



Tree Tips for Yarrow Point How to Plan for Today and Tomorrow

The Town of Yarrow Point, a “Tree City USA” community, values trees as an integral part of our town. They can contribute to our property values while providing countless ecological benefits, including stormwater management, micro-climate moderation, and wildlife habitat. However, they can also be a source of contention between neighbors when trees and hedges grow across property lines. TREE TIPS is designed as a guideline to help homeowners and developers make informed choices when preserving and planting trees in Yarrow Point. You can find trees that meet your needs while respecting your neighbors and considering the impact your plantings may have on them in the future.

Construction & Remodels

The most effective and easiest path to a great landscape today is to protect what you already have so you don't have to replant tomorrow. Your landscape will look mature much more quickly with this approach.

Keeping trees alive and healthy through a construction project is straightforward: protect the roots below ground as well as the canopy above ground. Preserve as much green foliage as possible so the plant can continue producing food for its roots. Keep its roots alive so they can continue pumping water and nutrients back to the leaves. And, since the root system depends directly on the condition of the soil, protect the soil from compaction.

Do

- Talk to the construction foreman about tree protection so he can inform all subcontractors on site
- Consult with an arborist about the extent of tree protection area needed for your tree
- Install chain link fencing around the drip line of the tree (or a greater area for columnar trees)
- Mulch the tree within the fence boundaries
- Irrigate during the dry season

Don't

- Drive across the soil under the drip line (this compacts the soil)
- Dig trenches near the tree (this cuts roots and decreases water uptake by the tree)
- Store anything within the drip line (which compacts the soil and decreases oxygen exchange)
- Dump construction waste under the tree (drywall, cement, or paint, for example)
- Prune the tree unless necessary

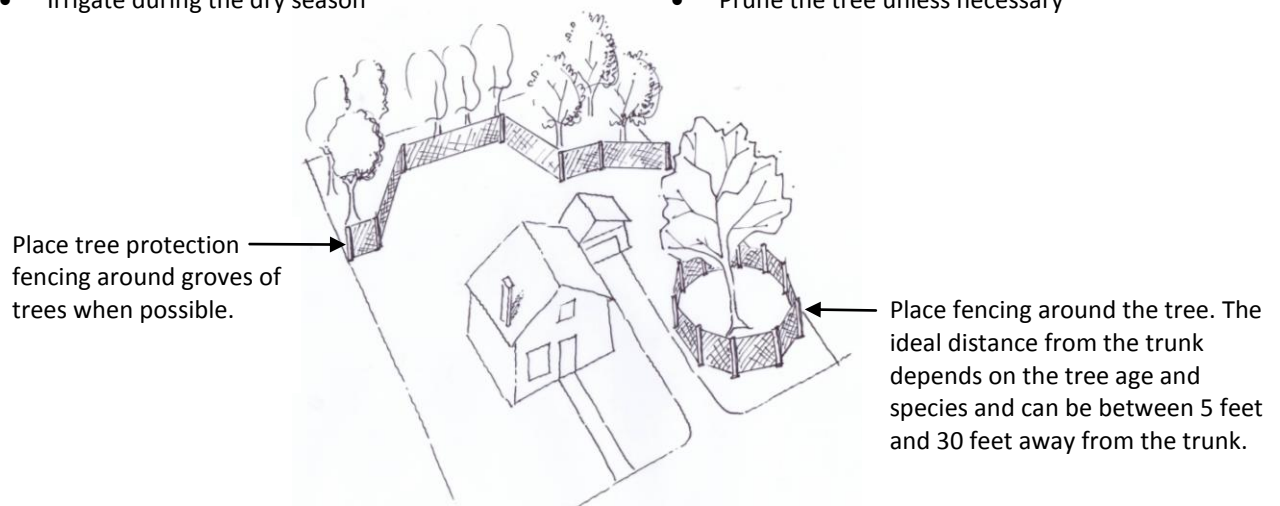


Figure 1: Tree protection fencing should be in place before any construction begins. It can be 6'-tall chainlink or 4'-tall orange construction fencing.

Tree Selection

To minimize costly maintenance, always keep in mind the idea of ‘Right Plant, Right Place.’ This concept encourages the designer to consider the site limitations first, and then choose a tree that is appropriate for the space. Ask yourself these questions about the site:

- Is it sunny or shady?
- Is the soil wet or dry in the winter? Summer?
- Is the soil sandy? Mostly clay?
- Are there views that should be protected?
- Are there views that should be obscured?

Once these questions are answered, determine what tree shape and size would be ideal. Before shopping for a plant, make sure that you know how you want your tree to grow, what space it will need, and what your objectives are for planting it.

Right Plant, Right Place
Know your space before you choose your plant.

Tree Types

Trees come in a range of sizes, shapes, and colors. While they often look similar in the plant nursery, they mature in remarkably different ways. Be sure to look at the specifics on the plant tag to know exactly what you should expect from the variety you are purchasing. A short list of small and medium trees are listed in [Figure 3](#).

Columnar trees require very little horizontal space whereas broad trees can require 50 feet or more for their spreading branches.

Figure 3: Small and Medium Sized Trees

Name	Mature Height	Mature Width	Growth Rate	Notes
Hedge Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	25'	20'	Moderate	Deciduous; yellow fall color. Sun to part shade.
Redbud (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>)	20'	20'	Moderate	Deciduous; pink blossoms in spring. Sun to part shade.
Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.)	20'	15'	Moderate	Deciduous; red fall color and spring blooms. Sun to shade.
Southern Magnolia (<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>)	30'	25'	Moderate	Evergreen; fragrant white spring flowers. Sun to part shade.
Strawberry Tree (<i>Arbutus unedo</i>)	20'	15'	Moderate	Evergreen; brilliant red fruit in winter. Sun or shade.
Wax Myrtle (<i>Myrica californica</i>)	25'	15'	Moderate	Evergreen; upright multi-stem tree. Sun to part shade.
Vine Maple (<i>Acer circinatum</i>)	25'	25'	Moderate	Deciduous; gorgeous orange/red fall color. Shade.

Drooping and twisted trees provide aesthetic interest, and rounded trees can offer a stately presence.

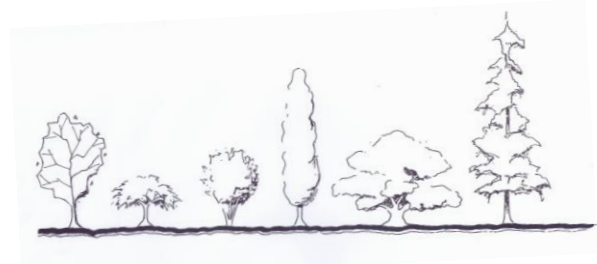


Figure 2: Examples of different tree shapes

Deciduous trees will shade buildings in the summer, but let in sunlight during the winter. Evergreen trees, however, will shade buildings year-round and provide excellent privacy.

Low-branched and multiple-stemmed trees can provide screening at eye-level, and trees with higher branching allows views beneath the canopy.

Tree Placement

Before placing your tree, consider how closely it will be planted to other trees, and the distances to surrounding buildings and property lines. Also, locate below ground utilities before digging to avoid dangerous situations.

Think beyond your property and ask questions. In future years, might the tree:

- Block a neighbor’s view?
- Cause unwanted shade?
- Create overhanging branches that will need to be pruned?
- Increase maintenance requirements due to unwanted debris like leaves, cones, or fruit?
- Have roots that may cause uplift or cracking of a driveway or patio?

Hedges

A **hedge** is a row of two or more trees, shrubs, or other plants that constitute a barrier in excess of six linear feet and establish a boundary, or hinder free passage of humans or animals on the surface of the ground or screen or obscure vision or baffle sound (YPMC 17.08.010).

Hedges are the single largest neighborhood dispute in Yarrow Point. When you plant a hedge for your own privacy, consider the impacts it may have on your neighbor, and the maintenance costs they could incur because of your choice.

Maintenance

Most hedges require rigorous pruning every year which can be a significant expense and burden. Hedges should be clipped or sheared as they grow, beginning with the first year they are planted, and continually managed indefinitely. We encourage owners to prune all sides of their hedges.

Diligent pruning creates multiple branchlets and buds within the framework of the hedge, creating a dense green “wall”. This wall should be slightly tapered so the hedge is wider at the base than it is at the top. This maximizes solar exposure for the green leaves lower to the ground.

Topping the hedge is essential to control the height of the plants, and heights must be managed on a formal hedge.

