

# Planting native hedges

## Advice Sheet 2



### INTRODUCTION

Native hedgerows are suitable for farms, small holdings, garden boundaries, playing fields and other public spaces. New hedges in the countryside should be planted with native species for:

- κ Maximum wildlife benefit
- κ To fit in with existing hedges and other features
- κ To prevent non-native plants escaping into the wider environment

### SPECIES

Plant locally native species that will be suited to local conditions and that will provide a variety of flowers and berries throughout the year. **Suitable species include:**

- κ Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- κ Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- κ Dogwood (*Thelycrania sanguinea*)
- κ Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- κ Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- κ Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- κ Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
- κ Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*)

### **Unsuitable species include:**

- κ Leylandii
- κ Japanese honeysuckle
- κ Laurel
- κ Privet
- κ Sycamore
- κ Snowberry
- κ Box
- κ Yew
- κ Elm
- κ Elder

### GROUND PREPARATION

A one meter wide strip should be cultivated, rotivated or sprayed off (systemic herbicide) prior to planting.

### PLANTING

A new hedge should be approximately 60% hawthorn and blackthorn and 40% other species (see above list). Plant bare-rooted 'whips' (40-60 cm sized plants) in a double row (rows set 40-50cm apart) with plants staggered in the rows (set approximately 50cm apart). Plant 10 or 12 plants (2 metres length) of 'thorn' species interspersed with 5 or 6 species (1 meter length) of 'other' species. Make a slot one spade width, place plant in the slot and heel in well to ensure good contact with the soil.



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In time, this will give a thick dense stock-proof hedge that will have maximum wildlife value. The best time to plant is from November to February.

### GUARDING

New plants will have to be protected from livestock or browsing rabbits, hare or deer. Consider placing rabbit spirals or quills (mini-tree tube with pointed end) around each plant if browsing is a serious problem. Guards are available from good tree nurseries.

### HEDGEROW TREES

Consider planting a new hedgerow tree when planting a new hedge. Oak and ash are most suitable species, but field maple, crab apple or holly are also suitable. Use a 60-90cm transplant in a 1.2m tree tube, with a stake and tie, for better establishment and protection.

### WEEDING & AFTERCARE

Weeds, particularly grass weeds, can be a serious threat to an establishing hedge in the early years after planting. Minimise weed competition in the first 3-5 years with a mulch of well-rotted farmyard manure, bark/wood chippings, sheet plastic (plant through slots) or mulch mats.

### GRANT AID

Grant aid for hedge planting and other conservation projects is readily available in Somerset. Somerset County Council's Somerset Landscape Scheme or DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship Scheme can both contribute towards the cost of planting new hedges, restoring old field boundaries and other works.

Please visit the Grants page on the Somerset Hedge Group website for further information.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Somerset Landscape Scheme and grants for native tree planting - Phil Stone 01823 355617.

Hedge management - Somerset FWAG 01823 355427.

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