

Easy Hedge: the Development of a Nursery Stock Brand[©]

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INTRODUCTION

The idea for the Premium EasyHedge[®] brand (in Danish, Prima Færdighæk[®]) arose more than 20 years ago when nurseryman Lars Strarup watched his neighbor erect a new fence. It occurred to him that it must be possible to produce hedges in a form that could be used as quickly and easily as fencing but which would be far more attractive. He developed his idea inspired by the principles of the rolled turf market — a product that makes it easy for gardeners to achieve good results without special expertise or equipment.

While developing his plans for marketing he also began preparing his production system and started to grow hedging plants to much larger size grades than was common at the time. He also realised the importance of protecting his idea, so registered the brand.

At that time Møllegårdens Planteskole was a part of the sales company Prima Plant. Its sales staff began promoting Prima Færdighæk hedging to Danish garden centers.

THE PREMIUM EASYHEDGE PRODUCT

Premium EasyHedge is a range of instant hedge plants. The range now includes more than 20 different species including *Fagus* (beech), *Lonicera* (privet), *Malus sargentii*, and *Syringa vulgaris*. The plants are available in different sizes ranging from 125-220 cm. During the production, the plants are trimmed and pruned several times to ensure they are well branched. The roots are also undercut regularly to aid establishment. For most species the pruning and undercutting treatments enable year-round lifting and despatch. The product is dispatched as individual root-balled plants ready to plant. Each plant is despatched with a label which is the customer's guarantee of quality.

MARKETING

At first the promotional activity at garden centres was based on simple displays of the hedging plants themselves. However, the concept has now been developed so that we now have displays based on containers of finished ready hedges and accompanying display posters. The product is also promoted at trade exhibitions and public garden and "life style" festivals in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany.

Advertising media has included newspapers, magazines and TV as well as some unusual formats such as posters on buses on main routes in Copenhagen. The company also uses the brand to sponsor TV shows. Danish gardening TV presenter Kim Tang was hired for a day to plant a hedge and speak about the product on a promotional video. Future plans include more online promotions including the use of "adwords" on search engines to drive visits to the company's comprehensive website.

The company also takes opportunities to promote the product to young people studying landscape architecture. The current promotional slogan "spring over hvor hækken er lavet" (roughly translated as "jump over the hedge" or "do it the fast and easy way" was a result of a project with high school students.

