

# **JUNKYARD SCREENING GUIDELINES**

Prepared by the Lewis County Junkyard Review Board

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## **PART I - INTRODUCTION**

According to the County of Lewis Junkyard Law, where a junkyard is or would be visible from a public highway or from neighboring properties, it should be screened. Most junkyards will require some form of screening in addition to what screening may already be present on the site.

The site plan required with all junkyard license applications should contain information on both existing and proposed screening of the junkyard site.

Effective opaque screening, either in the form of a fence or evergreen trees and shrubs, may be designed in a number of ways. The information contained in this booklet is intended to aid junkyard license applicants in designing acceptable screening for junkyard sites.

Although the Junkyard Review Board will have the final determination as to whether, and in what amounts, forms, and locations, screening shall be required, the board will consider screening designs proposed by junkyard license applicants. The information contained in this booklet should be of help to you in designing an effective opaque screen which the board may approve.

### **QUESTIONS ?**

If you have questions concerning these guidelines, the license application form, or the County of Lewis Junkyard Law, the Lewis County Junkyard Inspector is available to provide assistance. Please contact:

Lewis County Building and Fire Codes  
7760 North State Street  
Lowville, NY 13367

(315) 376-5165

## **PART II - SCREENING REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants should first review the County of Lewis Junkyard Law, Article C, Section 2, for screening regulations. Screening regulations presented in the County of Lewis Junkyard Law are not repeated here, but do apply to junkyard sites.

The Junkyard Review Board has also adopted the following additional rules and regulations pertaining to the screening of junkyard sites:

- A. **Residential Areas.** Where a junkyard is located in a predominantly residential area, any screening required shall include the provision of a fence. Such fence shall act primarily to deter unauthorized entry to the junkyard site. If adequate screening by plantings is additionally provided, a fence of opaque materials shall not be required.
- B. **Fences.** Where a fence is required in an area not predominantly residential in character and where such fence shall serve to screen the junk storage area without the addition of plantings, the fence shall be constructed of wood, brick, or stone and must be opaque. The Junkyard Review Board may consider alternative opaque fencing materials as may be suggested by license applicants.

Where, in addition to adequate screening by plantings, a fence is required by the Junkyard Review Board or is provided by the applicant, such fence need not be opaque.

The Junkyard Review Board may require a fence of less than eight (8) feet in height or may waive the requirement of a fence.

- C. **Screening By Plantings.** Evergreen trees and shrubs which shall be acceptable for use in screening junk storage areas shall include: pine, balsam, cedar, fir, spruce, hemlock, juniper, yew, arborvitae, and amur privet. Additional species of evergreen trees and shrubs may be considered for use in screening junk storage areas, as may be suggested by license applicants.

Where screening by plantings is permitted by or required by the Junkyard Review Board, the applicant shall provide evidence that the varieties of evergreen trees and shrubs proposed for such screening are capable of attaining heights of at least eight (8) feet.

- D. **Waiver of Screening Requirements.** Junkyard license applicants should refer to the County of Lewis Junkyard Law, Article G, Section 1, for more complete information on waivers. Generally, a waiver of screening requirements may be granted by the Junkyard Review Board where the board finds that, due to special circumstances of a particular case, a waiver is justified. The presence of existing screening on the site and the location of the junk storage area in relation to neighboring properties and public roads will be among the factors considered by the Junkyard Review Board in deciding whether to grant a waiver of screening requirements.

## **PART III - SCREENING DESIGN**

Once you have defined the boundaries of your junk storage area, you can decide where screening is needed around the junk storage area. Not all sides of the junk storage area may need to be screened. Although the final determination of where screening must be located will be made by the Junkyard Review Board, junkyard license applicants should be able to estimate where screening would be required around the junk storage area. Generally, where a junk storage area is or would be visible from a public road or from neighboring properties, the junk storage area should be screened.

The Junkyard Review Board recognizes that each junkyard site may present unique screening requirements and that effective screening may be achieved through varied methods. It is the intention of the Junkyard Review Board to equitably require screening of junkyard sites while not creating undue hardship to the applicants and while maintaining the best interest of the community.

In determining whether, and in what amounts, forms, and locations, screening shall be required, the Junkyard Review Board shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the following: practical difficulties with the shape, size, or topography of the site, the location from which viewers will observe the site, the elevation of the site in relation to viewers, the speed of movement of viewers passing the site, the presence of existing screening of the site, other special circumstances involving the site, and the general welfare of the public. These same factors should be considered by the license applicant when designing proposed junkyard screening.

A key point to keep in mind is that the selection of plant varieties, their size at planting, and the space between plants will greatly influence how well an effective screen is formed as the plants mature. Proper maintenance and care will also play a role in the appearance of the screen.

Another key point to remember when designing your screen is that the screen must be opaque. This means that the junk storage area should not be visible through the screen.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to fences and planted screens. These must be considered along with the particular characteristics of the area where the screen will be located.

### **Fences**

Screening may be accomplished through the use of fences. The popularity of this screening technique is due to various characteristics of fences when used as screens. In general, fences:

- require a minimum of land for the screen itself
- provide an immediately effective opaque screen
- are relatively easy to design and specify for construction
- are adaptable to various design heights and configurations

Although there are many inherent advantages to the use of fences as screens, they may not provide the most appropriate or aesthetic choice of screen in all cases. Some problems may arise when using fences as screens, due to the nature of fences themselves. For example, fences:

- may require periodic maintenance
- are often highly visible and may be incompatible with the surrounding landscape
- can be costly to erect
- do not adapt easily to uneven terrain

Due to the often incompatible appearance of long, high fences in rural settings, the additional planting of some trees or shrubs can help enhance the appearance of a fence. In such a fence/planting combination,

the major portion of the screening is accomplished by the fence, while the plantings provide additional height and soften the harsh lines of the fence.

### **Planted Screens**

Careful design and proper choice of plant varieties are the most important factors in creating an effective opaque screen. Inadequate design and improper choice of plant varieties can cause screens to be thin or spotty, allowing a view through or around the plants. The table on page 9 provides information on the proper spacing and minimum planting size of various evergreen trees and shrubs.

The use of plantings as screens offers a number of advantages, because plantings:

- appear most natural in a suburban or rural setting
- require little maintenance once established
- can be used to create a tall screen

The main advantage of the use of plantings over other types of screens is that wood and other materials deteriorate with age and may require maintenance or replacement. Plantings, however, become more visually effective with age if they are properly maintained.

At the same time, there are disadvantages to using plantings as screens. Plantings:

- may not initially form an opaque screen if planted in a single row
- may not survive in an unfavorable environment (i.e., unsuitable soil type, excessive shade)
- may allow a view through the screen as poorly chosen plants mature and thin out
- may be susceptible to disease and other pests which diminish their effectiveness as screens

### **Earth Berms**

Another alternative design is the earth berm. A berm is a built-up ridge of earth. A berm may be combined with either a fence or with plantings to create an effective opaque screen. Because of the nature of their construction, berms:

- can appear natural in the landscape
- require minimum maintenance
- offer permanent, immediate screening

Berms are not frequently used in screening, however, because berms:

- require considerable land area to reach effective heights
- may be costly to construct if fill materials are not readily and cheaply available
- may affect the drainage pattern on certain sites

Whichever screening method you propose, it will be helpful to the Junkyard Review Board in reviewing your application if existing and proposed screening is clearly indicated on your site plan. It is also advisable to include with your license application a short narrative description of how the junk storage area is to be screened. And, if you feel that certain sides of the junk storage area should not require screening, an explanation should be included.

Illustrations of various screening techniques are on the following two pages. Keep in mind, however, that the unique characteristics of each site will play a role in determining an appropriate screening design. Not all screening designs will work at all sites. Single-row designs may not always be acceptable, because they generally do not provide an opaque screen at the time they are planted.

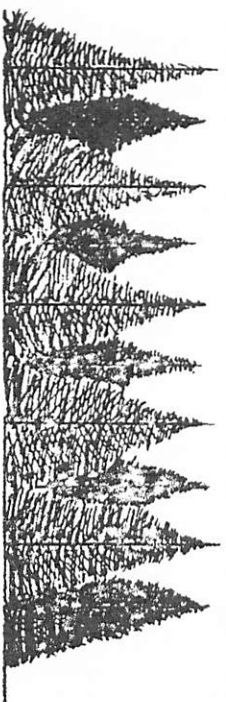


Profile

Single Species  
Single Row



Top View



Profile

Single Species  
Multiple Rows

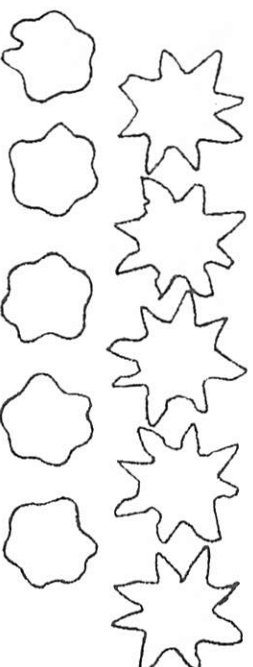


Top View



Profile

Multiple Species  
Multiple Rows

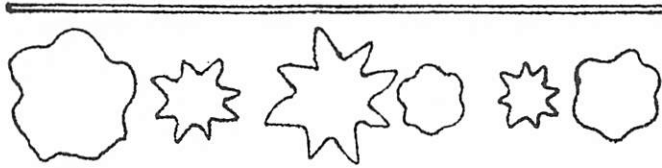


Top View



Profile

Fence With Plantings



Top View

Berm With Plantings



Side View

## **PART IV - SUITABLE EVERGREENS**

The evergreen trees and shrubs listed in the table on page 9 are those varieties which:

