

## Garden Crime: How to Nip it in the Bud

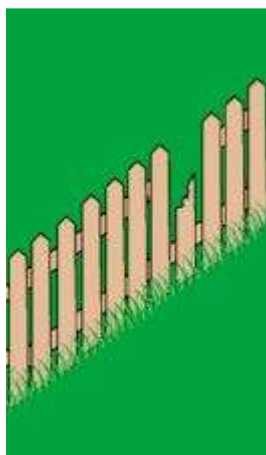
Garden crime is an unfortunate reality. Although many people take steps to protect their homes and the property inside them, they leave valuable equipment in gardens and unsecured sheds, providing easy pickings for opportunist thieves.

Power tools, mowers, garden tools, mountain bikes and golf clubs are just some examples of expensive equipment left in sheds that are not strong or secure enough to protect them from thieves. To make matters worse, these stolen items could then be used by the intruder to break into your house.

Around 1000 shed burglaries take place every year within West Mercia, which highlights the importance of storing valuable items securely. Effective garden security covers everything from boundary fences and gates to the valuables stored inside your shed.

As part of our Safe & Secure campaign we've pulled together the following hints and tips to keep your garden - and therefore your home - secure.

- [Fences, Gates and Walls](#)
- [External Lighting](#)
- [Plants, Bushes and Shrubs](#)
- [Shed Security](#)
- [Interior Security of Sheds](#)
- [Garden Tools](#)
- [Ladders](#)
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### Protecting Your Boundaries

The boundaries of your property are your first line of defence against burglars. Gates, fences and walls which are not kept in good repair could allow intruders to access the back and sides of your property.

Make sure:

- Rear garden fences are high enough to make climbing them difficult. A trellis can be used to add additional height
- Side gates are positioned as close to the front of the house as possible. Thieves will be put off by the fact that they are in full view of the neighbours
- Gates are kept locked at all times



### Let There Be Light!

External lighting could be used as a great way to keep intruders at bay. This can be purchased from most large DIY stores.



### **Defensive Planting**

'Defensive planting' is the term used to describe the way you can use certain prickly plants, bushes and shrubs to deter burglars.

Think about using it to protect vulnerable areas such as fences, windows, drainpipes and boundary walls.

Berberis, Pyracantha, Holly and Hawthorn are just a few examples of defensive planting. Ask for advice at your local garden centre.

This green-leaved security measure is not meant to replace, but to complement other security measures, such as lighting, locks and alarms.



### **Secure Your Shed!**

Most garden sheds are not designed for safe storage and expensive items should not be stored in them.

However, if you have no alternative, there are steps you can take to maximise its security:

- Keep your shed in good condition
- Fit a closed shackle padlock to the door. Fittings should be bolted through the door and any screws concealed
- Fit grilles or mesh to the windows
- Invest in an alarm

Household insurance policies should be checked to ensure they cover garden and shed equipment and whether or not any minimum standards of security apply.



### **Don't Give Thieves 'Shedloads' of Opportunities!**

Once you've improved the physical security of your shed, it is important to make everything inside it secure.

Often, valuable items such as power tools, lawn mowers, garden tools, bicycles and golf clubs are stored in sheds that are not strong or secure enough to protect them from thieves.

Make sure:

- Items are secured to a strong anchor point, such as metal rings fixed in concrete to the shed floor
- Large items such as bicycles are chained together. It is much more difficult for a thief to carry away a lot of large heavy items all at once
- Your valuables are marked with your postcode.



### **Garden Tools**

It is important to ensure garden tools are locked away after use.

Tools stolen from the shed or garden could be used to force entry into your home, causing you even more expense, hassle and misery.

Remember to mark garden tools with your postcode.



### **Ladders**

Ladders should be locked to a secure fixture in the shed or garage so they cannot be used by intruders to reach top floor windows of your house.

### **Top Tips for a Safer Garden:**

- Gates, fences and walls should be kept in good repair to stop intruders getting in
- Grow prickly plants close to vulnerable areas such as windows, fences, boundary walls and drainpipes
- Don't leave expensive equipment like garden tools, mowers, mountain bikes and power tools in the shed
- If you have nowhere else to store valuable equipment, take measures to secure your shed
- Don't leave ladders and tools lying around in your garden – these could be used to break into your home
- Mark your garden tools and equipment with your postcode