



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
- 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, preferably made with concrete block
- Door is wooden and reasonably solid
- Grille or curtain on window



- No clutter lying around
- Door secured
- Lockable hasp



## MACHINERY, TOOLS & 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.

- Do not leave ladders lying around the garden - secure them to a wall or other solid object.
- Do not 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 intertwined 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. Download the Garda Household Property Register at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)



## 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 & TREES SHRUBS AND PLANTS

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 does not 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. **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. If going away for a prolonged period, ensure your grass is cut during your absence.



## 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 & INSURANCE

The **Occupiers Liability Act, 1995** 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](http://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. **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.



## USEFUL CONTACTS AND LINKS

- The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit, Garda H.Q., Harcourt Square, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6663669 Email: [GNCPU@garda.ie](mailto:GNCPU@garda.ie)  
An Garda Síochána [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)
- The National Botanic Gardens of Ireland [www.botanicgardens.ie](http://www.botanicgardens.ie)  
Tel: (01) 8040300



Crime Prevention Video

