



Transition Kerry
Biodiversity & Climate

Community Leadership Programme

Biodiversity is the foundation of all life on earth and its interconnections

Hedgerows & Woodlands



Hedgerows & Woodlands

Why Plant A Native Hedgerow?

- ✓ They are an excellent and important natural habitat in their own right
- ✓ They are part of our cultural and landscape heritage that need to be protected and restored
- ✓ They act as ecological corridors and help to interconnect other habitats together, allowing creatures to move around safely and enabling plants and creatures to maintain genetic diversity
- ✓ They are vital for birds, insects, mammals, providing a range and variety of food and places to live throughout the year
- ✓ They are essential for pollinators, providing food, shelter and nesting sites throughout the year
- ✓ They create and provide shelter for gardens, living areas, other wildlife and farm animals
- ✓ They hold water and can slow down and reduce flooding and soil erosion
- ✓ Their root systems stabilise embankments and they store carbon
- ✓ They are an incredible seasonal community educational resource = Hedge Schools!

Why Plant A Woodland / Shelter Belt?

- ✓ They are valuable wildlife habitats in their own right
- ✓ They act as carbon sinks and oxygen sources
- ✓ They can be as small or as big as you like (minimum 3-5 trees planted closely together)
- ✓ They create and provide shelter in gardens, fields, buildings, etc.
- ✓ When managed sustainably, they can provide local timber for building, firewood, etc.
- ✓ They are an incredible seasonal community educational resource = Woodland and Forest Schools!

Resources Needed to Plant Hedges

& Woodlands:

- **Mixture of native tree** species (preferably sourced from local seeds - see notes below)
- **Mulch materials:** cardboard covered with fresh leaves, leaf-mould (compost), wood chip, bark mulch, grass clippings, twigs/branches, straw, (any materials you can source locally)
- **Tools:** Shovels, trowels, spades and forks – if it is a community planting, ask people to bring theirs along
- **Tools:** Secateurs/snips, wheelbarrow or buckets to move mulch
- **Markers:** Flour or sticks to mark planting spots
- **Optional:** If fertility is required: garden compost, well-rotted manure, seaweed dust, chicken pellets, fish, blood and bone meal. Not always needed unless soil is very poor. Mulching and leaf drop will improve soil over time into more woodland soil
- **Optional:** Gloves

Some Things to Consider Before

You Plant:

- What is growing locally in the hedges and thickets?
- Is it sheltered or exposed?
- Is it coastal (salty winds) or inland?
- Choose the right tree for the right place!
- Will grass competition be controlled by mulching? Or by trampling? See Mulching
- What is the soil type?
- Is it wet, dry or seasonally wet?
- Will they need protection from being nibbled – by hares, rabbits, deer or farm animals?
- Some land should not be planted, eg. wetland habitats and meadows/marshes, unless the trees move in by themselves
- Are there any wires or pipes you need to know about below ground and over head?

What
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- Nature does not plant trees in straight rows – plant in staggered patterns and with gentle curves. In woodlands, plant 1 metre apart to allow for nature walks and shortcuts to develop
- Strimmers and mowers are the bane of planted trees! Use logs as edgings to ensure that there is a safe space where they will be protected
- Expect 90% of the trees planted to succeed, as 10% may not – this is normal. Replace any dead trees during the following planting season
- Are there local placenames that indicates the trees that once grew here? e.g. Derrymore - Doire Mór – the Big Oaks; Ballinattin – Baile an Aitinn – the town of the gorse/furze. This [Logainm/Placenames](#) website is a great resource to explore the living landscape with placenames
- Do not worry if trees planted in community spaces get broken or damaged – cut out/prune the damaged branches and most trees will recover. Be prepared to replant if they are pulled out or strimmed!
- Trees planted in hedges and woodlands are the same plants. The main difference is that hedges are clipped, which encourages thicker outwards growth into an A shape. In woodlands, the trees are not generally clipped and are allowed to grow upwards into a more traditional tree shape. Both tree habitats are equally valuable!

- **Other options for increased diversity**
 - **50%** Hawthorn (Whitethorn)
 - **30%** Blackthorn, Elder, Gorse, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Holly, Rowan, Spindle
 - **20%** Oak, Wild Cherry, Bird Cherry
- **When is the best time to plant in climbers?**
 - Climbers can be introduced in year 2 or 3 – e.g. dog rose, rambling roses and honeysuckle - they can be too vigorous if planted in year 1

• **Sample Woodland Species Mix:**

- **Example of selection of native woodland species for SMALLER SPACES** - Hawthorn (whitethorn), Blackthorn, Elder, Gorse, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Holly, Rowan, Spindle, Oak, Wild Cherry, Bird Cherry
- **Other options for increased diversity and LARGER SPACES** - Hawthorn (whitethorn), Blackthorn, Elder, Gorse, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Holly, Rowan, Spindle, Oak, Wild Cherry, Bird Cherry, Scots Pine, Yew, Alder, Birch, Willow
- **Other options for increased diversity and WET LAND** - Alder, Birch, Willow
- **Other options for a working woodland, eg. COPPING** - Hazel, Willow
- **SOME OTHER BENEFICIAL INTRODUCED TREES** - Sweet Chestnut/Spanish Chestnut, Holm Oak, Field Maple, Walnut, Wayfaring Tree.

