

Portuguese Laurel Hedge 1.75m – 2m high – Maintenance



Summary

Maintaining a 1.8m – 2m Portuguese Laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) hedge requires an annual prune in late summer (August) to control its shape and density. Use hand shears instead of electric trimmers for the cleanest cuts, ensuring you feed annually and water regularly during dry weather and while avoiding waterlogged soils.

Annual Maintenance Checklist

- **Timing:** Prune once a year between late July and late August. This allows new growth to harden off before the winter frosts.
- **Cutting Method:** Avoid using heavy mechanical hedge trimmers if possible. Because Portuguese Laurel has large, leathery leaves, electric trimmers will slice the leaves in half, leaving ugly, brown-edged scars across the face of your hedge.
- **Shaping:** Trim the sides first to create a slight "batter" (taper). Make the hedge slightly narrower at the top than it is at the bottom, which allows sunlight to reach the lower branches and prevents bare patches.
- **Top Pruning:** Since the hedge is already at your desired 1.8m to 2m height, trim the leading shoots back to just below this height to encourage dense, bushy growth.

Year-Round Care

- **Watering & Feeding:** These hedges have shallow root systems that can dry out quickly. Give them plenty of water during dry spells, especially in their first few years. Apply a balanced, organic feed like Bonemeal in early spring to encourage healthy growth.
- **Mulching:** Apply a thick layer of bark mulch or organic compost around the base every year to help the soil retain moisture and suppress weeds.
- **Pests & Health Check:** Watch out for powdery mildew and vine weevil, especially on young or stressed plants.
- **Disposal Warning:** If you are removing large amounts of clippings, dispose of them at a local garden waste site rather than leaving them enclosed in a car, as cut laurel can release mildly toxic fumes.

For a complete guide to growing and caring for evergreen boundaries, consult the Royal Horticultural Society hedge cultivation advice.