



IT'S TIME TO PLANT!



WOODLAND
TRUST

All you need to know about
getting your trees in the ground

Our free tree packs have been generously funded by lead partners
Sainsbury's, Lloyds Banking Group and Simplyhealth.

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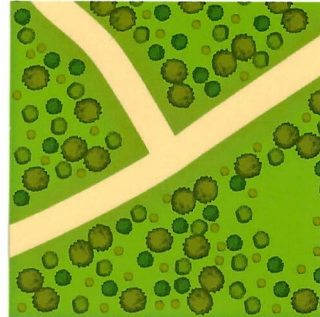
HOW TO PLANT YOUR TREES

It's important to plant your trees properly to give them the best start. Here's our quick guide to preparation, planting methods and aftercare to make your project a success. Find more essential guidance at woodlandtrust.org.uk/plantingadvice

Spacing notes: As a rough guide, trees are usually planted at about two-metre intervals, but can be planted at any distance from one to five metres depending on the space and plan for your site.

Varied spacing and wavy lines generally look more natural than regimented rows of trees.

Consider incorporating walkways and open glades into your design – including open spaces like this could help to introduce greater habitat diversity in future.



SITE PREPARATION, MARKING YOUR SITE AND STORAGE



Some sites may require 'topping' if overgrown with tall weeds. This involves cutting everything down to ground level to make planting easier. Avoid planting the saplings in areas of dense vegetation or under existing trees, as shade and lack of water will seriously restrict growth.



Start by marking out the planting positions for your trees. You should use stones, spray paint or canes as markers.



Until planting, keep the trees in their bags and ideally in an empty bucket for shelter. Do not leave the saplings in standing water as they will rot. You can stop them drying out by spraying the roots once a week.



**APPLY
FOR MORE
TREES**



PIT PLANTING

Pit planting is the most thorough but time-consuming method. It is suitable for all ground types but can be difficult in areas with stony soils. Pit planting ensures better contact with the soil and we recommend it in areas prone to drought.



1

Using a spade, dig a pit for each tree. These pits need to be several centimetres wider and deeper than the trees' roots.



2

The grass you have dug up can be placed upside down in the bottom of the pit to provide the tree with extra nutrients.



3

Place the tree in the pit and ensure that the top of the root plug is approx. 2cm below ground level.



4

Backfill the soil around the tree while holding it upright. Firm the top layer of soil around the tree with your heel.



5

Fit a tree guard or spiral for protection if you're using one.



**WATCH OUR HOW TO
PLANT VIDEO NOW!**



SLIT PLANTING

Slit planting is a simple method that is suitable for bare soil and grass, and can be easier than pit planting for stony soils. We don't advise using this method if you are planting in an area susceptible to drought or with clay soils, because in dry conditions the slit can re-open, exposing the tree roots.



1

First, fully insert a spade into the ground and push it forwards to create a slit. Ensure the slit is deep enough for the tree roots.



2

When the slit is open, insert the tree with the root plug approx. 2cm below ground level.

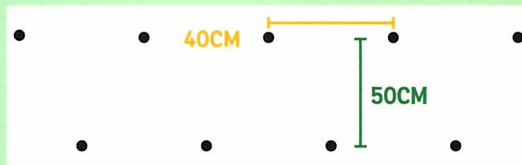


3

Remove the spade and push the soil back around the tree. Fit a tree guard or spiral for protection if you are using one.

TO CREATE A HEDGEROW

Hedging species are generally planted 30cm apart for a single hedge line. Or for a thick hedge, plant staggered double rows approximately 50cm apart with 40-45cm between each tree in the line.



NURTURING HEDGEROWS

Hedges support up to 80% of our woodland birds, 50% of our mammals and 30% of our butterflies. They enable wildlife to move through the countryside, protect soils from wind erosion, and provide shelter for people and livestock and habitats for pollinators. Make your hedge even more valuable for wildlife by letting some trees grow through the hedge to full height, ideally one every five metres. Don't forget to mark them so they aren't accidentally cut back! For hedge care and maintenance tips, visit woodlandtrust.org.uk/hedgcare



IDENTIFY YOUR SAPLING

Your saplings will arrive in bundles so before IDing them, be sure to separate the stems – the easiest way is to turn the bundle upside down and use the root plugs as a guide. Don't worry if the trees seem small – they'll go through a growth spurt in spring after planting.



Grey willow

Silver birch

Cherry

Downy birch

Elder

Field maple

Goat willow

Hazel

Rowan



Oak

Crab apple

Dogwood

Holly

Hawthorn

Blackthorn

Dog rose

HOW TO HELP YOUR TREES THRIVE

PROTECTION

As part of our pledge to move towards sustainable forms of tree protection, we no longer send plastic guards with our packs as standard. Many trees will survive without any protection at all and for small-scale projects, simple monitoring and basic aftercare can be enough to ensure success.

WEEDING

Weeding is the most important step in giving your trees the right start. Keeping a one-metre diameter around the tree clear of weeds and grass for the first two to three years will reduce competition for moisture and nutrients.

You can suppress weeds with mulch, such as bark chips or straw. Apply it to a depth of around 10cm to prevent it being blown away or dispersed and top it up annually. You can also buy mulch mats and peg them into the ground to keep them in place.

WATERING

Your trees should adapt to the natural conditions of your site so watering shouldn't be necessary, especially as it can encourage the roots to grow towards the soil surface rather than down towards groundwater.

If there's a particularly long dry spell and you feel watering is essential, saturate the ground thoroughly to ensure that the water soaks deep into the soil.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Check your trees regularly for any signs of damage or infection. Keeping a weed-free area around your trees will help minimise risk. If you suspect tree disease, please email us a photo: communitytrees@woodlandtrust.org.uk.

FENCING AND STOCK

If livestock are near your planting areas, they will need to be fenced off from the young trees. Electric fencing or post and wire will prevent livestock reaching, eating or knocking over the trees.

PLANTING TIMES

We recommend planting as soon as you can, but if it's not possible to plant straight away, saplings can be stored for a few weeks. On arrival, remove them from their boxes, lightly spray the roots with water and store them outside. A garage or outbuilding is ideal. Keep saplings upright, sheltered from frost and wind, and check roots weekly to make sure they don't dry out.

ENJOY YOUR TREES!

If you follow these instructions, your trees should thrive for years to come. You can find more information on caring for your saplings at woodlandtrust.org.uk/plantingadvice. If your trees don't all survive or you want to plant more, you're welcome to apply for another pack at woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees.

We'd love to see your trees in their new home! Share them on social with the tags [@WoodlandTrust](https://www.instagram.com/WoodlandTrust) and [#FreeTrees](https://www.instagram.com/#FreeTrees)



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