Sourcing Trees:

- **Native Irish Seed** - Collected and grown in Ireland – the more local it is, the more they will be acclimatised to local conditions.
- **Irish Stock** - Trees have been imported and have been grown on/heelled in Ireland for at least 1 year.
- **Imported** - Trees are imported from other countries that year – risk of introducing disease or pest (an insect that has no predator here).

How to Plant a Hedgerow (an Scaech):

1. A hedge can be planted as a single row or a double row. In exposed areas or large fields/sports pitches, they can be planted 3-5 rows deep.
2. Generally, the trees are planted are 30cm/1ft apart and in a staggered spacing for double rows. See diagram for spacings. Mark the planting spots with either sticks or flour.

Hedgerow Spacing



When to Plant Hedges & Woodlands:

- **Nov - Mar**- Bare Root Saplings (more affordable)
- **All Year Round** - Potted Trees (more expensive)

Sample Native Hedge Species Mix:

- **Example of selection of native hedge species**
 - **75%** Hawthorn (Whitethorn)
 - **25%** Blackthorn, Elder, Gorse, Guelder Rose, Hazel, Holly, Rowan, Spindle



3. Dig holes – keep removed soil close to hole.
4. Optional - add a scoop of compost/fertility, mix soil and compost in the hole together.
5. Place tree into the hole, (clip roots only if necessary), put soil back in around the sapling / tree with the sedge grass side down
6. Firm soil around plants with feet.
7. Mulch trees with cardboard and weigh down with mulch materials/grass cuttings, etc. When mulching with cardboard, be prepared to repeat this process for another 2-3 years to give the hedge a good head start of growth. If mulch material is not used, the grass growth around the base of the trees will have to be trampled down for the first few years, or it will affect the growth rate of the trees. Do not pull or cut it, as this encourages more grass growth!
8. Clip down the hedge plants to 30cm/1ft high – as this encourages the plant to bush out into a thick hedgerow.
9. Leave one of the trees unclipped every 3.5m/12ft in hedge, similar to traditional hedges.
10. Clip the hedge lightly for the first 3-5 years to encourage the thicker growth and shape.
11. Encourage hedgerow ground layer plants to move in, such as wild garlic (ramsons), native bluebells, lesser celandine, wood avens, primroses, fox gloves, wood sorrel, sorrel spp., dog violet and fern species. They will move in over time when the grass growth has reduced and a shadier environment has been created. If they are introduced too early, they generally do not succeed very well.

How to Plant a Woodland (An Choill):

1. Measure spacing for plants, roughly minimum 1-2m apart.
2. Mark with flour/bamboo on the planting spots.
3. Dig holes, larger than root ball.
4. Optional - add a scoop of compost/fertility, mix soil and compost in the hole together
5. Place tree into the hole, (clip roots only if necessary), put soil back in grass side down
6. Firm soil around plants with feet.
7. Mulch trees with cardboard and weigh down with mulch materials/grass cuttings, etc. When mulching with cardboard, be prepared to repeat this process for another 2-3 years to give the trees a good head start of growth. If mulch material is not used, the grass growth around the base of the trees will have to be trampled down for the first few years, or it will affect the growth rate of the trees. Do not pull or cut it, as this encourages more grass growth!

8. Plant the woodland more closely at 1m apart if you want to encourage quicker, more dense growth.
9. Encourage woodland ground layer plants to move in, such as wild garlic (ramsons), native bluebells, lesser celandine, wood avens, primroses, fox gloves, wood sorrel, sorrel spp., dog violet and fern species. They will move in over time when the grass growth has reduced and a shadier environment has been created. If they are introduced too early, they generally do not succeed very well.

Resource: Community Tree Nursery

Collecting and growing native trees from seed is a great community project. It means that the trees will have local genetic diversity and be more used to growing in the local weather and soil conditions. Please remember to only take a small amount of tree seeds each year. Leave the rest for wild birds and creatures, as it may be their main food source for the winter ahead. Tree nurseries can become a local social enterprise or small business, creating local employment. For more information:

- ✓ LEAF Ireland has a free [Tree Nursery Project Resource](#) that can be downloaded.
- ✓ [Community Tree Nursery Resource](#) from The Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland
- ✓ [Our Trees: A guide to growing Irelands Native Trees](#) – Available for sale at Tree Council of Ireland Shop. This is a Woodlands of Ireland/ Forest Service/ Coillte publication

Further Support & Information:

SOURCING TREES

- 1) [Wild Oaks Tree Nursery](#) 2) [Home Tree Nursery & Charity](#) 3) [Trees on the Land Tree Stock & Charity](#)
- 4) [Future Forests Tree Nursery](#) 5) [List of Tree Nurseries Nationwide from Teagasc](#) 6) [None So Hardy Tree Nursery](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

- 1) [Hedgerows Ireland \(Hedge Laying Association\)](#)
- 2) [Learning About Forests / An Choill Bheag, An Taisce](#)
- 3) [Teagasc Native Tree Planting Schemes](#)
- 4) [DAFM Forestry Strategy 2023-2030](#)

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