**Shrubs for Specific Landscape Issues**

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Issue- Are there any low-growing evergreen shrubs that deer do not eat?

Response- In my neighborhood, the deer pass up both dwarf yaupon holly and dwarf Chinese holly.

Dwarf yaupon holly forms a tight globe-shaped crown that may eventually reach five feet on good soils, but on most sites, it stops growing at three feet high and wide. The leaves are small and are blue-green

Dwarf Chinese holly forms a mound that grows to less than three feet tall. It is slow growing. The leaves are shiny Kelly green with sharp, short thorns at several points on the leaf.

Issue- Is there an attractive, but tough, shrub that can be planted in a garden plot bordered by sidewalks at our church? Children and adults have a tendency to cut through the bed.

Response- Martha Gonzales old-fashioned rose is the plant that I would recommend. It grows to five feet tall and five feet around. The quarter-size blooms are blood red. It blooms eight months of the year. The foliage is lush with shiny, red-green leaves.

Martha Gonzales protects itself and deters traffic because it has thorns. They are sharp enough to discourage contact but not savage enough to require blood transfusions for trespassers. The

Martha Gonzales is pest-free and drought tolerant. It does not require regular pruning.

Issue- What are our choices for a tall evergreen hedge to block an unattractive view?

Response- My favorite tall evergreen hedge plants are Texas mountain laurel, calomondin and viburnum tinus.

Texas mountain laurel is a very drought tolerant native shrub that will naturally grow as a thick, multi-stemmed shrub. It is slow growing, but will grow to 25 feet on some sites. Fifteen feet is more common. In March, it produces purple blooms with a strong, grape Kool-Aid fragrance. Texas mountain laurel needs full sun and well-drained soil to do its best. It doesn’t survive over-watering.

Calomondin is one of the citrus options available on the San Antonio market. Mine have grown to 10 feet tall with a disciplined crown that is six feet in diameter and dense from ground to top. It produces fragrant blooms and a bounty of quarter-sized fruit every season that are decorative from early fall to late winter. It grows best in full sun.

Viburnum tinus is an upright evergreen shrub that grows to 12 feet. Every spring it produces a crop of red buds followed by white flowers and black berries that are a songbird favorite. Viburnum tinus is drought tolerant after a two year establishment period. The tall, evergreen shrub forms a thick hedge when planted six feet apart. It grows well in shade or sun.

Issue- We need a shrub that can grow in sun or shade to hide a long, unattractive fence that is four feet tall. Are there any shrubs in this height range that have berries or color in the winter?

Response- Burford holly and standard nandina meet the described conditions.

Burford holly has waxy, dark green foliage. The dwarf selection grows to five and a half feet tall and the standard selection will grow to eight feet. Both selections produce bright red berries that are showy. They last most of the winter until the birds eat them.

Standard nandina is also called heavenly bamboo. It grows well in sun or shade. In addition to producing berries that are decorative all winter, the evergreen foliage turns reddish in the winter. Standard nandina is a good xeriscape plant with few pest problems. It grows to seven feet tall.

Issue- We are seeking shrubs to grow as specimens that are attractive and provide food for the birds.

Response- Three that come to mind are pyracantha, Katy Road rose and possumhaw holly.

Pyracantha has attractive white blooms in the spring that are followed by small apple-related fruit that is very decorative from autumn to early winter when the birds eat them. Pyracantha can be left to be a tall, multi-stemmed shrub, pruned to a tree, or even espaliered. It does have serious thorns that make it even more attractive to the birds but tough on gardeners who need to manage it.

Katy Road rose grows to five feet tall and wide. New foliage is reddish and the flowers are four inches across and pink. Katy Road blooms for eight months of the year and, throughout the bloom period, it produces rose hips that are eaten by the birds and other wildlife. Katy Road is also called Carefree Beauty. It is drought tolerant and does not require spraying.

Possumhaw holly grows to seven feet tall. It is the same species as yaupon holly but is deciduous. The plant’s main claim to fame is the decorative nature of its berries in the winter. The pea-sized red berries are spread along the horizontal stems. Birds eventually eat the berries.