

Practical Alternatives to Boxwood Shrubs

Here are some recommended substitutes that will give you a similar look without all the fuss.

For sunny locations, globe cedars and inkberry holly are evergreen options if you want a line of round, fairly uniform plants.

The closest boxwood lookalike you'll find is **inkberry holly**, specifically these two varieties that were developed expressly for this purpose.

Strongbox Inkberry holly has small, oval-shaped leaves that look more like a boxwood leaf than a traditional holly leaf that has spiny points. They are soft to the touch and won't be scratchy when you walk by. Like boxwood, these evergreen plants can be sheared into balls, boxes and hedges.



Inkberry holly is hardy in zones 5-9. It grows a bit faster than boxwood but is not drought tolerant. It will be happiest in moist, acidic soil in sunny or partly shaded conditions. These varieties reach 2-3' tall, with **Gem Box** having a slightly more rounded shape and Strongbox growing a bit wider than tall. Perfect for small spaces and garden planters in entryways, patios and decks. Plant these in a location that gets at least 4 hours of direct sunlight per day

Globe cedars range in size from 24 inches high and wide (the Danica, Anna's Magic Ball and Tater Tot varieties), to three or four feet high and wide

Tater Tot arborvitae has a shape much like its namesake, forming a slightly taller than wide mound of dark green, aromatic, fan-shaped leaves. Very little to no pruning at all is needed to achieve the look you see here. If your goal is to create a tighter hedge, space the plants about one foot apart. The Tater Tot hedge will grow up to 2' tall unless you prefer to keep it slightly shorter by lightly shearing it back in spring. Full sun to part shade and well-drained soil are what this shrub needs to thrive in zones 3-7.



The **Danica Cedar** is a slow growing, dwarf globe-shaped selection with emerald-green foliage. Excellent as an accent plant, borders or for low hedges. Globe Cedar retains its shape without pruning. Extremely hardy. Requirements full sun to partial shade. Height and spread are 24 inches.

Anna's Magic Ball is similar in size and shape to a bright yellow bowling ball, growing just 10-15" tall and wide. Those shown in the picture above are nearly full grown, so you can get an idea of how they could work for

you as a short, whimsical, evergreen hedge. Try it in full sun where its lightly colored foliage won't burn, or in a partly shaded location that sees 4-6 hours of sun each day.



Like Tater Tot arborvitae, Anna's Magic Ball is easy to grow in any well-drained soil in zones 3-7. Very little to no pruning is needed to keep its densely spherical shape.



For a trimmed hedge look in a sunny location, consider **Golden Ticket® Privet**. While not evergreen, it grows quickly and can be pruned to give a solid hedge. Privet has long been favored for hedges and screening off air conditioners and other outdoor eye sores. It forms a dense, leafy wall that creates lots of privacy, and clusters of white flowers perfume the air in summer. Golden Ticket® is the first non-invasive privet. High quality, glossy foliage emerges bright yellow and ages to chartreuse. Very adaptable and easy to grow, this deer-resistant shrub is the smart choice for hedging, screening, and landscaping. Height and spread is 4 to 6 ft. Sun to partial sun.



If your spot tends to be in the partial to full shade **Yews** are a great solution. They're evergreen and can be pruned to the size and shape you need. Yews also grow well in full sun conditions. Yews mature slowly but are very long-lived, which makes them ideal for planting as a hedge. They are easy to shear into just about any shape into a classic boxy hedge. **Stonehenge Dark Druid Yew** forms a 2-3' tall by 3' wide mound of dark green, soft needle like foliage. It retains its color beautifully through all four seasons and is very cold hardy, thriving in zones 4-7.



The Perfecto Mundo® Double Pink Rhododendron-Reblooming Azalea



This amazing azalea does something your boxwood hedge could never do – it blooms! Gorgeous soft pink, double flowers adorn this shrub in the springtime. After taking a bit of a rest, it blooms again from midsummer to frost. Its bright green, evergreen leaves are similar in shape to boxwood and the plant typically grows 2-3' tall and wide. Perfecto Mundo azaleas come in various colours.

These reblooming azaleas bloom on both old and new wood, so the best time to prune them is immediately after its spring flowers fade. Trimming the plants lightly encourages new growth, and with new growth comes even more flowers.

This azalea is hardy to zone 6b. However, it is advised to choose a sheltered location in sun or part shade and mulch around its roots for added protection.

Our Hardiness Zone is: 6b