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Can I Plant Leyland Cypress Trees For A Fast Growing Hedge or Privacy Screen?

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A weekly question/answer column

**Can I Plant Leyland Cypress Trees For A
Fast Growing Hedge or Privacy Screen?**

Hope A. Bragg answers:*

I would highly discourage planting Leyland cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*) in all but the southern portion of Utah. While the tree can tolerate temperatures as low as 0 degrees F, if it ever gets that low or below 0 the trees have been known to die quickly. The typical range of Leyland cypress is for the southeastern United States, where the winters are mild and the summers are warm and moist. While this tree is a hybrid between Alaskan cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) and Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), the tree exhibits an extreme susceptibility to cold temperatures. Unfortunately, most all cypresses are either slow growing or they cannot withstand the low temperatures associated with northern Utah. Rather than planting the Leyland cypress, I would consider some frost-hardy plants available locally from your nursery or by mail order.

- Most arborvitae and cedars should grow well and will also provide a thick crown for your privacy needs. If you are looking for something a bit more exotic, you may consider incense-cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*). These trees are moderately fast growing plants and should do well in Northern Utah.
- Another option available for privacy hedges are spruces. While these trees do not grow as fast as larches and redwoods, they have exceptionally thick crowns year round for your privacy hedge.
- There are two fast growing deciduous conifers that you could also consider planting. Dawn redwood and European larch both grow fast, and have nice shaped crowns in the summer providing shade and privacy, but they drop their needles in the winter, allowing sunlight to naturally warm your home.

* Hope A. Bragg is Utah State University Extension Assistant Forestry Specialist