

GARDENS • LANDSCAPES

5 Natural Fencing Ideas As Beautiful As They Are Functional

For when wood boards won't cut it

TEXT BY MIRANDA SILVA · Posted September 8, 2016



For most people, a [garden](#) or [terrace](#) offers an escape from it all, but when neighbors are close by, a traditional fence or wall alone doesn't always provide the privacy you crave in an outdoor retreat. That's when it's time to get inventive with the design and consider natural alternatives, says Alec Gunn, president of New York firm [Gunn Landscape Architecture](#). "When people think about using natural fencing for privacy, they tend to think of the privet hedge," says Gunn. "While it is a good staple, there are an array of other creative options." Here are some of his favorite ideas from his firm's recent projects.



Photo: Courtesy of Gunn Landscape Architecture



Reach for the sky.

There are a number of evergreens that grow tall enough to provide total seclusion. For this media-industry client, Gunn used Hollywood Juniper in wood planters to shield the family from surrounding buildings—and from the cameras.



Photo: Courtesy of Gunn Landscape Architecture



Mix it up.

“One of our favorite techniques for blocking out neighbors or unwanted views is the mixed hedge,” says Gunn. For this rooftop, his team combined a variety of textures and colors by using Japanese black pine mixed with ilex (a loosely rounded evergreen) and white hydrangeas.



Photo: Courtesy of Gunn Landscape Architecture



Shield from above.

For apartment-dwellers seeking solitude away from upstairs neighbors, Gunn suggests a [pergola](#) with climbing plants. At this New York City home, his team built a wisteria-covered structure that conceals the terrace from the balcony above



Photo: Courtesy of Gunn Landscape Architecture



Create a green screen.

While vines can provide ample privacy, they can take years to grow. Gunn's firm came up with a near-instant green wall for this city home by planting a series of custom-welded pockets over a wood frame. A selection of perennials and evergreens—including coral bells, autumn ferns, hakone grass, oak sedge, and English ivy—creates a lush look.



Photo: Courtesy of Gunn Landscape Architecture



Take refuge.

Sometimes, you want to create a sense of isolation within the garden itself. At this Bridgehampton, New York, country estate, Gunn created a willow dome, which the homeowners' children can use as a secret hideaway.

Explore

[Landscape Architecture](#)

[Landscape](#)



PIN



SHARE



TWEET