



Go local

GREAT FOLIAGE, GREAT FORM AND ADAPTABILITY TO LOCAL GROWING CONDITIONS ARE KEY PREREQUISITES FOR A SUCCESSFUL HEDGE, WHICH IS WHY NEW ZEALAND NATIVES RATE AMONG THE VERY BEST FOR KIWI GARDENS.

The refined natural beauty of a well-kept hedge is the best kind of garden wall of all. Above eye level, hedges offer privacy, screening and shelter. Trimmed low, they define garden lines, and give permanent shape and structure for a garden that looks good all year round.

While almost any species can be grown as a hedge, shrubs that make the best hedges are smaller leaved, dense growing evergreens. Ideally, they'll need trimming no more than two or three times a year. It's important to consider soil and climate when deciding which hedge to plant, but these tough natives will thrive in a wide range of situations.

KOROKIO

Highly prized for their distinctive thick, wiry growth and tiny leaves, our corokias (aka korokio) are a top choice for sculpting into strong architectural forms.

As a bonus to their impeccable foliage they produce tiny yellow star flowers in spring. Red or yellow berries follow in autumn, which makes corokias some of the best bird magnets in the garden, especially when left untrimmed.

So good are the corokias, that dozens of named cultivars have appeared on the scene in recent times, offering an enticing choice of different colours and textures. Many of them are selections of *Corokia x virgata*, a cross between the small leaved species, *Corokia cotoneaster* and larger leaved *Corokia buddleioides*.

Two of our most time-honoured favourites are *Corokia* Geenty's Green and *Corokia* Frosted Chocolate. The multi-toned leaves of the latter combine warm russet browns and olive greens with young growth that imparts a silver, almost lavender sheen. Geenty's Green leaves are pure olive green with white undersides. Both have excellent bushy growth that responds beautifully to trimming, ideal for hedges between 1 and 2m tall.

For a misty, silvery sheen that contrasts beautifully with darker greens, the similar looking (but subtly different) cultivars Silver Prince, Geenty's Ghost, Silver Ghost and Little Prince all make excellent small to medium hedges or topiaries, with small wiry leaves covering thick compact growth.

For a greener hedge, Emerald and Jade and Clover are recent additions to the corokia wardrobe, popular for their fine textured foliage in rich shades of green on green.

Corokias are best trimmed little and often, at least twice a year, ideally in winter and again in summer. They will tolerate dry, exposed sites. Though well suited to coastal areas, some varieties are sensitive to salt spray. Plant 50-70 cm apart.

KŌWHAI

Low growing and bushy, *Sophora* Dragon's Gold is perfect for gardens lacking space for a regular kōwhai tree. Dragon's Gold flowers over a longer period than its larger cousins, often commencing in mid winter. As well, its attractive close-knit foliage makes it a strong contender for hedging at 1 to 1.5m tall. Reaching about 2 metres tall and wide when left untrimmed, Dragon's Gold is loved by nectar seeking birds.



OPPOSITE PAGE: **Corokia Frosted Chocolate**
THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: **korokio; kōwhai; korokio in flower.**

KARO

New Zealand pittosporums are longtime favourites for privacy screening in urban gardens. In recent years a variety originating from a windswept island in Cook Strait has emerged as a top choice for hedging and shelter planting. *Pittosporum Stephens Island* has become today's leading choice as a tough dense hedge, informal or trimmed, with extremely attractive dense foliage that's lovely for picking. It thrives in a range of soil types, provided it is well drained. It is reasonably drought-tolerant once established and great for hedges 1-2.5m, growing about 4 metres tall and wide when left untrimmed. Plant 50-100cm apart.



TAUPATA

Catching the winter sun with their high gloss leaves, the mirror coprosmas (*Coprosma repens*) are great as quick growing hedges in frost-free climates and coastal gardens. One of many brightly coloured cultivars, Karo Red sports bright shades of purple, red and green. In citrus tones, Lemon 'n' Lime is another standout. Or try Pacific Sunrise for wavy multi-toned leaves with hot-pink highlights. A real statement in winter, *Coprosma Inferno* and *Ignite* radiate warm vibrant reds. If green is your colour, *Coprosma Middlemore* makes a superb 1m hedge in bright shimmering emerald. Plant coprosmas 50-70cm apart and trim regularly to a height of 50-100cm.

As a taller hedge that contrasts beautifully with the mirror coprosmas, *Coprosma virescens* (mikimiki) has an elegant weeping form with dense tangled growth coated in tiny coppery-orange leaves that glisten after rain. Left untrimmed it makes a striking tall screen, but it can also be trimmed as a tall formal hedge up to 2m tall.

HEBE

Hebes are favourites among small flowering hedges. As our most diverse native shrub genus, they offer a bewildering choice of cultivars. Those with tight packed foliage make the best hedges.

Some hebes are grown primarily for their foliage. *Hebe Red Edge* is constantly colourful, even when not in bloom, with glowing red leaf margins. Neatly compact *Hebe Emerald Green* makes a good low hedge up to 40cm tall.

Unlike many hebes, *Hebe Wiri Mist* will regenerate from inner bare wood when trimmed, making it one of the best as a hedge. With masses of snowy white flowers from late spring it is tough and easy care. Another top performer, *Hebe Wiri Charm* offers masses of rose purple flowers, peaking in summer. It makes a colourful display up to 50-75cm tall.



TOP LEFT: *Pittosporum Stephens Island* at Larnach Castle in Dunedin

BOTTOM LEFT: *Hebe Wiri Mist*

ABOVE: *Coprosma Pacific Sunrise*

Hebes grow best in moist, well-drained soil. Keep young plants well watered until established, especially over the summer months. Regular trimming will help prolong a fresh and youthful shape. Because hebes flower on new growth, it is best to trim immediately after flowering in mid to late spring. Another trim in summer is worthwhile to maintain compact leafy growth. Plant 40-50cm apart.

KAPUKA

Griselinia littoralis has become one of our most popular and omnipresent hedges - for good reason. It is quick growing and practically bulletproof in a wide range of hostile environments, including coastal. Hard frost is its only real enemy. Popular 'Broadway Mint' is now accompanied by equally tough darker green 'Ardmore Emerald', and bronze-stemmed 'Canterbury' for hedges 1 to 3m tall. For a smaller option *Griselinia* Gecko Green is a newer, more compact form with dense foliage and smaller leaves.



Happy hedges

- Purchase vigorous young plants of an even grade.
- In mid-late spring, once a newly planted hedge has had its first flush of new growth, cut it back by a half. This promotes thick even growth.
- Most hedges require clipping twice annually - in spring and again in late summer. Fast growing hedges may need up to 4 trims per year.
- Beware of heavy pruning in autumn; the resulting fresh growth may be susceptible to frost damage.
- Shaping hedges with slightly sloping sides so that they are slightly narrower at the top encourages leaf growth all the way to the base, because more sun can reach the lower branches.
- Give your hedges a good soaking during dry periods, but avoid overhead sprinklers.
- Feed hedges after trimming with controlled release fertiliser.

TORORARO

With tiny heart-shaped leaves on lacy brown-red twigs, *Meuhlenbeckia astonii* is a beautiful lacy textured native shrub that's superb either as a billowy informal hedge or trimmed to more formal shapes. This one is excellent for windy and coastal sites.

TOTARA

Podocarpus totara 'Matapouri Blue' is a blue-green variety of totara which makes a stunning hedge with thick dense yew-like growth. It can be trimmed at any height from 1 to 3m tall. Plant 50-70cm apart.

HOROPITO

A low sweeping curve of colourful *Pseudowintera* makes a vibrant accent between green lawn and shrubs. Compact and colourful forms like 'Red Leopard' and 'Burgundy Delight' are stunning in the winter garden and are great as low border hedges. 🌿

TOP LEFT: **Griselinia Broadway Mint**

BOTTOM LEFT: **Coprosma Inferno**

BELOW: **Pseudowintera Burgundy Delight**

