



Care before planting

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Planting Advice

1. General Advice for Successful Planting

There are 3 important elements given below but please do ask one of our advisers if you would like any help. We have many years of experience and are always happy to provide advice on planting.

a. Select plants of appropriate type and size for the planting site conditions.

Many plants we offer will succeed in most situations but the following should be noted:

- If the site is near the sea then you will need to be more careful in selecting suitable plants.
- Rhododendrons will not grow on chalky or lime rich soils.
- Yew, Box, Olive and Vines should not be planted on wet ground.

b. Make sure they are well planted

This leaflet gives full details of how to do this but the key points are:

- Plant in reasonable soil. If the soil is poor then mix in tree planting compost with the soil.
- Do not plant too deep! Make sure that the top of the rootball is level with the surrounding soil.
- Trees, larger shrubs and conifers must be securely staked. Poor staking will result in the tree rocking in the wind, preventing it being able to root into the surrounding soil leading to the tree dying.
- Firm the soil well after planting to remove any air pockets in soil.
- Water in well after planting.

c. Look after them

- Water regularly, particularly larger plants, during the first growing season (April to September) according to weather conditions. Feel the soil to make sure you are not under or over watering – the soil should be moist but NOT waterlogged.
- Control weeds around the base of plants. Ideally create a grass / weed-free zone of 50 to 100cm diameter around the base. This will avoid the need to mow around base of tree – but if you have to use mowers or strimmers, take care not to damage the bark at the base of the tree.

Following the above guidelines will give your plants the best start and should achieve good results. However, being natural, plants are all different and occasionally may struggle to get established. If you are concerned about the plants, please contact us for advice. Don't wait and hope the plants get better as by then it may be too late to remedy any problem. We are always happy to give advice over the telephone.

2. Care Before Planting

- **Container plants** – these should be kept in a position where they will not get blown over – maybe lean up against a hedge or lay on ground if safe. During summer the rootball should be watered daily until planted to ensure that the compost remains moist.
- **Bareroot Plants** – these are delivered in bags which help keep the plants in good condition for up to 2 weeks if kept out of direct sunlight and protected from very hard frosts. If they are to be kept for a longer period before planting, remove the plants from the bag, dip them in water and let them drain off before replacing them in the bag and resealing. Alternatively, plant bundles may be “heeled in” (roots covered with soil in a trench).



3. When to plant?

Avoid planting when there is snow on the ground or when the ground is frozen. Otherwise:

- Container plants can be planted all year round but avoid hot dry weather when particular attention to watering will be required.
- Bareroot plants can only be planted when they are dormant between mid November and mid April.

4. Consider Protection and Watering options

- Rabbits and deer can cause damage to trees and shrubs. If these are likely to be a problem please ask us about suitable protection products or refer to our catalogue. There are a range of solutions available to provide protection to the plants.
- Effective watering will be important for new plants. For larger trees or shrubs, or where watering may be difficult, consider:
 - Leaky Pipe irrigation. This connects to a garden tap and slowly leaks water where required. It is possible to control this on a time switch.
 - Rootball irrigation – this is a circular perforated pipe that is placed about 6 to 12” below ground level with an inlet coming up to the surface. When watering, the hose is placed in the inlet and water is distributed effectively around the rootball without any surface run off.

Right: Leaky pipe is connected to a tap and slowly leaks water when required.

Far right: The circular perforated pipe is placed 6 to 12” below ground with inlet coming up to the surface.



5. Ground Preparation

- Clear weeds and grass around the planting site.
- If the soil is poor then mixing in compost or a small amount of well-rotted Farm Yard Manure may be beneficial.

6. Planting and Staking Container Trees and Rootballed Plants

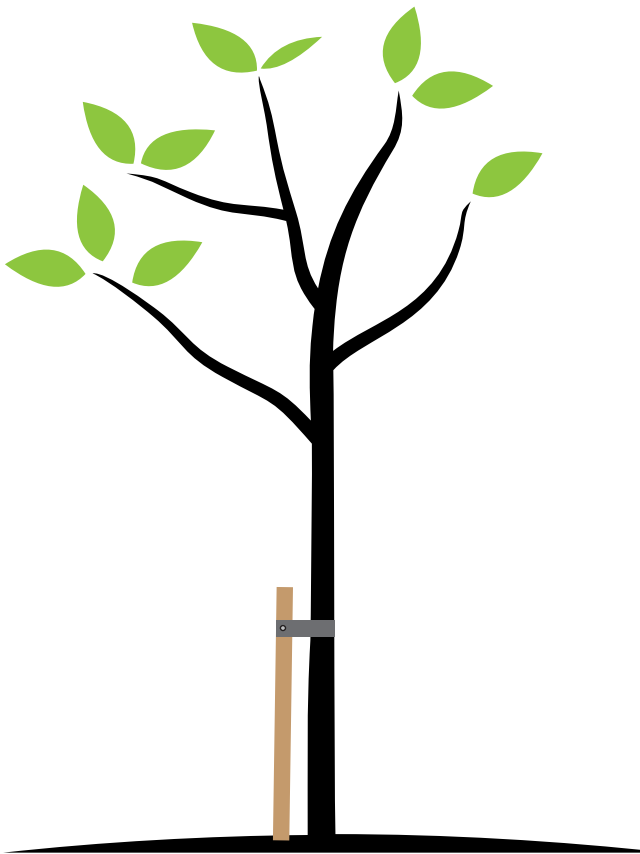
A video of this topic is available to view on our website: www.englishwoodlands.com



