

Tags are easy to hang

They are bright and durable so can be spotted if any cutting works are taking place. They are self-securing by slipping the ribbon around a branch and through the hole at the end of the tag and can be renewed, as necessary.

Importantly, experience from Devon Hedge Group shows that because tagged trees can rapidly become concealed within surrounding growth, they need to be obvious for five or more years to operators of flail cutters if their loss is to be avoided. This usually involves regular hand pruning of adjacent growth and frequent tag replacement.



A young rowan tree in a Devon hedge.

Hedgerow trees - ongoing management

Tagging is one step on your hedgerow tree's journey. Good ongoing management is key to its survival.

Some tips include:

- Removing the lower limbs of young trees will raise the canopy and reduce shading on crops and hedges.
- Don't remove large limbs from large or mature trees - these are very valuable for wildlife as well as providing critical shade for livestock.
- Encourage shade tolerant species such as holly under the tree's crown. Small gaps in the shrub layer beneath trees are usually not a problem to wildlife and may actually help some animals to move between fields.
- Ensure you maintain hedge banks by regular casting-up* and protecting them from livestock damage.
- Pollarding, where the tree's limbs are removed periodically at a set height, out of reach of grazing animals, keeps shading under control and can actually extend the life of the tree.

*casting-up = rebuilding the bank by replacing soil that has eroded or slumped.



Saving Devon's Treescapes

Photo: Brown hairstreak butterfly, Tom Hibbert



Take the next step in protecting local hedgerow trees

Saving Devon's Treescapes is actively tree tagging in your area.

You can help by raising awareness of the importance of tree tagging within your local community or by tagging your own, precious hedgerow trees.

For more information or to request your **Free Tree Tags** please contact the Saving Devon's Treescapes team by email at savedevontrees@devonwildlifetrust.org or call Devon Wildlife Trust on 01392 717094.

To find out more about and to support Devon Wildlife Trust's work for nature visit www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Saving Devon's Treescapes is a partnership project led by Devon Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum. It is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, One Tree Planted and other funders.



Saving Devon's Treescapes

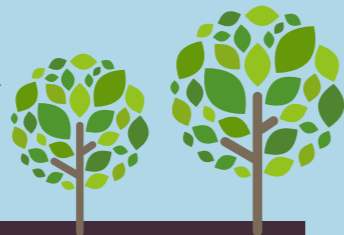


Photo: Rob Walton/Devon Hedge Group

Saving Devon's Treescapes: why and how to tag hedgerow trees

Saving Devon's Treescapes is supplying free, brightly coloured tags for hedgerow tree tagging - find out how to get yours and how to use them

About Saving Devon's Treescapes



Saving Devon's Treescapes is a five-year project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Devon County Council, and One Tree Planted led by Devon Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Ash Dieback Resilience Forum.

The project aims to work with community groups, landowners, schools and businesses to keep Devon's treescapes healthy in the face of ash dieback by planting and nurturing 250,000 trees outside of woodlands across Devon by 2026.

The Saving Devon's Treescapes project is supporting communities to plant and nurture trees.

A top priority for Devon's Treescapes is to recruit new hedgerow trees to replace the diminishing stock of mature, free-standing trees which give such character to the landscape.

Many Devon hedgerow trees are now nearing the end of their lives – their life expectancy is unlikely to exceed 150 years even with good management – so without a concerted and sustained effort to establish new hedgerow trees in coming years, there will be a gradual change to the landscape quickened by ash dieback disease.

Tagging the new hedgerow trees helps ensure they are not accidentally cut and with the right management they can go on to become the hedgerow trees of the future.

The best way to establish new hedgerow trees is often by allowing existing saplings and stems to grow up from the hedge. However, it is often necessary to plant into gaps, especially where the range or native trees present in the local area is limited. This guidance applies to both planted and naturally occurring young trees.



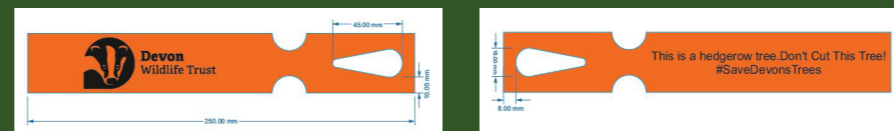
Photo: Rob Wolton/Devon Hedge Group

What is hedgerow tree tagging and what do the tags look like?



Hedgerow tree tagging is a method of clearly marking young trees within a hedge to protect them from being accidentally cut down during hedge maintenance. Brightly coloured tags are attached to the trees to alert hedge cutters to their presence. Along with clear communication on the location and reason for the tags, it ensures these trees are allowed to grow to maturity and contribute to the biodiversity and structure of the hedge.

An example tree tag



See the end of this leaflet on how to get your own free tree tags.

Purpose of hedgerow tree tagging

- Protecting young trees: hedgerow trees, especially young saplings, are vulnerable to damage from mechanical hedge cutting equipment.
- Ensuring maturity: tagging helps ensure that trees are not cut back to the same height as the rest of the hedge, allowing them to develop into mature trees.
- Supporting wildlife: a mature tree in a hedge is typically worth many in a wood – they flower and fruit more prolifically, their open, spreading form supports much more wildlife, and they store more carbon. They also serve as stepping stones for wildlife moving across open farmland, providing shelter, safety and food.



Photo: Rob Wolton/Devon Hedge Group

How to tag hedgerow trees:

- 1. Identify young trees:** Look for young trees that have the potential to grow into mature hedgerow trees (eg oak). Smaller tree species like holly, rowan and crab apple can also be very valuable for wildlife, producing large quantities of flowers and berries or fruits.
- 2. Obtain permission:** If you are not tagging on your own land, it is essential you get permission from the landowner or farmer before tagging trees on their property.
- 3. Tagging:** Attach brightly coloured tags to the trees or to stakes placed near the trees.
- 4. Tag safely:** Whenever you are working at height or near a public highway be careful and always have someone to help.
- 5. Clear communication:** Ensure the landowner or manager, and preferably the hedge cutter too, know where the tagged trees are, and explain their importance.
- 6. Regular maintenance:** Replace tags as needed and monitor the survival and growth of tagged trees. It is often necessary to clear some growth from around tagged trees so that the brightly coloured tags can be seen even during low light conditions.

How to choose which sapling to tag:

- It is easier to spot promising saplings or stems in the winter, or in the autumn when leaves have started to fall and you can see well into the hedge.
- Large species like oak and beech should be no closer than 20m apart, smaller trees can be closer together depending on the landowner's preference.
- Choose saplings that are well-back from public roads or tracks used by wide machines.
- Do not choose saplings that are beneath or within 10 metres of overhead power lines or other overhead services.



Photo: Rob Wolton/Devon Hedge Group