



Saving
Devon's
Treescapes

Planting instructions

It's time to plant!

Find out all you need to know
about giving your tree the best
possible start.



Devon
Wildlife Trust



WOODLAND
TRUST

Devon Ash Dieback
Resilience Forum



Photo: WTPL



About Saving Devon's Treescapes

The Saving Devon's Treescapes project is supporting communities to plant and nurture 250,000 trees in the next five years. The project is led by Devon Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, One Tree Planted and Tesco Bags of Help.

Devon's treescapes are stunning and crucial habitats for our wealth of wildlife, but they face many threats and have been in decline for many years. Our treescapes now face a new danger - Ash Dieback is estimated to kill at least 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years. **It will affect everyone, and everyone can be part of the solution.**

We're working with communities to help Devon's treescapes to thrive again. Every tree planted or encouraged to grow is vital to restore our treasured treescapes.

Once you've planted your tree, or protected a natural sapling, don't forget to post a photo on social media and tag **#SaveDevonsTrees**. You'll also be able to search and see everyone else's trees across Devon too.



By taking a tree today, I pledge to:

- Plant my tree in an ideal location
(if you aren't the landowner, permission will be required)
- Check the Devon County Council Environment Viewer to help ensure my proposed location is suitable
www.map.devon.gov.uk/dccviewer/
- Nurture my tree to ensure it thrives
- Share the progress of my tree on social media using the hashtag **#SaveDevonsTrees**

Visit **www.devonwildlifetrust.org/what-we-do/our-projects/saving-devons-treescapes** to find out more about Saving Devon's Treescapes and how to plant and nurture your tree.

If you're interested in undertaking a bigger planting then applications for larger scale planting ambitions are welcomed. Find out more at:
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant



How to plant your tree

It's important to take time to carefully plant your trees to give them the best possible start. Remember that in hedges it's often more effective to find, mark and protect existing saplings, so they can grow to maturity, than to plant new trees.

Planning the perfect spot

Whether you are planting one tree or a small copse, time spent planning the project to help your trees to thrive will be well spent.

To maximise benefits for our environment it is critical that your tree is planted in the right place.

The Devon Environment Viewer provides information on important features which need to be considered before planting.

Devon supports amazing historic heritage - check where there are historic environment features where trees should not be planted.

Also check for ecological and geological designations – if the area you propose to plant is identified then seek further advice.

There are also very sensitive flower rich habitats which could be damaged by tree planting which aren't shown on the Environment Viewer. Before you plant look closely at the grasslands. Avoid planting in areas where there are six or more different native flowering plants per square metre (excluding grasses).

Once you've planned the perfect spot, follow our guidance to help your trees to thrive.

Key things to consider before planting:

- Have I chosen an appropriate place to plant trees?
- Do I have permission to plant a tree on this land?
- What is under this piece of land? Will the roots affect any nearby buildings or underground services once it is mature? A good rule of thumb is to plant the tree at least three quarters of the mature height of the tree away from buildings or overhead lines.
- What is above this piece of land? Are there cables which the tree will obstruct once it is mature?
- Are neighbours happy with you planting a tree here?
- Have I checked the DCC Environment Viewer to ensure my proposed location is suitable?
- Have I chosen the right species for the site?

Introduction to site preparation, marking your site, and storage



1. If the trees are bare rooted keep them well wrapped in plastic bags, store in a cool place, and transfer to a bucket of water prior to planting to prevent the roots from drying out. Trees which are still in their cells (small pots) should be kept moist.
2. Keep the time from delivery to planting to a minimum. Bare rooted trees will need to be 'heeled in' to soil, covering the roots, if there are delays of more than a few days.
3. Start by marking out the planting positions of your trees. You could use tree tube canes as markers.
4. Choose a mild winter's day to plant trees – avoid frosts, waterlogged or very dry conditions.
5. Some sites may require preparing by 'topping' if overgrown with tall plants. This involves cutting everything down to ground level during late autumn and winter to make planting easier.



Spacing

If you are planting a copse, first develop a plan of what species will be planted and where. Visit local broadleaved woodlands for inspiration. Shrubs should be concentrated around the edges, taller trees planted towards the centre.

As a rough guide, trees that are planted in small copses are usually planted at about 2m intervals, but can be planted at any distance from 1-5m depending on the space and plan. Wavy lines or scattered plants look more natural than regimented rows of trees. If you are planting single trees to grow to maturity, ensure there is enough space for the tree to thrive and its canopy and roots to spread.



How to plant your trees

Pit planting

Pit planting is the most thorough but time-consuming method. It is suitable for all ground types but can be difficult in areas with stony soils. Pit planting ensures closer root contact with the soil and we recommend it in areas prone to drought. This is the best technique to use if low numbers of trees are to be planted.



1. Using a spade, a pit is dug for each tree. These pits need to be several centimetres wider and deeper than the trees' roots. If you are planting single trees, dig soils to a much wider and greater depth to relieve compaction – lightly firm soils before planting and infilling.
2. The grass you have dug up can be placed upside down in the bottom of the pit to provide the tree with extra nutrients.
3. Place the tree in the pit and ensure that they are planted at the depth they were growing. Look for the collar – the mark where it originally started to grow above the ground. This should be level with the top of the soil.



