



To increase the chances of your hedgerow saplings growing into healthy mature trees there are a number of practical steps we recommend you follow:

SELECTION

- ≡ Choose good specimens:
 - The sapling must have a straight stem from the ground and be from a strong rootstock. Check the lower stem for deformities and weaknesses (potential areas for disease to enter) that might have resulted from previous flailing.
 - Stems growing from previously laid stems/pleachers are not suitable.
 - A good method is to allow groups of saplings to grow up and select the best specimen the following year.

- ≡ Choose appropriate varieties:
 - Avoid the non-native species such as Sycamore, Beech, and Horse Chestnut, which will out-shade other hedgerow plants.
 - Elm is not suitable, as it is susceptible to disease.
 - Try to replicate the broadleaf trees you find in other hedgerows on your farm.
 - Appropriate species include Oak, Ash, Field Maple, Beech, Hornbeam, Lime, Wild Cherry, Wild Crab Apple, Damson, Holly, and Whitebeam.
 - Replace mature or dead trees by tagging adjacent saplings of the same species.

- ≡ Choose appropriate sites:
 - Avoid selecting saplings underneath overhead cables or over underground services, also near buildings, railways and roadsides with a narrow verge or where trees would be in a sight line.
 - Saplings in hedges running north south are recommended as they create the least crop shading, but provide good shelter.



MARKING

- ≡ Clear away brambles and nettles from the base of the hedge to enable safe access to the saplings. Trim around the saplings, approximately 1m circumference, to make the stems more conspicuous to the hedge trimmer.

- ≡ For the tags the priority is high visibility, low cost.

If you have a stock of bright coloured tree ties or spiral guards attach those to the saplings *above the height of the hedge*. Cheaper still, cut up fertilizer bags or brightly coloured tape into strips of approximately 45cm (18 inch) length. Tie these in a double knot (to



avoid them coming undone) around the sapling stems, just *above the height of the hedge* when cut. It might be necessary to tie the band through the crook of a branch to stop it slipping down into the hedge. These lightweight adjustable ties might be deemed as untidy, but they will be removed after a year or two.

Whatever you use it must be easily visible from 6 metres away, to enable the trimmer to take timely, evasive action.

- ≡ IMPORTANTLY *tell* your hedge trimmer about the trees you want to preserve and what colour and type of tags to look out for.
- ≡ If you are not too sure about your hedge trimmer's accuracy, select saplings from within groups of stems and mark out the group to leave. Cut out the unwanted stems after trimming.

THE HEDGEROW TREE GRANT

To encourage landowners and managers to allow hedgerow saplings to grow into mature trees, Somerset County Council have introduced a new grant through the Somerset Landscape Scheme – the Hedgerow Tree Grant.

This grant offers £5 per 'tagged' hedgerow tree. This is paid in two installments - £3 per tree is given once the signed grant offer and map have been returned, the remaining £2 per tree follows once the hedges have been trimmed a second time and after check to ensure the saplings remain.

The grant leaflet is available from SCC, District Councils and FWAG.



FUTURE MANAGEMENT

- ≡ The density of vegetation in a hedge creates a strongly competitive environment. Trim around the saplings at hedge height, mid spring and mid summer, to clear any vegetation that might shade the tree. A good mulch around the sapling base will also reduce competition and help retain moisture.
- ≡ Prune off the lower branches of the sapling to encourage a better shape, avoid the development of knots and prevent shading. Prune lower branches (up to 3m high) before they are 5cm (2 inches) in diameter. Never prune more than 20% of the crown at any one time.
- ≡ Check all your ties are in place prior to the next trim to avoid an awkward situation with your contractor!
- ≡ As the trees grow, loosen the ties to avoid constriction of their trunks. Remove the ties completely once the trees are large enough that the trimmer automatically avoids them.
- ≡ Remember to inform *new* contractors of your hedgerow trees, especially if you are receiving a grant.

Advice Sheet 1

≡ Replace mature or dead trees by tagging adjacent saplings of the same species.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Somerset Landscape Scheme and grants for hedgerow trees - Phil Stone 01823 355617.

Hedge management - Somerset FWAG 01823 355427.

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