- are suitable for creating opaque screens
- will grow well in Lewis County
- are generally available from local suppliers and sources
- are generally reasonably priced

A number of ornamental varieties suitable for screening have been omitted, due to their relatively high cost. The Junkyard Review Board will also consider proposals for screens comprised of varieties of evergreen trees and shrubs other than those listed.

The following is a summary of the general characteristics and requirements of the more common groups of evergreen trees and shrubs:

### **Arborvitae**

Arborvitae do best in moist soil and flourish where the air is humid. While full sun is best, arborvitae will tolerate some shade. Where shaded, they will become thinner over a period of years.

### **Firs**

Most species of firs cannot stand hot, dry climates. They require moist but well-drained acid soil. Young trees can tolerate light shade but they do best in full sun. Firs need very little pruning.

### **Hemlocks**

Hemlocks are especially suitable for screens and hedges because they may be easily sheared to shape. Hemlocks do best in cool, moist, acid soil in full sun or in light shade.

### **Junipers**

All junipers do best in full sun with well-drained soil. They tolerate both acid and alkaline soil conditions and they are tough enough to grow in dry, rocky soil.

### **Pines**

Pines must have abundant sunlight and do best when planted in well-drained soil that is especially rich in nutrients. Pines generally do not need fertilizer.

### **Spruces**

Spruces do best in full sun. They grow well in moist ground, yet are able to survive in light, dry soil if they are watered frequently for the first few years while their roots become established.

The table on the following page summarizes information on a number of suitable varieties of evergreen trees and shrubs.

COMMON NAME(S)	SCIENTIFIC NAME	AVERAGE ULTIMATE HEIGHT	AVERAGE ULTIMATE SPREAD	RECOMMENDED SPACING		RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SIZE TO PLANT	DESCRIPTION / COMMENTS
				SINGLE ROW	MULTIPLE ROWS		
Balsam Fir	Abies Balsamea	50'	15'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Tolerates shade and moist soils
Colorado Fir / White Fir	Abies Concolor	50'	12'-14'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Best in deep, rich, moist but well-drained soils.
Blue column Juniper	Juniperus Chinensis Var.	9'	12'	6'	10'	2'-3'	Fast-growing. Tolerates most soil conditions
Eastern Red Cedar	Juniperus Virginiana	50'	10'	7'	10'	4'	Growth rate: 8"-12" per year
Norway Spruce	Picea Abies	60'	25'	14'	20'	2'-3'	Fast growing Tolerates most soil conditions
Englemann's Spruce	Picea Englemanni	50'	22'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Tolerates most soil conditions
White Spruce	Picea Glauca	40'-50'	20'	8'	12'	2'-3'	Best in a moist loam or alluvial soil
Black Hills Spruce	Picea Glauca "Densata"	20'-40'	15'	10'	15'	3'	Slow-growing Tolerates poor soil
Colorado Spruce	Picea Pungens Var.	30'-40'	20'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Best in a moist loam or alluvial soil
Red Spruce	Picea Rubens	60'	15'-18'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Does well in moderately moist acid, sandy loams
Black Pine / Austrian Pine	Pinus Austriaca	35'	25'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Fast-growing Resistant to drought
Eastern White Pine	Pinus Strobus Var.	50'-75'	40'	12'	16'	3'	Tolerates light shade
Douglas Fir	Pseudotsuga Menziesii	60'	25'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Does best in full sun
Eastern Arborvitae / Eastern White Cedar	Thuja Occidentalis	40'	8'	5'	8'	2'-3'	Fast growing
Dark Green Arborvitae	Thuja Occidentalis "Nigra"	20'-35'	15'	8'	12'	2'-3'	Fast-growing
American Arborvitae	Thuja Occidentalis Var.	30'-40'	10'	4'	6'	3'	Tolerates moist and acid soils
Canadian Hemlock	Tsuga Canadensis Var.	30'-40'	30'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Tolerates shade
Eastern Hemlock	Tsuga Canadensis Var.	30'-40'	30'	8'	10'	2'-3'	Tolerates shade

## **PART V - MAINTENANCE**

As stated in the County of Lewis Junkyard Law, Article C, Section 2, the junkyard owner shall be required to provide evidence that all dead trees and shrubbery constituting the screen have been replaced with flora of the same species as the approved screen. Such replacements shall be planted at a height sufficient to maintain an opaque screen. Replacements shall be made prior to application for renewal of a junkyard license.

