

# Trees and hedgerows

## Planting trees

It is important to choose species suited to the conditions in your garden such as soil type, exposure, and space available. Try to gather as much information as possible about the conditions and match the shrubs and trees accordingly.

### Large trees

Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*  
Beech *Fagus sylvatica*  
Cherries *Prunus avium* and *P. padus*  
Elm *Ulmus procera*  
Oaks *Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*  
Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*  
White willow *Salix alba*

### Medium/small trees

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*  
Apples *Malus spp.*  
Field maple *Acer campestre*  
Holly *Ilex aquifolium*  
Pears *Pyrus spp.*  
Silver birch *Betula pendula*

- Plant away from where services are situated e.g. gas pipes or electric cables.
- Avoid planting wide rooted trees such as willows or poplars close to buildings.
- Try to choose native trees and shrubs which grow locally.
- Do not plant trees and shrubs in an area that is already good for wildlife as it may destroy it.
- The best time to plant your tree or shrub is between November and March as this is the time when plants are dormant, and falls between leaf fall and bud burst.
- Do not plant in frozen or waterlogged soil, and avoid the summer months when trees are likely to dry out.
- Always ensure that the roots of your trees or shrubs do not dry out. Keep them in a moist plastic bag until you are ready to put them in the ground.
- Dig a hole that is at least 3 times the diameter of the roots of the plant, and deep enough for the plant to fit in and be covered with soil (A large, spacious planting hole promotes better root growth because fine roots are able to grow into the freshly dug soil. Roots can become restricted within a small hole).
- Place the plant in the hole and spread out the roots.
- A short stake enables the tree to move in the wind, stimulating stronger root growth than a tall stake (smaller trees do not need staking at all).
- Replace the soil in the hole, gently shaking the tree to ensure that the soil is in contact with the roots and to remove any air pockets.
- Firm the soil around the tree with your heel and gently pull the plant to ensure it is secure.
- Water well immediately after planting.
- Water weekly during the growing season, and check that the soil around the tree is firm.
- Pruning and removing dead branches and weak shoots from the stem will also promote growth.

## Trees and the Law

Trees can be one of the best wildlife features in the garden, but they can also cause concern to neighbours. If a friendly discussion does not work, here are some points to bear in mind.

- There are no laws controlling the height of hedges and trees but there are guidelines on hedge height and light loss. However, they must not overhang or endanger a highway or block a vision splay. (For more details contact your local Highway Department).
- You are allowed to remove branches overhanging your boundary from a neighbour's tree, but must not enter their property to do so. Offcuttings must be offered back to the neighbour, but if they do not want them, you are responsible for disposing of them.
- If the tree has a Tree Preservation Order, is in a Conservation area, or is subject to a Development Condition, you must seek permission from your Local Authority before any works are done.
- If in doubt, consult your local authority tree officer for advice.

## Dead wood

Decaying wood provides important habitats for small vertebrates, invertebrates, cavity nesting birds, and a host of fungi and other organisms. Wherever possible, standing dead trees should always be retained. In public areas, these trees can be made safe by creating 'monoliths' which have been reduced in height and spread and then left to decay in a standing position.

Creating log piles with cut or fallen timber from the site can support a whole community of mini-beasts. Log piles are best sited away from living trees, in dappled shade, with some logs partially buried and some growth of bramble or similar to create a cool, damp habitat. Adding a pile of leaf litter can help to make a suitable home for hibernating hedgehogs and toads, and drilling some random holes in the logs is an easy way to provide nest sites for solitary bees.

Mature trees with features such as cavities, deadwood, flaking bark and dense ivy coverage may provide suitable roosting sites for bats. All species of bat and their roosts are legally protected. If you are planning work to a tree with any of these features please contact the Lincolnshire Bat Group for further advice (contact details over the page).

## Orchards

Traditional orchards are hotspots for biodiversity in the countryside, supporting a wide range of wildlife including Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species as well as many classed as nationally rare or scarce. The mosaic of habitats that comprise a traditional orchard provide food and shelter for hundreds of species of wildlife.

Newly planted orchards can also quickly become valuable wildlife habitats as well as places for communities to relax, enjoy the outdoors and learn about local fruit varieties. Tree spacing needs careful consideration, and good tree management and aftercare in the first few years after planting is crucial to ensure their survival and long-term health.

# Hedgerows

## Planting a hedgerow

Before planting the hedge, the area needs to be carefully prepared by removing all grass and other weeds. If you are filling up a gap in a large hedge that is overgrown with bramble and dog rose, cut these back before planting and dig the soil over.

The hedge should be planted in a double row with at least 30 - 50cm between the rows and 25 - 30cm between the plants in one row. The best planting time is between November and March. It is tempting to buy large plants to create an immediate effect, but it is better to use smaller hedging plants. These will establish better and grow faster. Plant them in a zigzag manner alternating between the two rows. Try to group about five plants of the same species throughout the hedge, before planting another species.

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*  
Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*  
Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*  
Common Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*  
Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*  
Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*  
Buckthorn *Rhamnus catharticus*  
Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*  
Dog rose *Rosa canina*  
Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*  
Elder *Sambucus nigra*  
Field Maple *Acer campestre*  
Goat Willow *Salix caprea*  
Grey Willow *Salix sanguinea*  
Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*  
Hazel *Corylus avellana*  
Holly *Ilex aquifolium*  
Honeysuckle (Woodbine) *Lonicera periclymenum*  
Hop *Humulus lupulus*  
Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*  
Oak *Quercus robur*  
Privets, including wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*  
Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*  
Sweet briar *Rosa eglanteria*

Check your local hedgerows to see what grows naturally and then try to make sure that your hedgerow reflects the local landscape.

## Managing hedgerows

In the first year after planting your hedge will need extra care. Weeds can easily outgrow the young hedge plants and it is therefore important to regularly weed during the first summer. If there is a risk of rabbit grazing it might be an idea to protect the young hedge with a mesh wire fence or tree guards.

Careful and regular management is needed to maintain the dense and bushy nature of hedges so important for wildlife. There are three management options to keep hedgerows in good shape: trimming, laying and coppicing. Whatever method is used it is important to maintain a minimum height of 1.5m and minimum width of 1.2m.

Trimming is used to manage new and older hedges that are in good condition. When trimming a hedge the ideal shape is an A-shape. This provides good bushy growth at the base that is ideal for nesting birds and gives good shelter for small mammals. Trimming should not be carried out annually, but rather on a two to three year rotational basis. This encourages more food in the form of fruits and berries to grow. A good regime is to alternate between the two sides of a hedge every year. The best time to trim a hedge is in late winter. Earlier trimming will remove the berries that grow in the autumn that provide winter food source for animals.

## Nesting birds

Hedgerows are ideal for nesting birds. Wild birds and their eggs are protected by law, as are their nests while in use or being built. Vegetation clearance and tree and hedgerow maintenance, should be avoided during the bird breeding season (generally March to end of August).

### Find out more...

#### The Tree Council

The UK's lead charity for trees, promoting their importance in a changing environment. Information online includes details of the Tree Care Campaign and tips on looking after trees. [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

#### Lincolnshire Bat Group

[www.lincsbatgroup.co.uk](http://www.lincsbatgroup.co.uk) For enquiries please email [info@lincsbatgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@lincsbatgroup.co.uk)

#### Wild About Gardens

Joint project with the RHS and The Wildlife Trusts. Website has lots of advice and factsheets: [www.wildaboutgardens.org](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org)

#### The Wildlife Trusts

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlifegardening>

#### Orchard Network

The Habitat Action Plan (HAP) group for Traditional Orchards. [www.orchardnetwork.org.uk](http://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk)

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