

## HEDGES IN FLOWER GARDEN



Another example of shrubs and trees used in place of a high hedge. Tall deciduous trees have been used among the evergreens to give high shelter without blocking out the sun in winter.

if it is available. Planting times and methods discussed in articles on trees and shrubs in the April and May issues of the "Journal" apply equally to hedges.

Distance apart depends on the growth habit, size, and purpose of the hedge; 12in. to 18in. is usual for dwarf and medium-sized species and 2ft. to 3ft. for taller ones. Generally it is better to overplant than underplant, for the plants grow together more quickly and a close-knit hedge is established in a shorter time. Recommendations for shrub borders, which may be used instead of more formal hedges, were given in last month's issue of the "Journal".

### Care after Planting

Watering and weeding should not be neglected, especially during the first 2 or 3 years. To encourage good, vigorous growth a slow-acting, balanced fertiliser should be applied each spring until the hedge is well established. Only on poor soils are regular applications of fertilisers necessary for established hedges. Mulches of organic matter are also helpful in the early years.

### Training and Trimming

Unless the plants, when received from the nursery, are compact and bushy with good root systems, they should be cut back fairly severely at

planting time to encourage a mass of young shoots low down. During the first summer they should be treated as individuals and the tips of the shoots pinched out at an early stage. If this is not done, they should be pruned fairly hard in winter or spring 12 months after they are planted. Individual treatment may be necessary for a further year, but after that the hedge can be treated as a whole and trimmed with shears.

The foregoing recommendations do not apply to conifers, as the majority will not stand hard cutting. With them it is most important to trim the sides from an early stage to encourage a bushy habit and to prevent the hedge from becoming too wide at the base and then having to be cut back hard into old wood which does not readily refurnish with new growth. This is one reason why many hedges of *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* are bare at the base.

Early pruning is best done with secateurs. Well before the required height is reached conifers should be tipped and the resultant side shoots regularly pinched to encourage a well-furnished top which will grow up in an even line. If they are not tipped until the required height is reached, it is often difficult to fill in the top and maintain the required height.

All formal hedges should be slightly wider at the base and slope in to the top to maintain growth low down. Once a hedge becomes bare at the base through faulty pruning, or because it has been smothered by weeds or garden plants, it is almost impossible to force new growth. Trimming of hedge tops is a matter of personal preference, for rounded, flat, and pointed finishes are equally good.

The time for clipping depends on the plants used. Most evergreens should be trimmed every 6 to 12 weeks during the growing season and conifers more often. Frequent light clipping is far better than one or two hard trimmings a year. The hedge will remain in better condition and will not tend to get larger and larger each year.

Hedge plants such as abelia and escallonia may be trimmed less frequently to take advantage of their profuse flowering habit. Escallonias should be trimmed after their main flowering period, but abelias should be left until spring, as the coloured bracts which follow the flowers make a bright show in the winter garden. Formal neatness is sacrificed, but the effect is worth while.

Plants such as *Tecoma capensis* with a semi-climbing habit of growth do not produce rigid upright frameworks of branches, and are unsuitable for heights above 3ft. unless they are supported. Strong wire fences with very durable posts set in the centres of the hedge rows are the most suitable supports.

### Pests and Diseases

Some hedges are good breeding grounds for a number of pests and should be sprayed at the same times as other susceptible plants in the garden. Thrips and scales are particularly bad and can seriously disfigure or debilitate hedges, and there is little hope of keeping other susceptible garden plants free of them when an infested hedge acts as a source of infestation. Fungous troubles are usually not serious.

## Garden Work for July



July is the best time for planting, pruning, and winter spraying of roses. The plants should be put into their permanent positions as soon as possible after they have been received from the nursery. If planting must be delayed because of soil or weather conditions, the sacking round the plants should be untied and the plants heeled in in a sheltered place.

### Planting Roses

It is desirable that the bed be prepared several months before planting time, so that it is consolidated and the