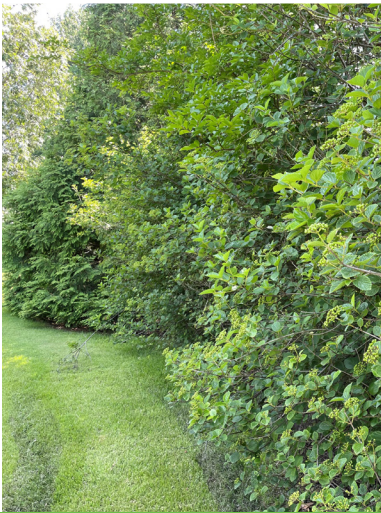


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LIVING SCREENS FOR TENNESSEE LANDSCAPES



LIVING SCREENS FOR TENNESSEE LANDSCAPES

Celeste Scott, UT Horticulture Extension Specialist, Department of Plant Sciences

Taylor Reeder, UT Horticulture Extension Agent, Williamson County

Jason Reeves, Research Horticulturist, UT Gardens, Jackson

Lee Rumble, UT Horticulture Extension Agent, Knox County

Justin Stefanski, UT Horticulture Extension Agent, Rutherford County

Living screens have many useful functions in a home landscape. They can hide less attractive outdoor workspaces, soften the edges of lawns, provide sound barriers from busy roads, designate property boundaries and create privacy. Creating a functional and beautiful living screen can be challenging, but a well-designed planting can aid home gardeners in achieving their ultimate landscape goals.

A well-planned screen includes multiple species that blend together in unpredictable patterns to form layers of interest similar to the process of succession in nature, where herbaceous plants give way to woody understory vegetation and finally to canopy cover. This multi-species approach has numerous benefits. It protects against insect pests and diseases that could quickly devastate a single-species planting. When plant death does occur, a mixed design minimizes the visual impact of plant loss, helping to avoid noticeable gaps in the design. Beyond resilience, mixed-species plantings create a more dynamic and visually engaging landscape than uniform rows of a singular plant. They also enhance biodiversity in residential spaces, while a carefully layered plant palette with varied canopy levels promotes stewardship by creating valuable habitats for wildlife

PRIMARY

The plant chart that follows is a step-by-step game plan to assist with the selection of appropriate plants for a long-lasting and attractive living screen. The first section, titled **Primary**, focuses on evergreen shrubs and trees that have medium to fast growth rates. These plants will create the backbone of the design by providing year-round coverage with a combination of broadleaf and needled evergreen foliage. As you develop your landscape plan, take into consideration existing plantings and how they might play a role in the overall design. For example, a mature *Magnolia grandiflora*, or southern magnolia, with branches reaching the ground may be useful as a focal point to build a new screen installation around, or you may have other prominent trees that could act as anchors to build out the screen from point A to point B.

Not all existing plants should be retained if they are not reliable performers. For example, *x Hesperotropsis leylandii*, or Leyland cypress, is susceptible to drought stress and prone to root rot as well as canker disease. While Leyland cypress is a fast grower and used widely in living screens, we do not recommend its use in Tennessee landscapes. The aim is to only incorporate existing plants that are reliable and support the overall landscape vision while building a strong foundation of medium to fast-growing evergreen shrubs and trees.

SECONDARY

The second portion of the chart, titled **Secondary**, highlights evergreen shrubs and trees with slow to medium growth rates. These plants will be complementary to the more quickly growing primary plants. Some of these selections may grow quite large over time. They will need primary plants to carry the load of screen functionality while they mature. Consider placing less valuable primary plants near larger, slower growing secondary plants that can be removed once crowding becomes an issue. The secondary category of plants can also provide interest in the form of blooms, foliage color and texture.

UNDERSTORY FILLER

The final category, titled **Understory Filler**, includes smaller evergreen and semi-evergreen shrubs. This group provides a layering effect for the front of screens and can help create movement and depth along the edge.

















Understory filler plants can also give new life to mature screens that have thinning lower branches by providing additional coverage near the base of the plants. Realistically, this category could include any number of small- to medium-sized shrubs. However, as the overall goal is to create a visual screen, plant selections for this reference chart have been limited to evergreen and semi-evergreen plants.

CHART NOTES

The plant charts include basic cultural information and are arranged in alphabetical order by scientific name. All plants included in the list are appropriate for growing zones found in Tennessee (8a-6a), and specific hardiness issues are mentioned in the description if applicable. An effort has been made to include plants that are readily available at local garden centers and nurseries. The cultivar list is not all-inclusive but will provide a starting point for selections that are reliable favorites across the state. For simplicity, this section also includes plants that are widely known by their trademark names. For gardeners who are interested in introducing native options to the landscape, look for the tri-star emblem. This symbol indicates plants that are native to Tennessee. It is important to note that these plants may not be native to all parts of Tennessee but do occur naturally within some regions of our state. Plants that are native to the Southeastern United States, but not specifically Tennessee, are noted in the descriptions.