Preparation for Planting

- Water the rootball / container well before planting to thoroughly wet the compost.
- Dig a hole to the same depth as the container and around 100-250 mm (4 to 10”) wider than the container each side, depending on the size of tree. Lightly fork the bottom of the hole to break up any compacted soil. A small handful of bonemeal may be added at this stage.
- Remove the tree from the container or bag. If you are planting rootballed plants, these have hessian and sometimes wire around the roots – these should NOT be removed. They protect the roots from damage while planting and both the hessian and wire will rot away naturally in a few months.
- Position the tree in the hole, adjusting the depth of the hole as necessary to ensure that the top of the rootball is level with the surrounding soil. It is important not to plant too deep!

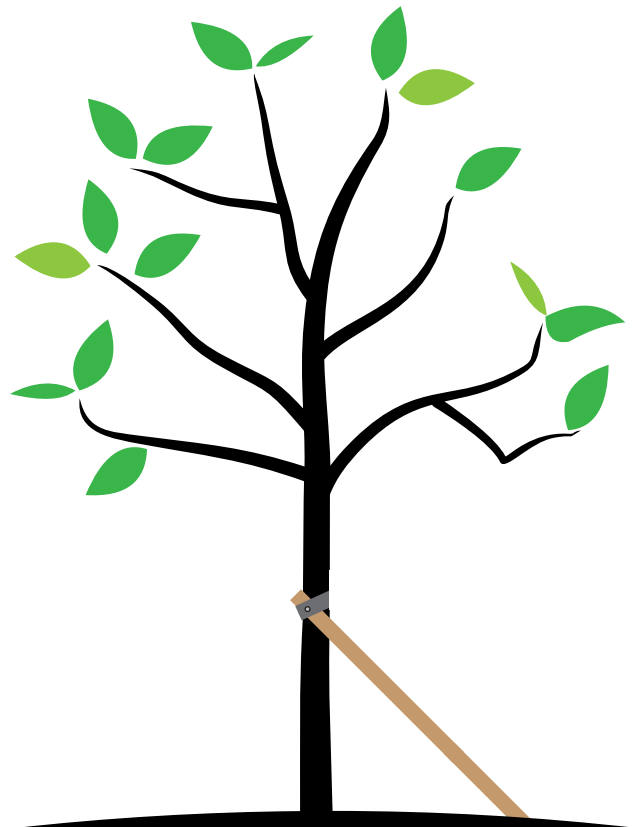
Staking Methods



Single upright stake

This method is suitable for small trees up to about 2.5m (8ft) high.

- Place the stake as close to the edge of the root system as possible and drive into the ground until firm. Do not drive the stake through the rootball. Fix the tree tie at the top of the stake and adjust it so that it holds the tree firmly. Use a nail driven through the tie into the stake to prevent the tie from slipping down the stake.
- If necessary, saw off the top of the stake so that the top is between 1/3rd and 1/2 the height of the tree.



Single stake at 45 degree angle

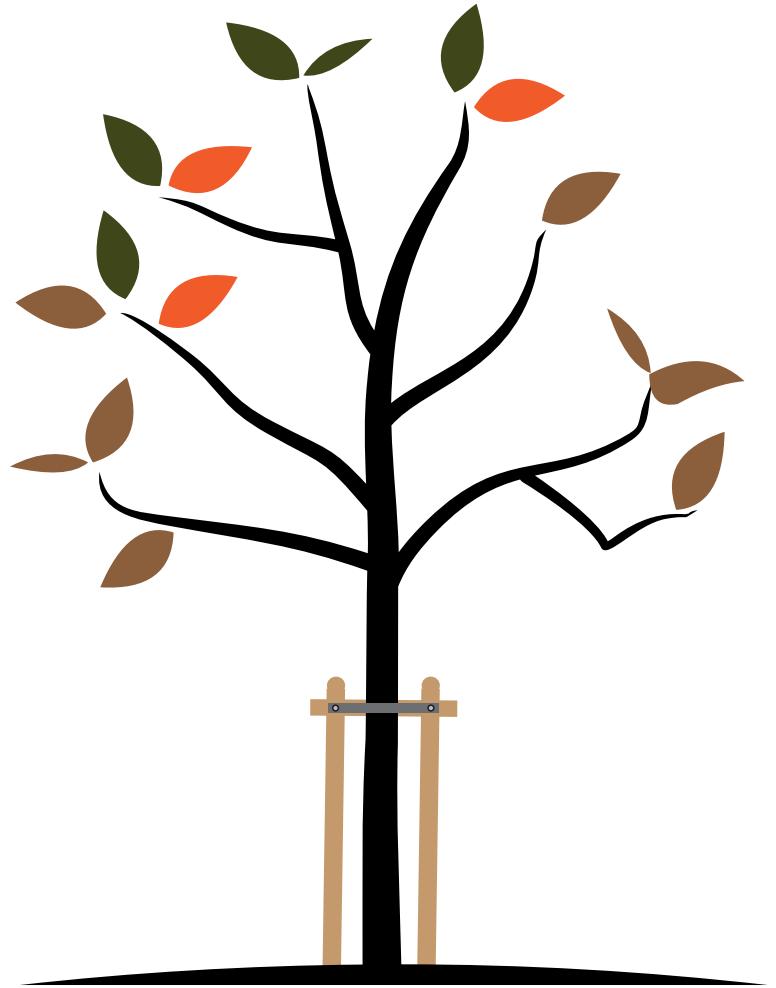
This method can be useful for all small trees, multistemms and conifers.