When homeowners skip a year of pruning, they regret it. An extra year of growth increases the width of the hedge up to three feet and sometimes means three more feet is added to the height of the hedge (see [Figure 5](#)). This can be costly and difficult to reclaim. In some cases this can mean excessive

pruning which can leave a permanent gap in the green “wall” the hedge originally provided.

Height Regulations

The Town of Yarrow Point regulates hedges when they are located within a setback. Fences within setbacks may not be taller than six (6) feet, however, a hedge may exceed that if agreed upon by both neighbors.*

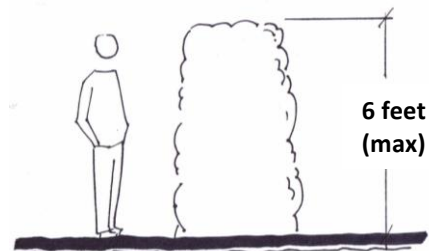


Figure 4: Hedges within setbacks are subject to a six (6) feet height restriction.

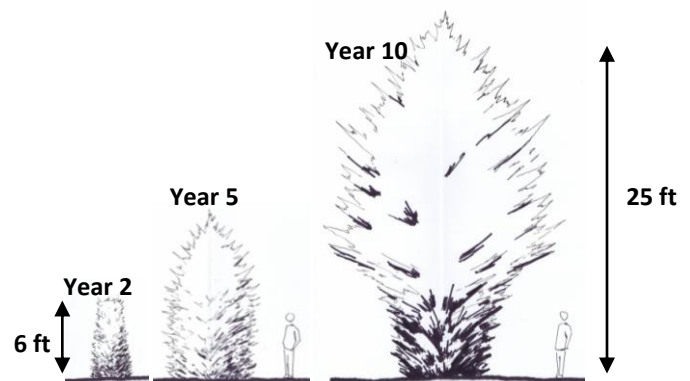


Figure 5: Hedge growth pattern when it is not pruned annually.

If you are directly affected by a neighbor’s hedge that does not conform to the Municipal Code, you have the right to submit a written complaint to town staff, who will assess the situation and take the proper action.

Hedge Selection

The best plants for formal hedges are fast growing shrubs and small trees that maintain their leaves through the winter (evergreen). Evergreen plants can either be conifers (cone-bearing) or broadleaf (flowering) plants.

Consider your planting site carefully, including how wet it gets in the winter, how much sunlight it will be exposed to throughout the year, and how much horizontal space you have for the hedge. Formal hedges are traditionally pruned in a rectangular shape to promote a narrow form that takes up less space. Informal hedges are pruned with less rigor to allow a more natural, wider shrub form.

If space is available, informal hedges can be very effective screening plants. Plants appropriate for hedges are listed in [Figure 6](#).

Two plants to avoid as hedges are English Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Leyland cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*). Both grow VERY fast in the Pacific Northwest and they prove difficult to constrain in size. Due to its propensity to reseed throughout greenbelts, King County has listed English Laurel as a "Weed of Concern" in our region and discourages new plantings.

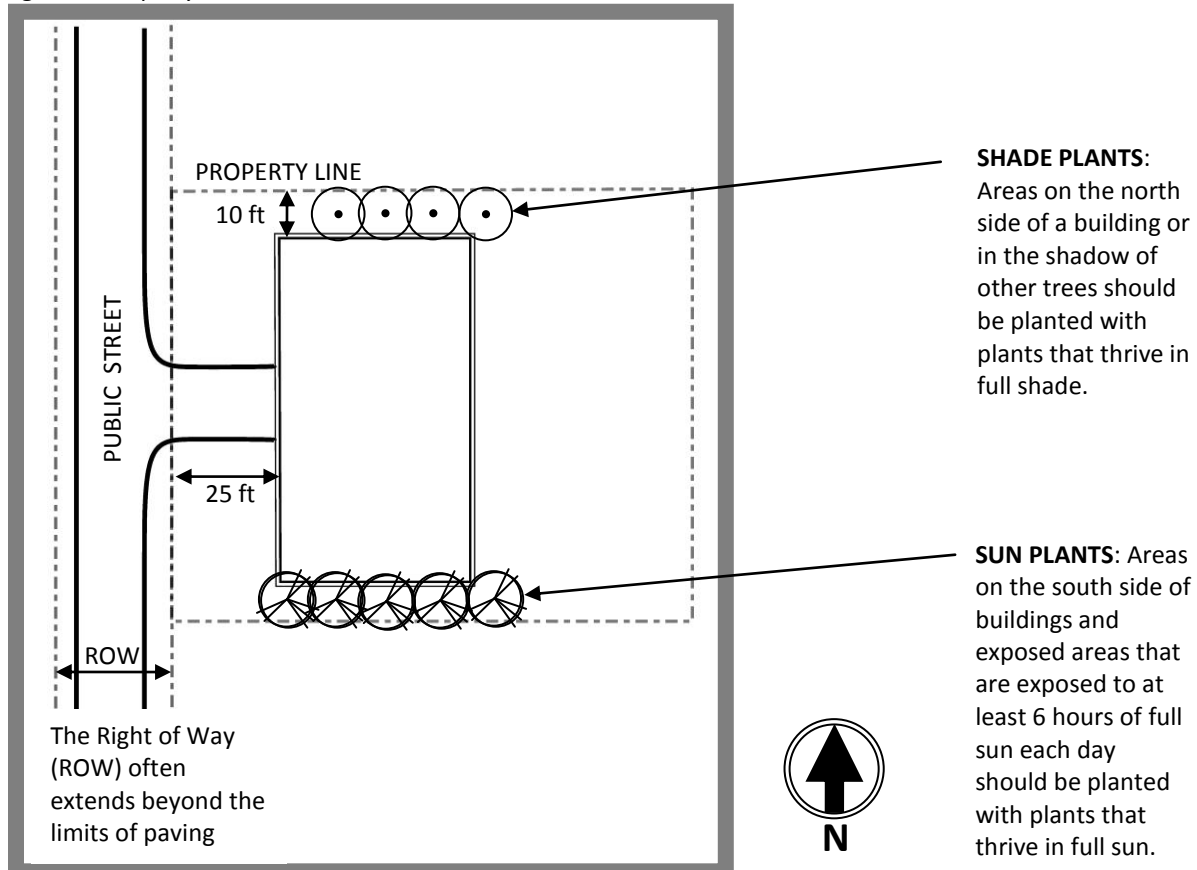
Figure 6: Plants commonly planted for moderate sized hedges

Common Name	Mature Height	Mature Width	Growth Rate	Notes
Burkwood Osmanthus <i>Osmanthus burkwoodii</i>	8'	8'	Moderate	Minimal pruning required. Sun or part shade.
Emerald Green Arborvitae <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> 'Smaragd'	15'	3'	Slow	Minimal pruning required. Sun.
Excelsa Cedar / Virescens Arborvitae <i>Thuja plicata</i> 'Excelsa' or 'Virescens'	35'	15'	Moderate	Pruning required every year. Sun or part shade.
Fortune's Osmanthus <i>Osmanthus fortuneii</i>	20'	20'	Moderate	Pruning required every year. Sun or part shade.
H.M. Eddie Yew <i>Taxus x media</i> 'H.M.Eddie'	20'	4'	Slow	Minimal pruning required. Sun or Shade.
Japanese Camellia <i>Camellia japonica</i>	15'	8'	Moderate	Pruning required every year. Sun or part shade.
Laurustinus <i>Viburnum tinus</i>	12'	12'	Moderate	Pruning required every year. Sun or part shade.
Portuguese Laurel <i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	20'	20'	Fast	Pruning required every year. Sun or Shade.
Schipka Laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Shipkaensis'	15'	10'	Fast	Pruning required every year. Sun or Shade.
Silktassel <i>Garrya elyptica</i>	12'	8'	Moderate	No pruning required. Sun or Shade.
Waxleaf Privet <i>Ligustrum japonicum</i> 'Texanum'	12'	8'	Moderate	Pruning required every year. Sun or Shade.

Property Setbacks

Setbacks are required buffers around private property that have restrictions on what can be built or planted within them. In Yarrow Point, hedges cannot be taller than six (6) feet when they are planted within a property's setbacks. (This includes a buffer from the ordinary high water line of Lake Washington in order to preserve views for neighboring properties).

Figure 7: Property Setbacks in Yarrow Point



What does solar exposure mean? This is the amount of sunlight or shade that a plant can withstand. The south side of a building in Washington is in full sun, while the north side is in constant shade. Different plants prefer different exposures, and the amount of light an area gets should be considered before planting.

Online Resources:

Great Plant Picks
www.greatplantpicks.org

International Society of Arboriculture
www.treesaregood.org

Tree Solutions Consulting Arborists
www.treesolutions.net

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