



Hedge Planting

Care of plants

Ideally, hedge plants should be planted out as soon as possible after delivery and should be 'heeled in' if they are not to be planted immediately. This involves placing the roots in a pit or trench and covering with firmed soil to prevent them drying out, being frosted or being exposed to sunlight.

When planting it is important to keep the plants in a plastic bag to prevent drying out and exposure to light. It is essential that the roots are kept moist and dark as even a short period of exposure could damage the plants.

Hedge plants should be 40-60 cm transplants of British provenance (preferably local) and should comply to British Standard 3936.

Planting

Planting should be carried out between October and March. Autumn planting is preferable as it usually results in better establishment although there is an increased danger of damage by rabbits and hares during the winter months. No planting should be done in very wet, frosty or snowy conditions.

A suitable herbicide applied before planting (when vegetation is actively growing) will help to control weed growth. **Note: all herbicides must be applied in accordance with the label recommendations.**

The normal method is to plant new hedges without constructing a bank but when replanting an old hedgeline the planting should follow the top of the bank, if present. The species of trees and shrubs planted should match those in surviving sections of the hedge or in adjoining hedges. If possible the new hedge should follow the former hedge line where one existed and can be identified; otherwise it should be accord with the hedgerow pattern of the immediate area.

Planting can be carried out in 2 main ways;

- i) in a cultivated strip, approximately 60 cm (2 ft) wide by 25 cm (10 inches) deep, or
- ii) by cutting a slit in the ground and holding it open with a spade whilst the roots of the plant

are carefully inserted and spread downwards.

The plants should be set in at the same depth as they were in the nursery and the soil must be firmed well in around the roots.

A double staggered row of plants produces a dense solid hedge with suitable stems for laying. This method uses 6 plants per metre (5 plants per yard), in two rows about 25 cm (10 inches) apart.

Damaged or dead shoots should be removed at planting.

Trees

Hedgerow trees, such as oak and crab apple, increase the landscape and wildlife value of a hedge. Trees should be planted in tree shelters for protection and increased visibility so they can be easily avoided during hedge trimming. (See Specifications for Tree Planting.)

Hedge Guards

Hedge guards are used to protect plants from voles and rabbits and may be used where rabbit netting is impractical.

It is important to establish the hedge guards firmly in the ground by the use of a stake or cane as they are otherwise liable to blow over in strong winds. Guards will need to be checked periodically to ensure that they have not fallen over.

Fencing

Protective fencing will be required to protect the new growth from livestock and, where appropriate, rabbits and hares. There should be a minimum of 1m left on either side of the planting (see Specifications for Stockproof for Fencing).

Aftercare

For the first few years the hedgerow plants should be kept free of weeds by manual weeding or using suitable herbicides. Weed control and moisture conservation can also be achieved with the use of black polythene sheeting laid as a mat or mulching with bark chippings, straw or well rotted farmyard manure.

The importance of weeding cannot be over emphasised (see Specifications for Hedge Establishment).

June 2013

**North York Moors National Park Authority, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley,
York, YO62 5BP**

Tel: 01439 772700

Email: conservation@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Web: www.northyorkmoors.org.uk