4. Backfill the soil around the tree while holding it upright. Gently firm the top layer of soil around the tree – take care not to compact the soil.
5. Now push the cane into the ground next to the tree, making sure it's stable.
6. If using tree guards or spirals to protect your saplings, this is the stage to add these. Press the protection firmly into the soil.



Slit planting

Slit planting is a simple method that is suitable for bare soil and grass and can be easier than pit planting for stony soils. We don't advise using this method if you are planting in an area susceptible to drought or with clay soils, because in dry conditions the slit can re-open, exposing the tree roots.



1. First, fully insert a spade into the ground and push it forwards to create a slit. Ensure the slit is deep enough for the tree roots.



2. When the slit is open, insert the tree.



3. Remove the spade and gently firm the soil back around the tree. Fit the guard as with pit planting.

T-notch planting

T-notch planting is another efficient method suitable for grass-covered ground but not bare soil. This method is an alternative to pit planting in areas susceptible to drought, but again not recommended for sites with clay soils.



1. Push the spade fully into the ground.



2. At a right angle to the first cut, repeat step 1 to create an inverted T-shape.



3. Take the spade to the original cut and level it upwards, parting the turf.



4. Place the tree carefully between the sections of turf.



5. Lever the spade back out and the turf will fall into place.



6. Gently firm down the soil around the tree. Fit the guard as with pit planting.



Suppressing weeds

It's important in the first couple of years after planting to limit weed growth to reduce competition for moisture.

You can use mulch, such as bark or wood chips, around each tree to suppress weeds. You'll need to apply your mulch to a depth of around 10cm to prevent it from being blown away or dispersed and will need to top it up annually. You can also buy biodegradable mulch mats which can be pegged into the ground to keep them in place. Make the hole as small as possible in the mat to avoid grass pushing up through. You should aim to keep a 1m diameter area around the tree clear of weeds and grass for the first 2-3 years. Trees need moisture in the soil to enable them to thrive. Other plants and grasses compete for water and will impact on successful tree establishment.

Watering

Your trees should adapt to the natural conditions of your site so watering shouldn't be necessary, especially as it can encourage the roots to grow towards the soil surface. If there's a particularly long dry spell in the spring/summer after planting and you feel watering is necessary, saturate the ground thoroughly to ensure that the water soaks deep into the soil.

Check your tree guards

Strong winds can blow trees over so routinely check your guards, canes or stakes are upright and pushed firmly into the soil. Remove grass growing inside the guard by lifting the guard, pulling up the grass and firmly pushing the guard into the ground once the grass is cleared. We advise wearing eye protection during this activity to avoid injuries from canes.

Pests and diseases

These can also cause problems inside the guards, so check the tree stems and guards for damage. Keeping all tree guards firmly in contact with the soil and a weed-free area around your trees will help. If you suspect disease, contact Saving Devon's Treescapes to confirm if there is a problem that requires action.

Fencing and livestock

If livestock or deer have access to your planting areas, they will need to be fenced off from the young trees. Electric fencing or post and wire will prevent livestock from reaching, eating or knocking over the trees. Tall tree tubes will help protect against deer browsing.



Looking to the future: What's next?



Remove the tree guards

Remove the guards once they have started to split and the tree has grown to over 3m in height. The guard has now done its job and may hamper growth if left around the tree. If the guards are still in good condition they can be recycled and used again.

The tubes are made from polypropylene (PP) and the spirals are PVC and should be reused. Both can be recycled where facilities exist; please check with your local authority.



Photo: Chris Gomersall/2020Vision

Nurturing hedgerows

Hedges support up to 80% of our woodland birds, 50% of our mammals and 30% of our butterflies. They enable wildlife to move through the countryside, protect soils from wind erosion, provide shelter for people and livestock and provide habitats for pollinators. When managing your hedgerow select trees to be given space to grow to maturity. For more information on hedge management visit the Devon Hedge Group website www.devonhedges.org/



Photo: Ross Hoddinott/2020Vision

Attracting wildlife

There are lots of ways to attract wildlife – you could install bird boxes, bat boxes, or bug hotels. If you have space, creating a pond will help attract a wonderful array of species. You could also plant a mix of native wildflowers in an open area of your site. Remember that any open spaces may need ongoing management outside of the growing season to keep them free of competitive plants.

Enjoy your trees!

If you follow these instructions, your trees should thrive for years to come. You can find more information about caring for your trees on the Saving Devon's Treescape website www.devonwildlifetrust.org/what-we-do/our-projects/saving-devons-treescapes



Keep in touch

We want to encourage more people to plant trees and your experience can help us inspire others to get involved. Please share photos and stories of your tree as it grows using the hashtag **#SaveDevonsTrees** so together we can create healthy and beautiful treescapes across Devon.



Hazel dormouse. Photo: Terry Whittaker/2020Vision

#SaveDevonsTrees



With special thanks to the Woodland Trust for their support with this leaflet and their donation of 60,000 native trees to the project.



www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future