Special thanks to Carol Reese, retired UT horticulture Extension specialist, for her expertise and suggestions during the early development of this publication.

Primary: Evergreen Shrubs and Trees with Medium to Fast Growth Rates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Japanese Cryptomeria	 	'Yoshino' 'Radicans' 'Chapel View'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various sizes and forms available • Dense needle like foliage soft to the touch • Winter bronzing of foliage is common • Hardy from zone 5a-9b, but can be sensitive to drastic cold temperature fluctuations
<i>Cupressus arizonica</i>	Arizona Cypress	 	'Limelight' 'Sulphurea' 'Carolina Sapphire' 'Blue Ice' 'Blue Pyramid'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued for foliage color and texture • Can be short lived
<i>Ilex x attenuata</i>	Foster Holly	 	'Foster' 'Savannah'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall Pyramidal • Dark green shiny foliage • Red berries in winter • Excellent cold tolerance • Naturally occurring hybrid native to Southeastern U.S.
<i>Ilex x 'Nellie R. Stevens'</i>	'Nellie R. Stevens' Holly	 	'Nellie R. Stevens'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red berries in winter • Shade tolerant, prefers well-drained site • Excellent heat and humidity tolerance
<i>Ilex x</i>	Lusterleaf Holly Hybrids	 	'Emily Bruner' 'Mary Nell'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad pyramidal shape • Glossy dark green spiny foliage, red berries in winter • New growth can be reddish/purple • Height can exceed plant label claims with time
<i>Ilex x</i>	Red Holly Hybrids	 	'Oakleaf' 'Cardinal'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad pyramidal shape • Glossy dark green spiny foliage, red berries in winter • New growth can be reddish/purple • Height can exceed plant label claims with time
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i> 	Tree Yaupon	  	'Hoskin Shadow' 'Pendula'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerant of wet or dry soil conditions • Adaptable to sunny or shady sites






 Tennessee Native  Full Sun  Part Sun / Part Shade  Full Shade

Primary: Evergreen Shrubs and Trees with Medium to Fast Growth Rates








Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese Juniper	 	'Blue Point' 'Hetzii' 'Hetzii Columnaris' 'Spartan' 'Torulosa' 'Angelica Blue' 'Holbert'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many cultivars are available of varying height, color, and form • 'Angelica' and 'Holbert' are feathery spreading forms • 'Torulosa' sometimes called Hollywood juniper is upright with wildly twisting branches • Small berry-like cones on female plants and small yellow cones on male plants in winter
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> 	Eastern Red Cedar	 	'Burkii' 'Brodie' 'Canaertii' 'Taylor' Spreading 'Grey Owl' 'Grey Guardian'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many cultivars with varying color and growth habits • Straight species <i>J. virginiana</i> can be a good landscape addition • Small berry-like cones on female plants and small yellow cones on male plants in winter • Cedar apple rust can be an issue for home fruit growers as <i>Juniperus</i> spp. is a host plant for the disease
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i> 	Sweet Bay Magnolia	  	'Henry Hicks' 'Moonglow' 'Green shadow' 'Green Mile' 'Sweet Thing'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upright and loose form, not as wide spreading as Southern Magnolia • Fragrant white blooms in spring and continues to bloom sporadically throughout summer • Tolerates heavy clay soil, wet and dry sites • Excellent shade tolerance • Cultivars listed here are more reliably evergreen than straight species
<i>Ternstroemia gymnanthera</i> (<i>Cleyera japonica</i>)	Cleyera	  	Large Forms 'Bronze Beauty' 'Regal' 'Variegata' 'Bigfoot' 'LeAnn'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upright dense oval shape, various cultivars provide size and foliage color options • Leathery shiny foliage, new growth is red maturing to dark green • Excellent shade tolerance but also performs well in sun • Susceptible to occasional leaf spotting

 Tennessee Native  Full Sun  Part Sun / Part Shade  Full Shade













Primary: Evergreen Shrubs and Trees with Medium to Fast Growth Rates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i> 	Eastern Arborvitae	 	'Emerald' 'Degroot's Spire' 'Jantar' 'American Pillar' 'Skywalker' 'Thin Man' 'Smaragd' 'Techny'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers moist soil, but will not tolerate standing water • Sensitive to droughty conditions • Many of these cultivars have tight narrow forms making them useful for tight areas
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Arborvitae	 	'Green Giant' 'Spring Grove'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall dense conical growth habit • Tolerant of heat and humidity










Secondary: Evergreen Shrubs and Trees with Slow to Medium Growth Rates

<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i>	False Cypress	 	'Vintage Gold'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued for foliage color and texture • 'Vintage Gold' has a conical growth form at maturity if left unpruned
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Japanese Cryptomeria	 	'Gyokuryu' Shrub 'Globosa Nana' 'Elegans Nana'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense needle like foliage soft to the touch • Winter bronzing of foliage is common • Hardy from zone 5a-9b, but can be sensitive to drastic cold temperature fluctuations
<i>Illicium parviflorum</i>	Anisetree	  	Yellow foliage 'Florida Sunshine' 'BananAppeal'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large upright mounding shrub • Foliage is olive green and licorice scented • Excellent shade tolerance • Tolerates poor drainage • Native to Southeastern U.S.

Secondary: Evergreen Shrubs and Trees with Slow to Medium Growth Rates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> 	Mountain laurel	  		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leathery broad dark green foliage Tolerates shade but flowers best in sunnier locations Thrives in the understory of mountainous regions Requires acidic, well-drained, cool, moist soil Specific culture requirements limit this plant's success in many regions of the state
<i>Loropetalum chinense</i>	Loropetalum	 	'Zhuzhou Fuchsia' 'Carolina Midnight' 'Ruby' 'Crimson Fire' 'Purple Diamond' 'Snow Panda'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For screening purposes select forms with large growth habits Leaf color options in green and purple Bloom color options in shades from white to pink and fuchsia Prefers well-drained soil Severe winters may cause defoliation
<i>Taxus cuspidata</i>	Japanese Yew	  		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth habit is broad columnar Soft needled foliage Prefers shade, acidic soil, and excellent drainage Very cold hardy
<i>Viburnum x hybrid</i>	Prague Viburnum	  	'Pragense'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rounded irregular growth habit Shiny dark green foliage, reliably evergreen Showy white blooms on large cymes in spring Excellent shade tolerance













Understory Filler: Smaller Evergreen to Semi-Evergreen Shrubs

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	Glossy Abelia	 	'Canyon Creek' 'Kaleidoscope' 'Rose Creek' 'Mardi Gras'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large growing forms have mounding growth habits with arching stems • Semi-evergreen with many foliage color and variegation options • Showy blooms in white to pink from summer into fall are attractive to pollinators
<i>Abelia chinensis</i>	Chinese Abelia	 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mounding habit with arching branches • Semi-evergreen • Showy blooms in white to pink from summer into fall are attractive to pollinators and fragrant
<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Aucuba	 	'Rozannie' 'Picturata' 'Variegata'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upright rounded habit • Foliage has a broad oval shape and is shiny, variegated options are popular • Prefers moist well drained soil in part to full shade
<i>Buxus spp.</i>	Boxwood	  		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural form is round and mounded • Many forms available with foliage of various sizes and shades of green • Requires excellent drainage • May benefit from protection of hot summer sun and cold winter wind

Understory Filler: Smaller Evergreen to Semi-Evergreen Shrubs

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Camellia</i> spp.	Camellia	○ ◐ ●	Akerman hybrids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural form is round and mounded Many forms available with foliage of various sizes and shades of green Requires excellent drainage May benefit from protection of hot summer sun and cold winter wind
<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i>	False Cypress	○ ◐	'Gold Mop' 'Curly Tops' 'Soft Serve' 'Soft Serve Gold'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valued for foliage texture and color Filifera (mophead) types form oval haystacks of threadlike leaves Green and gold foliage forms available Mature size is larger than described in literature Excellent cold tolerance
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i> ★ ★ ★	Yaupon Holly	○ ◐ ●		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mounding rounded growth habit, tree forms are also available Small olive-green foliage, can work as an alternative to boxwood Tolerant of poor drainage as well as dry sites
<i>Rhododendron</i> spp. ★ ★ ★	Azalea	◐ ●	Large forms 'George L. Taber' 'G.G. Gerbing' 'Formosa' Reblooming Types Encore Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small leaved evergreen or deciduous shrub with spring bloom display in a wide range of colors Native forms are typically deciduous Requires acidic well-drained soil, prefers shady understory sites, not as cold hardy as Rhododendron

Understory Filler: Smaller Evergreen to Semi-Evergreen Shrubs

Scientific Name	Common Name	Light Requirements	Cultivars	Description
<i>Rhododendron</i> spp. 	Rhododendron	 	Numerous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large leaved evergreen shrub with spring bloom display in a wide range of colors • Many species are native to the mountainous regions of TN • Requires acidic moist well-drained soil, prefers shady understory sites • Ideal placement is important for success in non-native regions of the state • 'Roseum Elegans' has potential for greater success in warmer parts of the state
<i>Taxus cuspidate</i>	Japanese Yew	  		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upright spreading habit wider than tall • Soft needled dark green foliage • Prefers shady locations, • Not tolerant of wet sites or heavy clay soils
<i>Ternstroemia gymnanthera</i> (<i>Cleyera japonica</i>)	Cleyera	  	Medium Forms 'Juliet' 'Romeo' 'Montague'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upright dense oval shape, various cultivars provide size and foliage color options • Leathery shiny foliage, new growth is red maturing to dark green • Excellent shade tolerance but also performs well in sun • Susceptible to occasional leaf spotting
<i>Viburnum obovatum</i>	Small Leaf Viburnum	  	'Reifler's Dwarf' 'Mrs. Schiller's Delight'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-evergreen dense rounded form with small azalea-like foliage • Spring bloom display • Tolerant of wet or dry soil • Tolerant of sun or shady sites • Native to Southeastern U.S.



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