

BEDS 'N' SHEDS

Improve Your Garden Security

The garden is your home's first line of defence against crime. Here are some ideas from Bedfordshire Police to protect your property:

TO SCRATCH A THIEF . . .

Prickly or "hostile" plants will slow down or deter unlawful entry to your premises - and there's no need for unsightly signage, as with other types of man-made perimeter defences, because you can't sue Mother Nature for causing injury.

When planting up the boundaries of your property, consider using any of the plants below. You can even put them under vulnerable windows to prevent anyone getting near enough to look inside.

The Home Office recommends keeping hedges no higher than 1 metre and tree canopies no lower than 2 metres to enable natural surveillance from your neighbours and the street. If you can't see out of your property, no one can see an intruder on your premises.

- Pyracantha (Firethorn) - all varieties
- Prunus Spinosa (Blackthorn)
- Mahonia - all varieties
- Ilex (Holly) - aquifolium varieties
- Rose - climbing and rambling
- Ulex Europeaus (Gorse)
- Crataegus Monogyna (Hawthorn)
- Berberis - Ottawensis Superba, Stenophylla, Darwinii
- Hippophae Rhamnoides (Sea Buckthorn)
- Chaenomeles Japonica (Ornamental Quince)
- Rubus fruticosus (Blackberry)

Hostile planting is intended to complement but not replace crime reduction measures such as locks, alarms and lighting.



*Environmentally friendly
crime reduction advice from
Bedfordshire Police*



GET SHEDUCATED...

Unfortunately, if offenders have easy access to your shed, they also have access to the tools they need to break into your house. When you've finished in the garden, make time to:

- Lock away your digging implements, this includes small items like trowels and dibbers - think about putting a lockable cabinet in your shed.
- Secure your power tools - consider sinking a steel d-ring into the floor and chaining your mower to it.
- Items that stay outside can also be chained together (such as garden furniture) or to a metal drain pipe - wheelie bins are often used to gain access to roofs and windows, wheel barrows can be used to transport stolen goods.

When you add up the value of the contents of the average shed, it can work out to several hundred pounds, so you need to make sure your shed is also secure:

- Is your padlock adequate? It should be made of hardened steel and comply with British Standards.
- It's no use having a good padlock when the hasp is of poor quality - make sure you fit one that covers the screw heads when it is in the closed position.
- Some outbuildings may have doors thick enough to fit a 5 lever mortice lock.
- Exposed door hinges would benefit from using coach bolts or clutch head screws so that thieves can't remove them.
- Fit window locks - burglars won't risk climbing through broken glass if they can easily reach through and open the window instead.
- There are plenty of alarms suitable for outbuildings, ranging from fully wired systems connected to your house alarm to stand-alone battery operated units.

MORE ANTI-THEFT IDEAS...

- Dusk-till-dawn lighting not only makes your garden attractive at night but removes the dark corners where a burglar can hide.
- If you have a piece of stoneware you don't want to go missing, you could drape a chain around it and fix it to a wall or the ground - to hide the chain, grow a climbing plant through it.
- Battery operated drive alarms are also available on the market - these will ring a doorbell chime in the house when someone walks past it.
- Don't forget property marking can be applied to furniture and tools - for outdoor items, microdot technology and etching work best.