

# Hedgerow Planting and Protection

## Ground Preparation

- The less tussocky or dense the ground vegetation the better. Closely cropped or grazed land is ideal. Simply cut out a small square of turf for each hedge plant, turning the sod upside down in the hole, and create a slit with your spade to plant in to and heal in.
- Alternatively, turn over the turf along the hole new hedgerow length using a mini-digger wide bucket to create a low bank, or copp, makes planting easier and quicker and can boost establishment. Just slit plant into this after it has settled for a few weeks and the fencing has gone up.
- Try to avoid using glyphosate-based herbicides as they damage soil health by disrupting their microbial communities, impacting soil structure and harming beneficial organisms like earthworms, leading to a decline in overall soil biodiversity.



Wild cherry



Hawthorn

## Species:

- Plant at 6 plants per metre for new hedgerows and planting gaps.
- Plant the hedge in double staggered zig-zag row 40 - 50cm apart.
- Cell or bare rooted hedge saplings are both suitable. Bare rooted are quicker to plant and have a longer winter planting window.
- A diverse species mix is recommended, to help with: disease resilience; creating an 'edible hedge' - nectar and food sources across the seasons; and providing browsing diversity for livestock.
- Recommended percentage mix: hawthorn (40%); hazel (20%); blackthorn (15%); dog rose (5%); field maple (5%); holly (3%); hornbeam (2%); plus 10% mix of: crab apple, bullace or damson (source locally), small leaved lime (lowland sites), sessile oak, rowan, spindle and wild cherry – nb. when the hedge is laid, leave some of these to grow as hedgerow trees.
- Plant hazel and holly next to any lime, oak or cherry that will be left to establish as hedgerow trees, as they will grow under larger tree canopies.
- Allow one of the saplings to grow into a hedgerow tree every 15-20 metres or so (avoid cutting by any trimming or hedge laying).



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## Protection – Guards and Canes

- Initial protection is usually required against vole and rabbit ring-barking the hedge saplings.
- Hedge plant guards to be biodegradable where possible. More options are coming on the market to stop adding to the billions of plastic tubes/spirals across the countryside.
- These have proven effective on farms: [WhiptecBio hedge and tree guards](#) These square card guards are easier and quicker to use and will last three winters to establish the hedge, then break down, so that the cost and time of removing spirals or guards is saved.
- Push the canes in securely and tap down with a lump hammer.
- Adding a chipped wood mulch after planting along the double planted rows can help suppress weed growth competition and retain soil moisture. Often tree surgery companies have to pay to dispose of their chipped wood waste and may be happy to supply it at no cost.



## Fencing

- The majority of newly planted hedgerows should be protected with Rylock fencing on either side to protect against livestock, deer and hares.
- Provide a 3 – 3.5 metre gap between the twin fences to allow access for aftercare (eg. replacing dead saplings), preventing the need to take down fence(s) for future laying, and provide a valuable uncultivated margin for wildlife habitat, soil protection, slowing down water flow and future carbon credits or payments.
- On cattle only farms, with no or low deer density, fencing may consist of single or double high tensile wire, often electrified.

## Aftercare

- In the first summer/autumn after planting, water the new hedge plants and during prolonged dry spells.
- Monitor your hedge plants and protections during the first year, making sure to replace any dead plants or damaged guards.

## Any Questions?

### Get in touch:

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For more information about our hedgerow work, scan the QR code or see our website:

