**Tree planting - Frequently Asked Questions**

# Why are trees so important?

Trees are a fantastic resource and have so many benefits to the environment. They play a crucial role in mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity. They also help reduce flood risk, improve soil conservation, aid habitat management, and benefit a range of ecosystems.

Climate change is a huge and complex global issue, but planting more trees is one way in which we can help to reduce CO2 emissions. On average, one broad leaf tree will absorb in the region of 1 tonne of carbon dioxide during its full life-time (approximately 100 years).

Planting trees also creates habitats and corridors between habitats that help wildlife move across the landscape. Studies have shown that the UK’s native oak species support 2,300 species of mammals, birds, invertebrates, fungi and mosses, and that one oak tree can support over 280 species of insect! Leaf litter is also a fantastic source of food for bacteria, fungi, insects, plants and animals, which then recycle the leaf litter and other tree debris back into the soil.

There are also a wide range of social secondary benefits. Planting trees improve mental wellbeing, encourages people to take pride in outdoor spaces, helps people become more engaged with and connected to nature, and offers a great way for people to be socially and physically active.

# What are the benefits of tree planting in our area?

Increasing tree cover across the Chichester District will:

* help tackle climate change
* combat challenges of tree diseases and aging tree stocks
* create habitats for wildlife
* improve biodiversity
* help to alleviate flooding risk
* aid wildlife corridors between Chichester and Pagham harbours and the South Downs National Park, and those along the A27 and railway
* make areas more attractive

# How can we increase tree planting in the Chichester District?

We are at a crucial time in which levels of planting are in decline. To help increase tree planting in our area, we are piloting a scheme to establish new ways of planting trees across the Chichester District. This scheme is being led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Natural England and the Tree Council. We are developing cost-effective and innovative approaches to planting trees outside woodlands over the next two and a half years. The council is one of five local authorities in England taking part in the £2.5m tree planting project, which aims to increase tree cover in rural and urban areas.

As part of this project this year we are giving residents, landowners, farmers, community groups, businesses, charities and other organisations the opportunity to apply for trees that are subsidised at a 50% cost by HM Treasury and Chichester District Council. The applicant will be responsible for paying the remaining 50%. This fund is open to everyone and applications for these trees will open in July 2022

# How much space do I need and where should I plant them?

Trees can be planted as individuals, copses, groves, avenues, shelter belts, hedgerows and many other ways. The amount of space you need will differ depending on how you plant your trees.

As an example:

* 30 saplings will cover around one tennis court-sized area, or create 6-8 metres of double-row hedging
* 100 saplings will cover 4 tennis courts, or create a double-row hedgerow of 20-25 metres
* 400 saplings will cover a football pitch, or create a double-row hedgerow of 85-100 metres

[The Woodland Trust has some fantastic resources on where to plant your tree or trees](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/where/)

# What types of trees should I be planting?

It’s crucial that the right trees are planted in the right spaces. Before getting started with your planting, you need to be aware of the soil type, how much space you have and topography of your area. You can then decide what type of tree or trees to plant depending on its suitability to the area. Native and locally sourced trees where possible are best, you can also check their provenance to identify that it is UK grown. Even better, grow on locally collected tree seed.

It is important for trees to be able to establish with enough room to grow and develop naturally, therefore the size of area you have will determine the type of trees you will be able to plant. If you have a smaller space, choose smaller species or plant less densely, whereas if you have a larger space you can plant larger species.

If you are planting a large area it may be better to use a mix of native species. UK woods are under pressure from pollution, climate change, pests and diseases. Including a broad range of native tree species will make your planting more resilient to these pressures.

Again, [The Woodland Trust has a great document outlining different types of trees that can be planted](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1168/twigged.pdf), including which soils they prefer and how large they will grow.

If you are applying for our subsidised tree scheme, we can help you with this. Different trees suit different types of growing conditions, so we have specially selected bundles of trees tailored for specific areas.

# What trees are best for Chichester soils?

Chichester District is primarily lime-rich chalk with a clay cap and sandy soils. Most of the South Downs are comprised of layers of soft chalk with seams and bands of flint, this means the soil often stays quite dry even in very rainy conditions.

Recommended trees for sandy soils include: sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, pedunculate oak, scots pine, silver birch.

Recommended trees for chalky soils include: common yew, common beech, common hazel, maples, apple trees, crab apple trees, whitebeam, field maple, hawthorn, mulberry, pear trees and cherry trees.

Chichester also has some clay soils in areas outside the South Downs such as Fishbourne, Bosham and Plaistow.

Recommended trees for clay soils include: birch, hawthorn, crab apple, pedunculate oak, small-leaved lime, field maple and hornbeam.

# Are there any problems with planting trees?

When planting trees, it is important to be aware of and understand the surrounding area. That is why the right tree must be planted in the right place.

There are potential impacts to roads and underground services with roots (usually only if the pipe or duct is already defective), branches can conflict with overhead wires and can block public access areas.

When planting, please also consider your neighbours; trees on your land might have an impact on their land once the trees are at full height, consider this in terms of the impact on light and ensure trees are planted at a suitable distance from any buildings.

You must research the type of tree to ensure the right tree is planted in the right place.

# Do I need specialist tools for tree planting?

For tree planting you will need:

* Spade or fork
* Stake and tie
* Tree guard or spiral
* Mulch (organic matter like chipped bark)
* Watering can or bucket

# How do I plant my trees?

Once you have established what space to plant your tree in, decided which species and acquired the tools you need you can start planting. Your tree will arrive either with bare roots, root balled or in a pot, there are different methods of tree planting depending on your soil and the type of tree. Thorough preparation of the planting site is essential — weeding / grass removal may be needed, and a square planting hole dug — large enough to accommodate the root ball. The hole should be ‘wide and shallow’ not ‘deep and narrow’.

The planting season and best time to plant bare rooted trees is November to March when the trees are dormant. You must ensure the bare roots are protected, kept damp and not damaged in transit or when being planted.

A container grown tree can be planted all year round, except in frozen ground, and if planted in the warmer months it would need more attention such as additional watering

[The Woodland Trust has a comprehensive guide on tree planting](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/), but if you need any further advice do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

# How do I ensure my tree survives?

Maintenance of trees is crucial; caring for your tree will ensure it survives for years.

You will need to mulch, water, prune and care for your tree. [The Woodland Trust has advice for long term care of your tree](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/care/), and [for more detailed advice on measures such as pruning the Arboricultural Association has some good resources](https://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning).