

When Tiny Tim, the neighborhood kids, or thoughtless adults begin to tip-toe or traipse through the tulips, it's time to think about selecting plants for their benefit as barriers rather than their beauty.

Often, these barrier plants are barbed or thorned, are grown to a pedestrian-traffic-inhibiting height and planted in a wide enough bed to give people pause.

A large corner lot with a broad expanse of lawn is an open invitation to pedestrians taking and establishing well-worn short cuts. Plants must be at least knee high to deter pedestrians. If the perimeter of a corner is planted with barrier plants, pedestrians are more likely to use the sidewalk. Here are some other guidelines:

1) Do not rely solely on pruning to keep barrier plants in check.

Plants with thorns do not invite close inspection. Instead of tall plants that will need to be bludgeoned, butchered and beaten into a smaller, submissive size, plant groundcovers, shrubs and trees that will quickly mature to roughly the height and spread that you need.

2) Place barrier plants on the outside of any conventional fence when using as a second line of defense or privacy around a swimming pool. Select compact shrubs to reduce the number of twigs that might poke through the fence. Avoid plants with dry, prickly leaves that might impale feet.

3) Lay down a landscape fabric before installing any plants if you are planting a large area. This will reduce the need to venture into thorns for weeding.

4) Install trickle or pop-up irrigation for barrier plants, if possible, or channel run-off from a nearby watering system.

5) Safety equipment: sturdy gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, thick full-length pants, barbecue tongs, salad tongs.

6) Shred clippings before composting prickly

Plants that say: 'Keep Off the Grass'

*Strategically placed barrier plants
look better than barbed wire.*

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The paleleaf barberry grows two feet tall—a perfect height for sticking wayward human knees and shins.

prunings or using them as a mulch.

7) Use barrier plants to burglarproof your house. Most burglars are amateurs, seeking an easy target, so anything you can do to discourage them is to your advantage.

8) Avoid plants that can grow high enough to obstruct windows, or wide enough to crowd doors or sidewalks. Select plants that do not need frequent heavy pruning, and which have a slow growth rate. Leave at least one window free of thorny plants as a possible escape route in the event of an emergency. Leave space between the shrubbery and the foundation to allow air circulation.

9) Don't plant prickly or thorny plants around children's play areas or outdoor eating areas.

10) In general, the pricklier and thornier the plant, the better.

—The author is a regional specialist in commercial horticulture at the Western Maryland Research and Education Center, and a professor at the University of Maryland. This article was condensed from "Free State Nursery News," where it originally appeared.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS TO CONSIDER AS BARRIER PLANTS

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	EVERGREEN / DECIDUOUS	HEIGHT	USDA ZONE
<i>Agave americana</i>	century plant	E	6"	6
<i>Aralia elata</i>	Japanese angelica tree	D	45'	3
<i>Berberis beaniana</i>	Beran's barberry	D	8'	6
<i>Berberis buxifolia nana</i>	dwarf Magellan barberry	E	18"	5
<i>Berberis candidula</i>	paleleaf barberry	E	2'	5
<i>Berberis x chenaultii</i>	Chenault barberry	E	4'	5
<i>Berberis circumserrata</i>	cutleaf barberry	D	6'	5
<i>Berberis coccinea</i>	dainty barberry	E/D	3'	6
<i>Berberis darwinii</i>	Darwin barberry	E	10'	7
<i>Berberis gagnepainii</i>	black barberry	E	6'	5
<i>Berberis gilgiana</i>	wildfire barberry	D	6'	5
<i>Berberis juliana</i>	wintergreen barberry	E	6'	5
<i>Berberis koreana</i>	Korean barberry	D	6'	5
<i>Berberis x mertorensis</i>	Mentor barberry	D/E	7'	5
<i>Berberis potaninii</i>	longspine barberry	D	8'	7
<i>Berberis x stenophylla</i>	Rosemary barberry	E	9'	5
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese barberry	D	18'-7'	4
<i>Berberis triancanthophora</i>	threespine barberry	E	4'	5
<i>Berberis verruculosa</i>	warty barberry	E	4'	5
<i>Celastrus flagellaris</i>	Korean bittersweet	D	24' (vine)	4
<i>Chaenomeles japonica var. alpina</i>	Japanese quince	D	3'	4
<i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i>	flowering quince	D	6'	4
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Washington hawthorn	D	30'	4
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolius</i>	Russian olive	D	20'	2
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i>	thorny elaeagnus	E	12'	7
<i>Elaeagnus umbellatus</i>	autumn elaeagnus	D	12'	3
<i>Halimodendron halodendron</i>	salt tree	D	6'	2
<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	sea buckthorn	D	30'	3
<i>Ilex cornuta</i>	Chinese holly	E	18"-10'	7
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese juniper	E	18"-20'	4
<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	creeping juniper	E	6"-18"	2
<i>Lycium halimifolium</i>	Oregon grape holly	E	2'-6'	5
<i>Opuntia basilaris</i>	beavertail prickly pear cactus	E	4'	5
<i>Paliurus spina-christi</i>	Christ thorn	D	18'	7
<i>Poncirus trifoliata</i>	hardy orange	D	35'	5
<i>Prinsepia sinensis</i>	cherry prinsepia	D	10'	4
<i>Pyracantha atalantiodes</i>	Gibbs forethorn	E/D	18'	6
<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	scarlet firethorn	E/D	18"-6'	6
<i>Pyracantha crenulata rogersiana</i>	Rogers firethorn	E	10'	7
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	common buckhorn	D	18'	2
<i>Robinia hispida</i>	rose acacia	D	3'	5
<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	sea tomato rose	D	3'-6'	2
<i>Rosa spp.</i>	many names	D	3'-6'	2-5
<i>Smilax rotundifolia</i>	common greenbrier or horsebrier	D	30'	4
<i>Sophora davidii</i>	vetch sophora	D	7'	5

SOURCE: DR. BALGE