Beyond the requirement of maintaining the screen as opaque, many varieties of evergreen trees and shrubs will benefit from regular maintenance to control their growth and appearance. Trimming branches at the appropriate time in a plant's growing cycle will help to control its size, shape, and density of growth.

The timing of growth determines the timing of pruning. Some evergreens produce their new shoots in a spurt that starts early in spring and ends by the start of summer. Others begin growing in spring and continue slowly but steadily until the end of summer.

### **Pines, Spruces, and Firs**

Narrow-leaved evergreens, such as pines, spruces, and firs, are generally pruned in the spring. Simply remove half or two-thirds of each new shoot. New buds will form behind the cut. In the following year, the foliage will be much more dense and compact than if the shoot had grown to full length.

### **Hemlocks and Junipers**

Hemlocks and junipers grow continuously throughout the summer and require a different pruning technique. They do not have the end-of-branch buds, but send out new shoots from all over their branches - old branches as well as new. They can be pruned at any time during the growing season except during the last few weeks, when the new growth slows down and matures in anticipation of winter cold. The pruning of such plants is generally done lightly near the tips of the branches, following the natural shape of the plant.

### **Hedges**

Pruning hedges requires a special technique. If the hedge is to be a formal one kept to a smooth, geometric shape, use hedge shears. Never trim an evergreen hedge so that the top is wider than the base. Otherwise, the lower branches will be shaded by the upper ones and will turn brown and die for lack of light. Taper the hedge outward from the top down or cut the sides straight and round the top, to encourage compact growth and to preserve the lower foliage.

Additional information on maintaining evergreens is available in several of the references cited in Part VII of these guidelines. It is also advisable to consult a professional nurseryman for instructions on the proper maintenance and care of the specific varieties of evergreens used in your screen.

## **PART VI - SOURCES OF SCREENING PLANTS**

Listed below are nurseries in and around Lewis County which may have trees and shrubs suitable for screening.

PLEASE NOTE that this list was compiled from telephone directories for the convenience of junkyard license applicants. The Lewis County Junkyard Review Board makes no claims as to the reputation or reliability of any nurseries or nurserymen listed herein.

### **North Country Landscaping & Nursery**

(315) 376-3030  
Route 12, Lowville, New York 13367

### **New Port Florist and Greenhouse**

(315) 348-6012  
Quarry Rd., Port Leyden, New York 13433

### **American Tree Company, Inc**

(315) 543-2114  
800-433-7965  
Graham Rd.  
Harrisville, New York 13648

### **Green Pen Nursery**

(315) 348-6711  
Route 26, RD 1 - Box 50, Turin, NY 13473

### **North Country Landscape & Nursery**

(315) 785-9126  
Route 11, Watertown, New York 13601

### **Starnes Florist**

(315) 287-1360  
Somerville Rd. Gouverneur, New York 13642

### **Black River Garden Center**

(315) 782-8272  
Black River Rd., Watertown, New York 13601

### **P. J. Burns Landscaping & Lawn Service**

(315) 639-3844  
Foster Park Rd., Dexter, New York 13634

### **Casselman & Doctore's Landscaping**

(315) 788-0162  
Bradley Street Rd., Watertown, New York 13601

### **DiStefano Gardens, Inc.**

(315) 788-1494  
214 Breen Ave., Watertown, New York 13601

### **Gasparini Landscaping Co.**

(315) 488-4261  
4005 Split Rock Rd., Camden, New York 13316

### **Peter Aceto Landscaping**

(315) 793-0024  
5770 Walker Rd., Utica, New York 13502

### **D'Alessandro's Nursery & Landscaping**

(315) 738-0434  
Higby Rd., New Hartford, New York 13413

### **Dave's Landscaping**

(315) 853-3146  
Route 12B, Clinton, New York 13323

### **Ferraro Landscape Co., Inc**

(315) 797-0443  
748 Tibbitts Rd., New Hartford, New York 13413

### **John V. Pinkos Landscaping**

(315) 896-6817  
Prospect Rd., Barneveld, New York 13304

### **Royal Landscape Co**

(315) 732-6785  
118 Lynch Ave., Utica, New York 13502

### **Cerri Greenhouse**

742-4164  
9528 Route 49, Marcy, New York 13403