

Defensive planting

Using prickly plants to create a physical and psychological barrier is something that has been done for many years and is known as 'defensive planting'.



Criminals do not like climbing through prickly plants and hedges. They know that a small item of ripped clothing or blood can help the police identify them.

However, prickly plants can be dangerous to young children playing in the garden. Bear this in mind when deciding on whether or not to use them as a defence against burglars.

The following list is not exhaustive but it does include some of the best plants to protect your garden.

BERBERIS STENOPHYLLA (BARBERRY)



Growth : Medium sized shrub, arching habit, evergreen

Flowers : Yellow in April/May, blue/black in Autumn

Uses : Hedging or border shrub

Spike rating : Excellent foliage and stems, well armed with spines (Other varieties of Berberis also available)

BERBERIS JULIANAE (BARBERRY)



Growth : Medium sized evergreen shrub

Flowers : Yellow in late Spring, young growth has coppery tints

Uses : Hedging or border shrub

Spike rating : Excellent prickly foliage, very spiny stems. (Other varieties of Berberis also available)

ILEX AQUIFOLIUM 'FEROX ARGENTEA' (HEDGEHOG HOLLY)



Growth : Medium/tall sized shrub, evergreen, male plants—no berries

Flowers : Not a prominent feature but interesting colourful foliage

Uses : Hedging or border shrub

Spike rating : Very good, lightly packed spines on sides and top of leaves. (Other varieties of holly also available)

MAHONIA MEDIA 'WINTER SUN'



Growth : Medium sized shrub, attractive evergreen leaves

Flowers : Erect racemes of scented yellow flowers in Winter

Uses : Border shrub

Spike rating : Good, spiny edged foliage. (Other varieties of Mahonia also available)

PYRACANTHA ORANGE GLOW (FIRETHORN)



Growth : Medium/large evergreen shrub

Flowers : White in early summer followed by orange autumn berries

Uses : hedging border or wall shrub

Spike rating : Excellent very spiny stems. (Other varieties of Pyracantha also available)

CHAENOMELES X SUPERBA 'CRIMSON AND GOLD (JAPONICA)



Growth : Medium size spreading shrub

Flowers : Cup shaped red petals with golden stamens, quince fruits

Uses : Hedging, border or wall shrub

Spike rating : Very good, well spined stems. (Other varieties of Chaenomeles also available)

Allotments

Because allotments are usually on isolated sites they are harder to protect. Getting to know other people on the allotment site is a great way of making friends and looking out for each other's plots and property.

You could set up an "allotment watch".

For further details contact Staffordshire Police Neighbourhood Watch on 01785 234427 or 01543 464218 or 01785 234129.



"Working to make South Staffordshire Safer"



Effective crime prevention is all about awareness and hopefully this information will help you take steps to improve your security. If you or your neighbours see someone acting suspiciously call the police on 0300 123 4455 or in an emergency ring **999**.

If you know someone that is committing crime in your area and you want to report it but do not want to involve the police, contact **Crimestoppers** on **0800 555 111** or by logging onto the Crimestoppers website www.crimestoppers-uk.org. You can remain totally anonymous and may even qualify for a reward.

Staffordshire Police are here to help, if you would like further crime prevention advice, visit our website at www.staffordshire.police.uk



Produced by Phil Russon, Crime Reduction, Staffordshire Police with permission from Andy Foster, South Yorkshire Police

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Don't let your garden become

RICH PICKINGS

for criminals

Many people underestimate the value of the items they store in their shed, garage or garden. Unfortunately, criminals are fully aware of the value of the goods that some people do store in vulnerable places. The following advice can help to keep your property secure and reduce the chance of you becoming a victim of crime

Shed Security

Sheds can be attractive targets for thieves. They can contain expensive equipment and are often poorly protected. Whilst a shed is not designed to withstand any form of determined attack, there are some simple measures you can take to make them more secure.

- Position your garden shed as near to your house as possible so that it is clearly visible from your home.
- If spoiling the aesthetics isn't too much of a concern then paint your house number and postcode onto your valuable gardening equipment (e.g. lawnmower, strimmer and tools). This makes them much less attractive to potential thieves and also increases the chances of the property being recovered and returned to its rightful owner if it is stolen.

- Avoid storing valuable items such as power tools, fishing tackle or golf clubs in a shed. These items should be stored inside your home or a secure garage.
- The most effective way to secure shed doors is to fit a strong hasp and staple (also called a 'padbar'). Secure this with coach bolts (long bolts with a smooth head that cannot be undone with a screwdriver or spanner) and lock the hasp over the staple with a closed shackled padlock.
- You can further protect your shed with items such as 'shed bars' and larger items such as cycles can be secured to shed shackles (both pictured below). These and other approved products can be found at: www.soldsecure.com or www.securedbydesign.com



Shed bar



Shed shackle

- If you have been working in your garden ensure that you lock away tools such as spades or forks when you're finished. Tools left out overnight could be used by an intruder to gain access to your property.
- Secure the shed door hinges with 'clutch head' or 'coffin' screws. These are a special type of screw that once fitted can only be unscrewed with a special tool. They can be purchased from DIY outlets and off the internet.
- If you don't intend to use opening windows in your shed you can make them secure by screwing them shut, or fitting window locks. Hanging old curtain or netting up against the window will prevent any prying eyes from seeing what is stored in your shed.

Garage Security

Garages usually contain valuable items and many have integral doors which could offer a thief easy, hidden access to your home.

- "Up and Over" garage doors are usually fitted with a central locking door handle, these are often quite weak and can be easily attacked. As with the wooden double door, the 'up and over' can be fitted with a hasp and staple, and padlock.
- If you have a household alarm fitted, consider extending the system to cover your garage. This should be a relatively cheap and effective way of protecting your garage. Having a 'bell box' fitted to your garage would offer an additional deterrent.
- It is good practice to fit British Standard approved locks to all your external doors and this includes integral garage doors. For further advice on suitable locks contact the Master Locksmiths Association on 01327 262255 or visit www.locksmiths.co.uk
- There are numerous approved security products available that will vastly improve the security of your garage door. Visit web sites: www.soldsecure.com or www.securedbydesign.com for more details or ask your local crime prevention officer for advice.



garage door defender



Garalock



garage locking bolts

Your Garden

Many people invest a lot of time and money in their gardens. Plants, shrubs, water features, solar lighting and garden furniture can be very expensive and are all very attractive to a thief.

- Extra attention should be given to passageways located at the side or rear of your home. Strong lockable high gates will deter thieves attempting to gain access to your rear garden.
- Fencing and walls can be given extra protection by fixing trellis on the top. This will collapse if someone tries to climb over it and the noise this causes can be enough to alert you or your neighbours and so deter a thief.
- If you are planning to build a path in your garden or around your property consider using gravel. The noise made when this is walked on can alert householders to any approach.
- Plants and trees can be very attractive to a thief and difficult to secure. If you are buying expensive plants or trees and intend planting them into plant pots then buy the heaviest you can. Expensive plants should be planted where they can be seen from the house or neighbouring properties
- Never leave spare keys hidden in your garden, garage or shed for children or family members. If hidden keys are found by an intruder and used to burgle your home you may find your home insurance is invalid.



- Good lighting is an excellent way to deter intruders, particularly by fitting exterior lights with dusk to dawn sensors. These are light sensitive and activate when it gets dark and turn themselves off when it gets light. Using low wattage bulbs provides a cheap and effective security measure for your garden.