



Garden Talk

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Home Security Landscaping

When thinking of home security what often comes to mind are lights, cameras and barb wire. What you have planted in the landscape should be your first line of defense and can greatly reduce your home or business as a target. Lets cover some of the basics in landscape security.

Keep the sight lines. Burglars don't like to be seen so they look for homes that give them protection. Trim or remove tall shrubs from around the house, especially when they are under windows and next to doors as they provide a good place for thieves to hide. Instead replace shrubs in these locations with plants that deter potential intruders. These thorny sticky plants can also be used near adjacent trees or other structures so intruders will be less likely to climb and attain access to upper levels and decks.

Plant can act as natural razor wire and still remain low to the ground with barberry hawthorn, holly, pyracantha, raspberry, blackberry and goose berry, currant, locust, prickly pear, scrub oak, agave, yuccas, desert spoons and roses all make great security shrubs. Pick one that is right for the landscaping of the property as well as the security of the home. Thick shrubs that are difficult to walk through yet provide a wide low barrier are also effective. Plants like juniper, mugho pine, globe spruce, rosemary and even eoumymous all make access to window, trees and other structures more difficult.

Security however, isn't all thorns and prickles; it can also be the edge of a leaf. The Oregon grape holly, false holly and regular holly all grow upward in a narrow form, perfect for walkways. The spiny teeth around the leaves are a guaranteed hindrance to unwanted hooligans.

Keep shrubs trimmed. For proper security shrubs near the home should be kept down to approximately three feet, especially near windows and door. This part of a home security plan is hard for most folks to implement because they enjoy the natural beauty of larger plants. Thieves love high bushes, especially near basement windows, because they cannot be easily seen by neighbors or passersby on the street.

Limb trees up so they are more difficult to climb. Trim tree branches close to your house. Tree branches that come closer than 7 feet from upper story windows and decks are as good as a ladder to thieves. A big part of a home security plan is to keep tree branches near your house well trimmed to remove this opportunity.

Avoid planting lines of trees near the street. This is one of the most common mistakes homeowners make. Landscapes near busy streets or highways often plant a line of trees or shrubs to cut down on the road noise and provide a sense of privacy on their property. Thieves recognize this as a chance to get close to your house undetected. If they cannot be easily seen from the road or by neighbors, this gives them the time to break windows and aggressively gain entry to you home.

Keep the lawn mowed and weeds down. An unkempt lawn is a green light to thieves that you are out of town. If you need to be away on business or vacation, ask a friend or a trustworthy neighbor kid to mow your lawn at least once a week.

Keep weeds from ever emerging with an application of "Weed & Grass" preventer. This granular is spread much like fertilizers and keep weed seed from ever germination in the landscape.

Properly store ladders. Leaving an unsecured ladder in your backyard is an easily avoidable breach of your home security. When you are done with ladders or other tools, make sure that they are put back in the garage or secured to a building to prevent easy access to upper-story windows and decks.

Install Outdoor Lighting. This may be the single most effective part of your home security plan. Install motion detector lighting around the perimeter of your home especially in the back yard and other hard to see locations. Good outdoor lighting is fairly inexpensive and if motion triggers a light to go off at 2 in the morning, it will arouse suspicion and inspire thieves to look for a softer target. In the landscape avoid using solar powered lights they just aren't powerful enough to provide security. Instead light outside trees and dark corners with low voltage lights that can be bought at any hardware or home store.

Summary - All of these tips and more are a big part of any effective home security plan. Ask your local police to 'case' your property as a thief would and they will provide several more tips you can do to make your home more secure and less likely to become a target for thieves.

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