Privet
*(Ligustrum species)*

Alex X. Niemiera, Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

**Summary:**
Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf
Height: 4 to 15 feet
Spread: 4 to 8 feet
Shape: Bushy
Small, green, summer foliage. When unpruned, pyramidal clusters of small white flowers produce black berries.

**Plant Needs:**
Zone: 3 to 8
Moisture: Wet to moist
pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0
Light: Partial shade to full sun
Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

**Functions:**
Suggested uses for this plant include hedge, screen, and border.

**Planting Notes:**
Bare-root plants transplant easily.
Tolerates all but very wet soil conditions.

**Care:**
Prune after flowering.
Tolerates severe pruning, including shearing. Prune hedges so that base is wider than top.

**Problems:**
Despite their susceptibility to a variety of insects and diseases, privets generally do well and rarely require spraying.
Many privet species have become invasive and are therefore not suitable as landscape plants. Ask your local Extension agent if a particular *Ligustrum* is appropriate for landscape use.

**Alternatives:**
Consult local sources, including historic or public gardens and arboreta, regarding cultivars and species that are suitable for your area.
In lieu of potentially invasive *Ligustrum*, consider holly (*Ilex*) species and cultivars as alternatives.

**Comments:**
Privets are most often grown as hedge plants because they are so easy to grow.
There are many other plants which make more attractive hedges.
The fruit on unsheared specimens lasts throughout the winter and provides food for birds.

*This material was developed by Carol Ness as part of the Interactive Design and Development Project funded by the Kellogg Foundation.*