

For an ornamental hedge, I would unhesitatingly recommend the American Arbor vitae. It endures close trimming well, and can be kept in neat and tidy dimensions for a greater length of time than any tree that I know of. I know of some hedges of it which are in good condition twenty eight years after planting, and they are less than three feet high. It is never infested with injurious insects; intense frost does not hurt it; and dry, hot weather seems to be congenial to it. In this respect, it is perhaps the hardiest tree which grows in Canada or elsewhere. That may be the reason why it was given the name "Tree of life." In its native state it is found growing on dry, rocky hills, and also in water-soaked muck swamps. It thrives on almost any kind of soil, and lives to a great age, yet it is not suitable for any formidable hedge fence. It will not endure bruising or crushing by animals rubbing against it, especially when it is in a frozen state, and cattle seem to have a singular fondness for doing that very thing.

The common barberry being very prickly, is given a wide berth by animals of all kinds. The most enduring hedge-fence I have seen was of this shrub. It thrives well on any soil which is not of a poor, cold, or wet nature. It grows closely, and by annual trimming it is easily kept in any desirable size or shape, soon forming a hog-proof fence that will last for generations. The common barberry is easily propagated, sold cheaply by nurserymen, and has few insect enemies. The purple-leaved barberry, although less robust, is quite as hardy and more ornamental. It is said that barberry hedges breed rust on wheat. I have never seen any satisfactory evidence to that effect, and think the evil is wholly imaginary.

The hawthorn, which is commonly used for hedge fences on the British Isles, does not thrive well here; several kinds of aphides attack and generally destroy it. Our native thorn is of too slow growth. The Buckthorn, which is no relation of any of the other thorns, is quite as hardy, makes a compact hedge when skilfully trimmed. No insects infest its leaves, and mice will not girdle its bark.

Where rapid growth of a shelter hedge is desired the Norway spruce is particularly well adapted. It is quite as hardy as our native white spruce, and is of much more robust growth, and can be successfully transplanted when of large size. The hemlock spruce makes a beautiful hedge while young, but its lower branches soon die, leaving the hedge bare at the bottom, and much trimming shortens its life, hence it is not well adapted for the purpose.

The honey locust is sometimes planted for shelter hedges, but on account of its excessive tendency to send out suckers a great distance from its trunk, I would discourage its use; yet, it is not as objectionable in this respect as the Chinese abele, which should never be planted where any other tree will grow.

There is no lack of variety of plants suitable for ornamental hedges. The Japan quince (three varieties), makes an excellent hedge where the climate is not too severe.

The Tartarian honeysuckle (of four varieties), is quite hardy. It makes a superb hedge, and so does the Persian lilac, and several varieties of shrubby spiræ; also, mock orange and viburnum. The privet is not quite hardy enough for all parts of Ontario, but where the climate is favorable it makes a compact, neat hedge. The mulberry is also now planted for hedges in favorable climates.

If I were to speak of tree shelters on prairie and other rich flat lands, where quick growth is especially desirable, I would recommend the poplars and several varieties of the willow, but for making formidable hedge fences they have not proved satisfactory. About twenty years ago many thousands of dollars was extracted from the Ontario farmers through the white willow swindle. A company of scamps from Michigan recommended it as being the grandest thing for hedges ever discovered. It was purchased and planted extensively throughout the country, and now all that remains to be seen of it is some rows of widespreading clusters of very ugly trees. Yet, I dare say some credulous farmers will again be humbugged in the same way by the yellow or black willow, both of which are nearly as worthless for hedge purposes as the so-called white willow. I will not, however, occupy your time discussing hedge frauds on the farming community, but would merely remark that intending hedge planters should in some measure be guided by the experience of others.

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