



# Fact Sheet

## Alternatives to Pyramidal Cedars and High Water Use Shrubs

Cedar hedges. One sees them 'everywhere' in the Okanagan and, although they are functional and inexpensive to purchase, they have a stressful existence in the dry Okanagan Valley.

Growing a hedge using pyramidal cedars has a number of benefits including:

- fast-growing
- can be pruned or trimmed
- evergreen
- inexpensive hedging material.

However, there are cultural requirements that create drawbacks to using pyramidal cedars in our region. They require:

- a lot of water, compared to alternative hedging plants (see below)
- annual fertilizing
- full sun exposure.

Other disadvantages to growing cedars in the Okanagan include:

- they are a favourite browsing material for deer
- the climatic stresses result in dead or dying cedars needing replacement.



### Alternatives to Cedar Hedges

There are several excellent alternatives to pyramidal cedar hedges. These plants create a lush, full hedge without drawing heavily on our water resource.



Yew

#### HEDGING YEW

- tolerates full sun to shaded areas
- tolerates wide range of well-drained soil types, but prefers sandy loam
- evergreen
- not attractive to deer
- low-water once established
- tolerates heavy pruning
- **Both the arils ('berries') and foliage of yew are toxic and should not be ingested.**

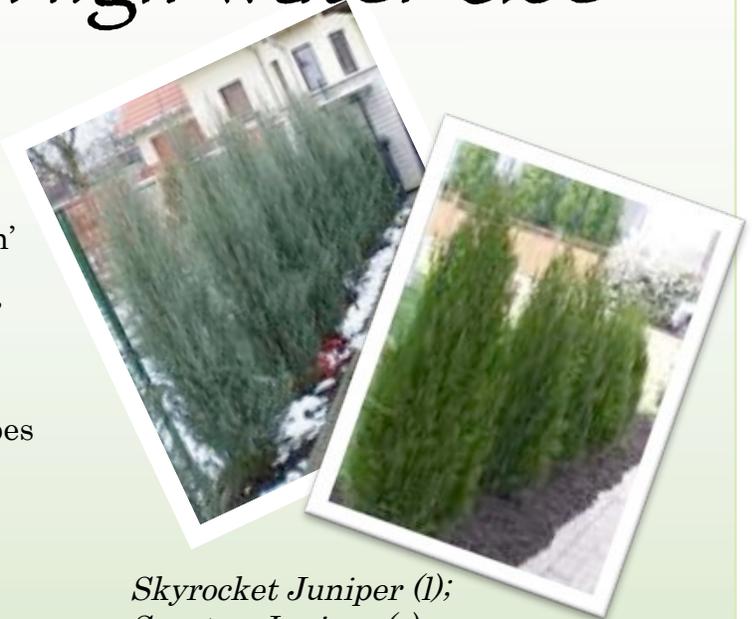
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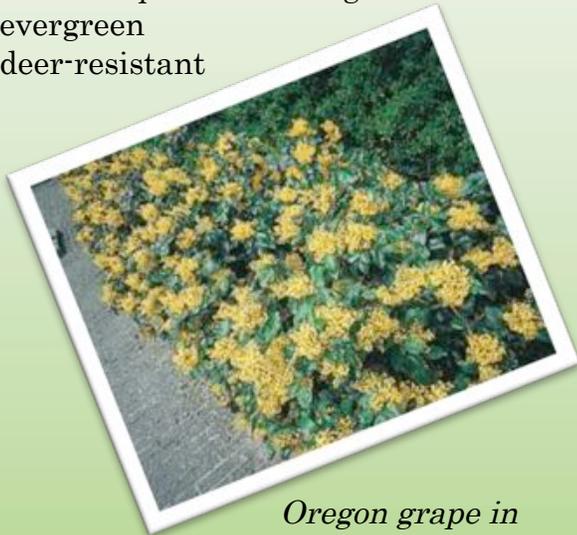
# Alternatives to Pyramidal Cedars and High Water Use Shrubs

## PYRAMIDAL JUNIPERS

- several cultivars available, including 'Spartan' junipers that look much like hedging cedar
- grows at a moderate rate, except for 'Spartan' which is fast-growing
- tolerates full and light shade
- tolerates a wide range of well-drained soil types
- low water requirements once established
- do not require fertilizing
- evergreen
- deer-resistant



*Skyrocket Juniper (l);  
Spartan Juniper (r).*



*Oregon grape in bloom.*

## OREGON GRAPE

- native plant, so well-adapted to native soils
- tolerates full sun but prefers some light shade
- evergreen (broadleaf)
- fragrant flowers in spring; colourful berries in fall
- deer-resistant
- restrict watering once established to discourage suckering and 'ill-mannered' growth (or enclose with a root barrier)
- prickly leaf edges make it a good barrier plant

## PRIVET

- deciduous, but holds bluish-black berries through the winter
- very dense foliage, providing a good shelter and nesting site
- tolerates trimming
- low-water once established



*Privet*



# Alternatives to Pyramidal Cedars and High Water Use Shrubs

There are many shrubs that can replace those that use a lot of water. A selection of low-water deciduous shrubs can make a very attractive hedge as well. Choices include:

- Arnold's Red Honeysuckle
- Forsythia
- Wayfaring Tree
- Smokebush (*Cotinus coggygria*)
- Mock Orange
- Lilac
- Beauty Bush
- Barberry
- Saskatoon
- *Rosa rubrifolia* (needs root barrier)

Tall ornamental grasses can also be used as a hedge. Although they are cut back in the spring, they grow quickly and can screen through the winter.

Be creative: a mix of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, at varying mature heights and differing bloom times and foliage colours can create an outstanding hedge or screen.

Check the plant database at [www.okanaganxeriscape.org](http://www.okanaganxeriscape.org) for more options.



From left:  
Barberry, Mock Orange in  
summer bloom, Forsythia  
in spring bloom,  
Lilac in spring bloom.