



Tree & shrub preparation & planting

Tree/shrub hole to be dug to approximate dimensions of 600-800mm² (dependant on the size of the rootball). Ensure that the hole is square with vertical sides. Bottom of hole to be filled with topsoil so tree sits at the desired height (with container grown plants, the top layers of compost should be scraped away, and the point where the roots flare out should be near the soil surface). Use mycorrhizal fungi as it gives plants a boost of the friendly fungi they use to help them find moisture and nutrients in the soil - use of mycorrhizal fungi dramatically reduce time it takes plants to establish and gives vigorous growth. Unlike bonemeal, RootGrow does need to be in direct contact with the roots when planting. Install irrigation system, such as MONA Relief Grande Tree Irrigation kit around the base of the root system. Backfill the planting hole, placing soil between and around all the roots to eliminate air pockets. Firm the soil gently, avoiding compacting the soil into a hard mass.

Watering

Drought stress is common with newly planted trees and shrubs. Even in a cool, wet summer, rain will rarely replenish soil moisture stores fully. The soil may be dry around the roots even when the surface appears moist. Dry, windy conditions are especially likely to lead to water shortages. With experience, it is possible to detect the dull, lifeless foliage indicative of drought stress but by then the tree has already been damaged. Ideally anticipate water loss, and irrigate to prevent damage.

Weeding

Weeds, lawns and other vegetation intercept water before it reaches the roots of newly planted trees and shrubs. - Keep a vegetation-free circle at least 80cm in diameter around the plant for its first five years to help avoid this problem
- The circle can be kept weed free through hoeing or use of contact or systemic weedkillers
- Laying mulch over this circle is also helpful, although take care to leave a collar of 10cm (4in) around the woody stems that is free of mulch, to prevent the risk of rotting the bark.

Problems

Planting too deep is a common cause of tree death. Aim to plant at the same depth that the tree was growing in the nursery. Poor establishment and brown leaves are also sometimes encountered after planting. Newly planted trees often need protection from mice and voles, rabbits and deer to prevent being ring-barked. Consider protecting trees with 1.5m height deer meshing around the trunk.

Hedge preparation & planting

Dig over a trench at least 70cm wide and 45-50cm deep. It is important to remove all perennial weeds. Rotovate & incorporate well rotten organic matter. Make sure the soil is easily workable. Make sure there is good drainage in the trench.

Avoid planting during frosts or on windy or very wet days. Wind can dry out bare roots before you can get them into the ground and very wet weather can lead to compaction around the roots, inhibiting initial root growth. If there is even a light wind, keep the bundle of bare roots in a sheltered place or in the packaging and just take out a few roots at a time, to minimise their exposure.

The trench needs to be slightly wider than the roots and the level judged carefully so that the soil level will come to the old soil mark on the stems. Spread the roots out carefully. If you are using canes on taller plants or to pin rabbit guards in place, take note of where to drive in the cane so that the roots will not be damaged.

Make sure the soil is firmed down well around the plant (but not compacted) so that there are no air pockets where roots could form. Water each plant really thoroughly and you could apply a mulch around the base of the plants to suppress weeds, protect from frost & retain moisture.

Aftercare

It is critical that new plants get the space to themselves so that they can obtain moisture, nutrients and light so weeds and grass need to be kept away from the hedge for the first 2 or 3 years.

Another factor that determines the success or failure of a new plant is lack of water, even in winter when they are dormant and particularly in March, April and May as deciduous plants break dormancy. Drench each plant thoroughly so that the water will get down to the roots. Always water in the evening, so that the sun does not evaporate the water. Evergreens benefit from having their foliage sprayed.

Frosts are another enemy of the immature hedge. If there are heavy frosts after planting, the soil can break up, so the plants may need to be firmed in again. Severe frosts will cause damage to leaves - generally they will recover but weather damage is always a risk you need to be aware of, particularly with new plants. Larger plants generally suffer more than smaller plants, evergreens more than deciduous.

In windy sites, the wind can 'rock' new plants opening up air pockets where either frost can get in or roots can be exposed to drying winds. Firm in the plants from time to time. Ideally evergreens need to be sheltered from drying winds during their first winter and growing season. If the weather is particularly severe or the site is subject to strong winds, it would be sensible to put up some windbreak netting to help prevent the plants drying out before their roots are established.

Hedge plants are planted close together so there is competition between the roots for nutrients and the trimming of hedges clips away much of the plant's food-producing unit so an annual mulch of well rotted manure or compost or any annual feed of a foliar fertiliser is helpful to maintain vigour.

In the first year after planting, plants often come into leaf or flower much later than established plants. Evergreen plants (or semi evergreens) often defoliate or the leaves turn yellow when transplanted. Evergreens also have a tendency to defoliate when they first experience warm, dry weather. If your plants experience any of these, just increase the frequency of watering and feeding (but don't make them waterlogged) and new leaves will appear.



Typical staking method using horizontal support which should be set parallel and windward side to the prevailing wind (SW)



Typical staking method for bare root trees - stake should face into the prevailing wind (SW). 80cm circle kept grass & weed free around trees planted in grass for first 3 years.

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