

5 STEP GUIDE

to creating and maintaining Hedges and Screens

1 HEIGHT SELECTION

How high is the hedge/screen required to grow?

- It is important to consider whether the plants used will be pruned to maintain height or left to grow to the plants full height.

2 PLANT SELECTION

Which plant will reach the desired hedge or screen height?

- Here it is important to establish the foliage effect one wishes to achieve.
 - Manicured** – tightly pruned, well maintained hedge – Syzygium Australes and Murraya forms.
 - Weeping** – A foliage effect commonly achieved using Syzygium Luehmanniis.
 - Colourful** – A foliage effect commonly achieved using Syzygium Francisii, Luehmanniis or certain Acmenas.

3 PLANTING

How much space should each plant in the hedge or screen be given?

- Plant spacing is directly related to both the growth spread or width of the plant selected and the time taken for plants in the hedge or screen to inter-link.
Basically the smaller the distance between plants, the faster the effect will be created.

4 WATERING

A new hedge or screen will require frequent watering until established. This is because the potting mix surrounding the root ball will dry out much faster than the surrounding soil.

- Micro irrigation such as dipper lines and low flow soaker hoses are an excellent way to water hedges or screens of all sizes. These systems minimize water consumption and the time association with watering, whilst delivering the best results.

5 MAINTENANCE

Excluding watering, there are three main areas of hedge or screen maintenance.

- **Fertiliser** – The foliage plants used in hedges or screens respond best to high nitrogen (N) based fertilisers. This will encourage fast lush growth. Fertiliser application should at least occur at two main stages- the initial planting, and then in Spring through to Autumn each year. Fertiliser should be applied in the recommended amounts, as over fertilizing can burn plants, particularly in Winter.
- **Pruning** – The rule for pruning is little and often. This is easier on individual and the plant. The plants used for hedging and screening don't mind a hair cut, so don't be afraid to trim as required, particularly if a manicured hedge is the goal. (If the plant has not been fertilised for some time, fertiliser application after pruning should be considered to encourage a faster recovery.
- **Pest Management** – Bad pest infestations in hedges and screens are usually a sign the plants are stressed or run down. This is normally the direct result of lack of water, and or lack of nutrient. If pests become a problem there are number of non-organic and organic pesticides available. **It is important to identify the pest first before selecting a pesticide.**
Common pests include – Red spider (Acmenas), Psyllid (on certain Syzygiums), Pink and brown scales (Acmenas, Syzygiums, Murrayas) Mealy Bug (Murrayas).

REMEMBER PESTS ARE NOT A MAJOR PROBLEM ASSOCIATED WITH HEDGING AND SCREENS. LIKE PEOPLE, PLANTS ATTRACT VARIOUS AILMENTS WHEN THEIR SYSTEMS ARE STRESSED.