contemporary style. The front garden is more traditional — "It needs to be in keeping, as our 18th century thatched cottage is Grade II listed," she says. A yew hedge marks the front boundary. "We didn't need planning permission for a hedge, but we would have done for a wall, fence or railings."

Proud of her vegetables, Patricia shows off her south-facing raised beds filled with an assortment of strawberries, salad crops, herbs and flowers for cutting. Also in front, a large productive border edged with a crisp, low box-hedge marks the boundary between front lawn and driveway. And to the right of the cottage and just behind the driveway a decorative metal gate, set into the tall yew hedge (of plants bought 1.8m high, for instant screening), leads into the side garden.

The side garden (now a courtyard catching the morning sun) was once part of the front garden, but has been reclaimed for private space. A contemporary border of ornamental grass and herbaceous perennials, mulched with slate, links the courtyard to the rear of the house.

Patricia's rear garden is very much about entertaining, with three seating areas. Over the terrace there's a powder-blue pergola, above which grows wisteria, clematis and a vine. An ipe deck is laid for a more formal dining suite of dark, all-weather rattan. Nestled in one corner is the outdoor kitchen from Patricia's 'Freshly Prepped' RHS Chelsea 2009 show garden, complete with sofa, wine cooler, sink and massive chopping board-cum-bar.

● See overleaf for advice on using hedging as a boundary ▶

## What I Did

- Yew hedging: low around boundary, and high to separate front and rear gardens
- Low box-hedge to frame front lawn and offset driveway
- Raised vegetable beds and productive border in front garden
- Back garden extended forward, now aligned with front building line of cottage
- Secluded courtyard garden to side of house, with decking and seating
- Outdoor kitchen with sink, worktops, wine cooler, bar and sofa area, nestling in a border of butter-yellow bamboos
- Secluded dining space with planted pergola
- Living wall of ornamentals with auto-irrigation and fertiliser

**Garden Design**  
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## Dining Out

The outdoor kitchen (TOP) was reassembled from Patricia's 2009 award-winning RHS Chelsea show garden, and has a green wall backdrop. Elsewhere, high yew hedging defines the boundary (LEFT) with fledgling low box-hedging bordering the drive (FAR LEFT). The garden has three dining areas — one defined by a wisteria-covered pergola (ABOVE)



# Hedging will Create a Soft, Textured Boundary

Hedges shape the garden, adding structure, mystery and fun as well as a practical barrier, but you must choose the right species for a harmonious green screen, says **Jackie Herald**

**P**ut simply, a hedge is a single or double row of woody species planted close together (on average 330mm apart; three per linear metre). It needs to be clipped to achieve your desired height and width, and to prevent the plants growing into full-size trees. Regular maintenance will also keep your neighbours happy.

Don't be put off by reports of acrimonious 'high hedge' disputes, centred on thuggish evergreen hedging – of which Leyland cypress is the main culprit, and bay laurel a close runner-up. There are many types of hedge to choose from, depending on the style and setting of your home, your budget, time frame and planting space.

Why choose hedging? Aside from creating a living backdrop of colour and texture for the rest of your landscaping, the benefits include: seasonal interest, privacy and shelter, softening the visual impact of buildings, cutting out noise and wind, wildlife habitat, a prickly deterrent to intruders, economy, and generally there's no need for planning permission (check with the local authority if you're in a designated area, such as a Conservation Area).

So where do you start? Think first about looks and practicality: are you the clipper-happy type who enjoys neat formality? In which case, a single species hedge will be most appropriate. Or would you prefer the more relaxed, wilder look of a mixed native hedgerow to attract songbirds and – if you're lucky – a hedgehog or two?

Take a walk around the local area to see which hedges grow well in your neck of the woods. The soil type and drainage will rule out some species. Critical constraints include the location and depth of utility services, and the proximity of the buildings. As with trees – and, indeed, any planting – you need to ensure that the roots of hedges won't interfere with your own or your neighbours' structures, and that there's adequate drainage and available daylight.

If you have limited space, there's probably not room for both a hedge and a floral border – the hedge will generate a rain shadow, disadvantaging the other plants. However, your hedge could be a colourful low-maintenance tapestry of different flowering shrubs – even offering edible fruits. Visit hedging nurseries for ideas and to see the plants at first hand. ■



**Jackie Herald**, Director of The Extra Room, has been a landscape designer for seven years. Tel: 07714 234808



## On the Edge

TOP TO BOTTOM: Hedging comes in many textures and colours, like this red leaf berberis from Hedges Direct (hedgesdirect.co.uk) – prickly, it helps deter intruders; For a contemporary-style home, a well-groomed single-species hedge can keep the project in context with its neighbourhood; Backdrop of beech hedging with taller purple beech behind, in a scheme by Sarah Price (020 7703 3973)

## Top Tips

- For a fairly low-maintenance hedge, plant a native hedgerow – good for wildlife
- For the most economic hedge, plant bareroot or rootball stock in the winter months
- For instant hedging, plant tall container-grown species
- Make sure your hedge is well watered through its first year
- If planting a hedge around the edges of your property, make sure there's space for its mature thickness within the boundary line
- Check that your neighbours will allow access for trimming the hedge from their side (party hedges are joint responsibility)

