

Air pollution worries? Get yourself a supershrub

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FOR those who live on busy roads, reducing air pollution might be simpler than you think – thanks to an emissions-trapping ‘supershrub’.

Cotoneaster, a common hedge plant, was found to absorb more pollution than other similar shrubs, according to the Royal Horticultural Society.

With its bushy, hairy leaves and dense canopy, cotoneaster was 20 per cent more effective at soaking up traffic fume particles than plants such as hawthorn and western red cedar.

And, in just seven days, researchers found that a well-managed dense hedge of only one metre long mopped up the same amount of pollution a car

‘20% more effective’

emitted over a 500-mile drive. However, although cotoneaster was found to be more effective on roads with heavy traffic, it did not make a difference along quieter streets.

Lead researcher Dr Tijana Blanusa said cotoneaster would be ideal to plant along busy roads in pollution hotspots.

In other areas where encouraging nature was key a mixture of species was recommended.

However Dr Blanusa added that any hedge was better than no plants in people’s front gardens at all.

‘A hedge, even if it’s not the top performer for air quality, may still be quite a good barrier for noise or to help mop up excess rain,’ she said.
