

## GARDENS, GARAGES, SHEDS AND 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 garden.

Very prickly plants are a visual deterrent and a physical barrier intended to complement more traditional crime preventive measure such as burglar alarms, sensor lights 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.

Pyracantha, sea buckthorn or berberis are all excellent plants to add colour to your garden and at the same time offer you some protection from thieves. Your garden centre will be able to help you select the right plants for your needs.

The majority of **domestic outbuildings** are only designed or intended to store items of low value and not the expensive items that many families keep in them. So first consider whether you should be storing valuable items in a garden shed.

Then, consider upgrading and improving the often flimsy security fitted by the suppliers. Hinges, pad-bars and pad-bolts are usually secured with simple wood screws. These are easily removed or forced. Some of the screws should be removed and replaced by dome headed coach bolts, which pass right through the door or doorpost and are bolted on the inside.

A good quality close shackled padlock should be fitted and not the usual £5 locks.

A metal grill over the inside of the thin glass or Perspex window will improve a weak spot.

The low security of an average up-and-over **garage** door could be upgraded with a heavy-duty lock fitted or a specialist locking system.

Attention should be paid to garage and shed windows and any side doors. Locked cabinets can further improve security.

There are some good battery powered stand-alone **alarm systems** available and they are a useful addition.

## TO PREVENT CRIME IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY