



How to
plant and
care for trees



A National *community forest* Partner

Greenwood



How to plant and care for trees

Assessing the site

Ground Conditions

The first step is to assess the ground conditions to see if the site is suitable for tree planting. By digging a test hole (on larger sites, dig a number of holes) you can check for potential problems e.g. rocks, rubble or compacted soils which may need some improvement work before planting.

Existing Wildlife Value

Some sites e.g. heathland, grassland or wetland, may have existing wildlife value which could be badly affected by tree planting. If in doubt, ask for advice.

Choosing which tree species to plant

Your choice of species is largely dependent on the site conditions. As a general guide to suitable species, look at what trees are already growing well on similar sites in the local area.



If you need advice about assessing the site or which tree species to plant contact the Greenwood Team on 0115 9932600

Tree and Shrub Provenance

'Provenance' describes the location of the tree population from which seeds or individual plants are collected. When selecting trees and shrubs for your project, check your supplier can provide stock which has a UK provenance i.e. the plants are grown from seed collected, raised and grown only in the UK.

Where to plant your tree

Before you grab your spade and start digging holes, you need to think about where to plant your tree.

- Think about how the tree will look in 10 years time and choose a place with enough space for your tree to grow.
- Don't plant too close to buildings or features such as patios.
- Avoid planting on top of underground services such as drains or underneath overhead wires.
- Is the site shaded or exposed? Choose tree species to suit the conditions.
- Think about how your tree might affect a neighbour's property e.g. overhanging branches, falling leaves and berries.

When to plant

It is best to plant trees from mid November (after leaf fall) through to mid March while the tree is dormant. Avoid planting when there is snow on the ground or in periods of heavy frost.





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Selecting stock for planting

Tree and hedge plants are supplied in a range of sizes and may be 'bare-rooted', grown in a container or with a root ball.



Bare rooted



Containerised



Root balled

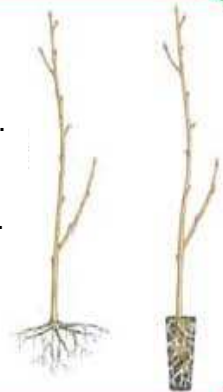
Containerised trees can be planted all year round but they are expensive and need regular watering during spring through to autumn.

Tree handling and storage

- Tree roots are delicate and need careful handling. Avoid throwing or dropping bags of trees. Damage to the roots reduces survival rates and slows growth.
- It is best to plant your trees as soon as possible after getting them. Prior to planting they should be kept in a cool, damp and frost free location.
- It is important that the tree roots stay moist and do not dry out. Even a slight breeze can dry tree roots in under a minute. Leave bare rooted trees in their bag until you have dug the hole and are ready to plant the tree.
- Containerised and root-balled trees should be watered the night before planting.

Transplants

Transplants are small, (up to 60cm high) bare rooted trees. They are easy to transport and plant, are quick growing and have good survival rates.



Whips and Feathered Whips

Whips and feathered whips are slightly larger (around 90cm tall) and more visible than transplants. They are useful where some initial visual impact is needed or to mark the edge of a planting scheme where they can help reduce the risk of accidental damage from mowing.



Standards

If you need instant visual impact or a feature tree you could plant larger trees, known as 'standards' (around 3 metres tall). However, they are more expensive, require supporting with a stake and tree tie, take longer to establish and can have lower survival rates.





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How to plant your tree

When you are ready to plant your tree, follow these steps:

Note:

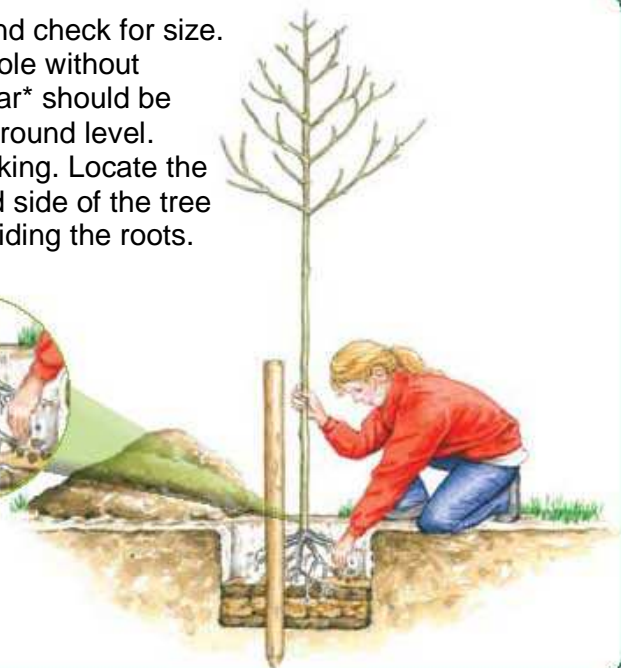
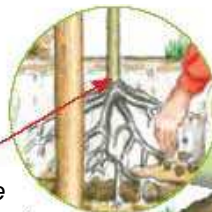
The steps shown opposite describe the planting sequence for a bare-rooted 'standard' tree. However, the steps can be used as the basis for planting any size tree.

- 1 Dig out and remove any turf or weeds from where you want to plant your tree. For each tree, dig a hole slightly deeper and wider than the roots. Loosen the soil at the base of the hole.



- 2 Place the tree in the hole and check for size. The roots should fit in the hole without bending back. The root collar* should be level with the surrounding ground level. Larger trees will require staking. Locate the stake on the prevailing wind side of the tree and knock in the stake, avoiding the roots.

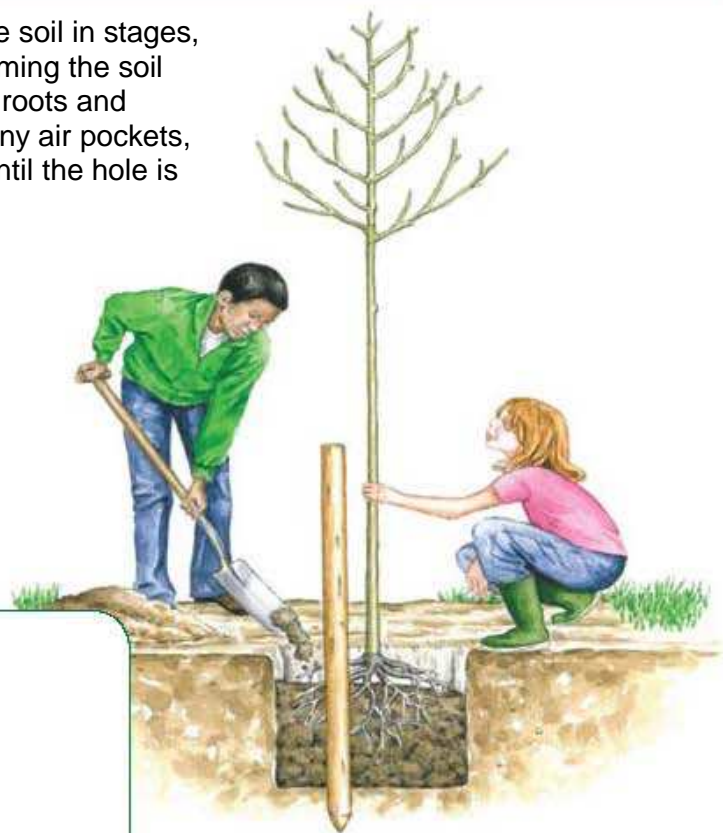
* the root collar is the joint between the roots and the stem where the colour changes.





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- 3 Replace the soil in stages, carefully firming the soil around the roots and removing any air pockets, Continue until the hole is filled.



- 4 Firm the top layer of soil using your foot. Take care not to damage the tree.



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- 5** Secure the tree to the stake with a tree tie positioned close to the top of the stake. Water the tree well, especially in dry conditions.

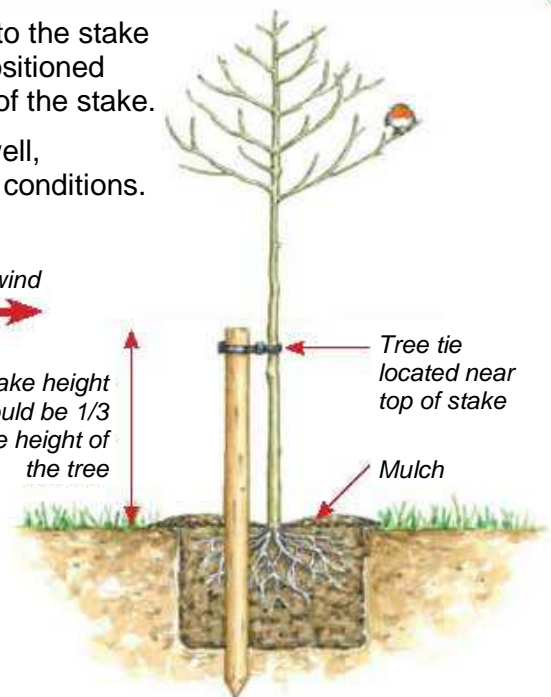
Direction of prevailing wind



Stake height should be 1/3 the height of the tree

Tree tie located near top of stake

Mulch

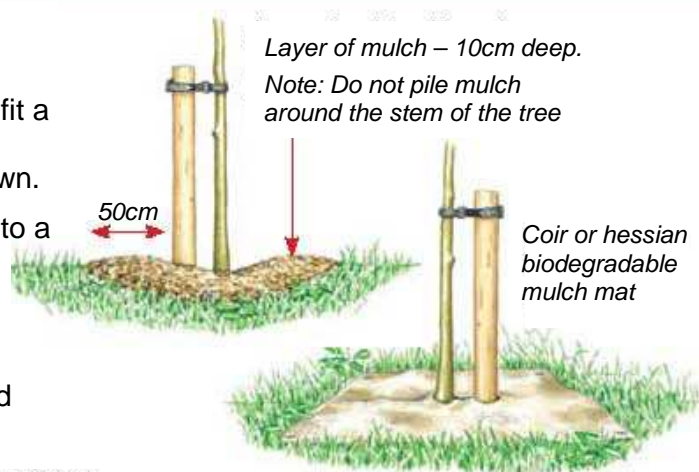


- 6** Add a layer of mulch e.g. composted bark, approximately 10cm (4 inches) deep around the base of the tree, or fit a mulch mat. This will help keep the moisture in and help keep weeds down.

Prune any dead or broken branches to a suitable outward growing bud.

Fit protective guards as required e.g. rabbit guards, strimmer guards.

Clean your spade, tidy up and go and have a cup of tea and a biscuit to celebrate a job well done.





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Looking after your tree

Looking after your tree doesn't end with the last spade of soil put back around the roots. Good maintenance is crucial to the survival of your tree. By taking these simple steps you will make sure your tree thrives and grows.

1 Weed control

Grass and other plants will compete with your tree for water and nutrients. It is essential to maintain a weed free area (of about 1 metre / 3 feet diameter) around each tree for the first 3 years after planting. The best way of doing this is by regular applications of mulch (applied in April each year), fitting a mulch mat or application of a suitable herbicide in the spring.

2 Watering

It is important to water during dry periods in spring and summer. An infrequent soaking is much better than little and often.

Online pdf versions of the guide can be found at www.greenwoodforest.org.uk which can be read online, downloaded or printed off.

Paper copy versions of this guide are available free of charge to members of the public, schools and community groups within the Greenwood area. To request a copy, contact the Greenwood Community Forest Team:

Greenwood Partnership Team, Floor 1, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

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Greenwood

Nottinghamshire's Community Forest bringing Sherwood Forest to your doorstep

A partnership initiative of Nottinghamshire County Council, Ashfield District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Mansfield District Council, Newark & Sherwood District Council, The Forestry Commission and Natural England.

