

An Garda Síochána

Crime Prevention Information Sheet



Home Security

Gardens & Landscaping



Introduction

When we think of crime prevention and how we can secure our homes we often forget to consider our gardens and everything in them. Your garden contains valuable possessions that thieves can easily sell; thieves can also use implements found in the garden to break into your home.

By taking some simple precautions you can reduce the risk of being burgled, increase the security of your home and garden and make life more difficult for any would-be intruders.

Perimeter - Gates, Walls, Fences, Hedges

Your perimeter / boundary is your first line of defence. This includes your walls, fences, gates and hedges.

Walls, fences and gates in the rear garden should be at least 1.8 metres (6 feet) high. It is often a good idea to fix a trellis to the top as it provides an extra barrier to negotiate and is also likely to break, if climbed, creating noise and attracting attention. Suitable thorny / prickly climbers could be grown through the trellis as an extra deterrent - see further information on defensive planting in the next section.

Ensure that side gates or doors are robust, locked with good quality padlocks or deadlocks and that they cannot be lifted off their hinges. Regularly check for damage or weakness and repair as necessary. The height of the gate / door should complement the height of the walls.

Defensive Planting

A barrier consisting of a dense prickly hedge running along your perimeter / boundary is well worth considering. Most would-be intruders will be deterred from seeking entry through this route. There are many plants suitable for such a role. The following list is not exhaustive and is offered as a guide only - you should discuss with a horticultural expert at your garden centre or nursery.

- Holly
- Berberis
- Firethorn

- Hawthorn
 - Blackthorn
 - Pernettya
- Climbing, Rambling or Shrub Roses

Driveways and Paths

Consider putting gravel on driveways and paths. Walking on gravel makes noise which can alert you and put off potential intruders.

Sheds / Garages / Outhouses

Sheds, garages and outhouses should be kept closed and locked when not in use. They should all be kept in good condition - windows and doors are particularly vulnerable and prone to damage. You should consider the following

- Fit metal grilles or strong mesh to the windows and a net curtain inside to prevent a person seeing in.
- Doors should be secured with mortice deadbolts or good security quality closed shackled padlocks as appropriate. If using a padlock, ensure that the hasp and staple are fitted securely and bolted through the door with concealed screws/bolts or with anti-tamper screws/bolts e.g. one-way screws.
- Connect to your home intruder alarm system if you have one installed.



- Solid shed, made with concrete block
- Door is wooden and reasonably solid
- No grille or curtain on window
- Too much clutter lying around
- Door not secured
- Cannot lock the hasp and even if possible, easily removed by unscrewing



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,
PLEASE CONTACT
your local GARDÁ CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER
or
visit the Garda website at www.garda.ie**

Machinery, Tools and Implements

These items are attractive to thieves for two reasons - (1) some are valuable and can easily be sold-on and (2) some can assist in actually breaking into your home.

- Don't leave ladders lying around the garden - secure them to a wall or other solid object.
- Don't leave garden tools e.g. spades, forks etc. lying around - they too can be used to break into your home.
- Lock away, in your garage or shed, valuable machinery such as lawn mowers, shredders, power washers, bicycles etc. It is also a good idea to further secure these items within the garage or shed e.g. by individual chaining to the wall or by inter-twined chaining of them all to each other etc.
- Other tools e.g. hammers, screwdrivers etc. should be kept in a secure, lockable container within your garage/shed, preferably anchored to the floor/wall.
- Consider property marking, in particular, valuable items such as the lawnmower, shredder, power washer and so forth. As with property inside your home, take photographs for record purposes and ease of identification.



Too many items unsecured and left lying around

Garden Furniture and Ornaments

Garden furniture and ornaments can be expensive to buy. This makes them attractive to thieves.

- Where possible, secure furniture and ornaments to the ground or a solid wall etc.
- Take photos and make notes of all scratches, indentations and defects

Landscaping

Landscaping and garden maintenance are important aspects of garden security. A neglected, poorly maintained, overgrown garden conveys a message that the owner may be absent or doesn't care whereas a well-maintained and properly landscaped garden evokes a sense of territoriality and can enhance access control and surveillance opportunities.

- If going away for a prolonged period, ensure your grass is cut during your absence.

Trees, Shrubs and Plants

Keep shrubs, hedges and large plants such as trees

pruned and cut back so as not to afford cover for thieves and also to allow better surveillance by you and/or your neighbours.

Lighting

Most gardens are dark at night allowing would-be thieves the opportunity to hide easily.

- Fit exterior lights that have sensors attached (either continuous 'dusk to dawn' or those triggered by motion detectors).
- As stated above, keep trees and shrubs pruned to improve surveillance, reduce opportunities for intruders to hide and not interfere with or block your lighting.

Occupiers' Liability Act, 1995

The above act imposes on occupiers of premises (including private residences & gardens etc.) certain duties of care with regard to visitors on the premises or grounds, including trespassers. Essentially' an occupier owes a duty of care to a visitor or trespasser not to injure the person or damage the property of the person intentionally and not to act with reckless disregard for the person or the property of that person. This Act can be viewed on the Acts of the Oireachtas website www.acts.ie. The erection / installation of 'severe' security measures may, in certain circumstances, be affected by this Act e.g. the old practice of embedding glass shards on top of walls would not be advisable.

Insurance

Household insurance policies should be checked with your insurer to determine whether they cover theft and/or damage to garden machinery, tools, other equipment and garden ornaments etc. You should also check if there are any minimum security standards required and if there are any particular restrictions applying.

The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute. At all times it is wise to seek appropriate professional advice where additions or alterations are made to your property to improve security.

Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.

Useful Contacts and Links

**The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit,
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An Garda Síochána
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