- Fix the stake as shown. When planting on a windy site, drive the stake in so that the top of the stake faces the prevailing wind. The top of the stake should be at a point between 1/3 and 1/2 the height of the tree – you may need to saw off any surplus if the stake is too long.
- Fix the tie at the top of the stake and drive a nail through the tie into the stake to prevent the tie from slipping down the stake.

Double staking and crossbar

This method is suitable for larger trees of about 3m (10ft) and over.

- Position stakes on either side of and close to the rootball of the tree and drive stakes in until firm.
- Cut the crossbar to length and nail it between tops of stakes with the flat side against the stakes and facing towards the tree.
- Thread a length of tree tie strapping around the trunk of the tree and then through the slots of the rubber block making sure that the rounded side of the rubber block fits against the tree trunk.
- Position the flat side of the rubber block against the crossbar and nail the strapping to the crossbar using large head roofing nails. Put the nails in close to the rubber block to ensure that the tree is held tightly in position and that it is vertical.



Backfilling

- If using Rootgrow mycorrhizal fungi then this should be applied at this stage – see the instructions on the packet.
- Finish planting the tree by filling in the gap between the rootball and the hole with a 50/50 mix of soil and planting compost and firm in well.
- If installing an irrigation pipe watering system, fill the hole to within 6" (15cm) of the top. Then place the irrigation pipe around the root system and nail the bracket to the stake with a single nail. Then continue to back-fill the hole as above.

Watering and Aftercare. Trees need regular watering during dry conditions during the first few years. Adjust watering to your soil and the weather conditions so as to keep the soil moist but without waterlogging.

Weed control around the base of the plant will help the growth and establishment of new plants. This can be achieved with a suitable mulch eg bark, or by hand or chemical weeding. Tree ties should be left in place for 3 years or so after which the stakes and ties can be removed.

7. Planting Bareroot Hedging and Trees

How many plants?

New mixed hedges are usually planted at a spacing of 5 plants per metre (approximately 4 plants per yard). This allows for 2 rows with plants staggered – see diagram below:

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---X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----  
X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----
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Double row – typically 30cm (12") between the rows with plants spaced at 40cm (16") along each row.

Protection from rabbits and deer

Bare root hedge plants are vulnerable to rabbit and deer damage, particularly in rural areas. For protection from rabbits, spiral guards should be used with canes to support them. Alternatively, the entire hedge can be fenced off with rabbit netting, with the base of the wire firmly buried in the soil. Deer fencing generally needs to be 1.8m high. For further details please see our website or ask for advice.

Care of the plants before planting

Bareroot plants are delivered in bags which help keep the plants in good condition for up to 2 weeks if kept out of direct sunlight and protected from very hard frosts. If they are to be kept for a longer period before planting, remove the plants from the bag, dip them in water and let them drain off before replacing them in the bag and resealing.

Planting

Don't plant into waterlogged or frozen soil – wait until conditions improve. At the planting site check the roots are not dry – if necessary dip them in a bucket of water. To prevent the roots from drying out in the wind, leave the plants in the bag, taking them out only as you plant them. Alternatively cover the roots with damp sacking. We recommend using Rootgrow Mycorrhizae or bonemeal and these are applied during the planting process – see the instructions on the packet. Depending on the soil type, a 50/50 soil/compost mixture can be used to avoid large air spaces around the roots.

Aftercare

Weeds compete for water, nutrients and light so plant into soil free from perennial weeds (including grass) and keep them weed free in the first two years. Rolls of mulch mat such as woven polypropylene and bark can be used as a weed suppressant. Water during the first spring and summer if logistically possible.

For more information please ask for advice or see our website blogs at www.englishwoodlands.com





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SPECIMEN TREES • HEDGING • ACCESSORIES

English Woodlands, Burrow Nursery, Herrings Lane, Cross in Hand, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 0UG
T: 01435 862992 E: sales@englishwoodlands.com www.englishwoodlands.com

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