

## Scratch a Thief

This is the time when gardeners like to browse through seed catalogues making plans for spring and summer.

A recent survey of 6,000 gardeners revealed that 300 had something stolen from their garden or outbuildings during the previous two years. If it has not already happened to you, I am sure you know someone who has had something stolen from their garden or outbuildings.

You can make your garden your property's first line of defence against crime and at the same time, bring colour and variety to your garden. Most of us are vulnerable to thieves coming through our back gardens.

Very prickly plants are a visual deterrent and physical barrier intended to complement the more traditional crime prevention measures such as burglar alarms, sensor lights, good locks on both doors and windows etc.

Home grown security can be adapted to protect all perimeters of your property, forming a barrier around drainpipes or beneath ground floor windows making forced entry much more difficult.

“What plants should I use?” – well, here are a few suggestions:

**Pyracantha:** Large evergreen prickly shrub suitable for wall training or a hedge. White flowers in May/June followed by red/orange/yellow berries in autumn. Grows 2-4 metres tall.

**Hippodae Rhamnoides:** Sea Buckthorn – grows in any soil and is wind resistant with silver foliage and excellent thorns. This large shrub provides superb cover.

**Berberis Ottawensis Superba:** Use this as a hedge or an individual shrub. Deciduous, barbed plant with beautiful purple foliage. Grows 1.5 – 1.8 metres tall.