



2025

Tree planting notes for trees and hedges



Contents

Page

- 3. Document summary & steps/stages.
- 4. Planting and aftercare notes for whips, hedge plants and trees as per BS8545
- 5. Supports – staking methods
- 6. Watering

Outline summary

In order to support a planning application a planting statement and aftercare recommendations are often required to support the application so that it can be proven the land owner has had sufficient advice on planting and keep new stock alive.

The removal of previous low quality woody vegetation and damaged/defective trees on site means that re planting a new long lived tree stock is advantageous to the site and wider landscape setting. It may also be that the site did not have any woody vegetation present.

In order to satisfy the planning condition to provide new or mitigation planting, new planting is to be planted in the next available planting season after development is completed. JPTC advise that planting in April to October be avoided unless frequent aftercare can be provided. It is strongly recommended that BS8545 is read and understood before buying new planting trees and hedge plants.

Stages

Preparation

1. From now up to appropriate planting season – excavate new planting pits/trench size as directed by the trees/plants root ball diameter or the supplying nursery. Remove stones larger than 20mm diameter and other foreign bodies from the planting area.
2. Backfill the planting pits/trench with a mixture of good quality top soil (70%, compost (20%) and rotted woodchip mulch (10%).
3. Provide protection of this area to prevent contamination from building work. Ply wood sheet cut into strips and pinned on the area will suffice – mark this area as “protected planting pit do not disturb”.

Planting – after all construction is complete and in the appropriate planting season

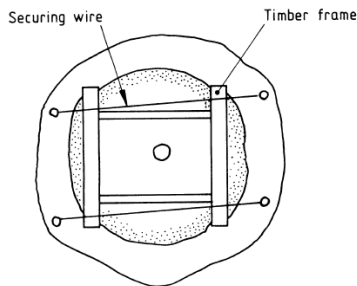
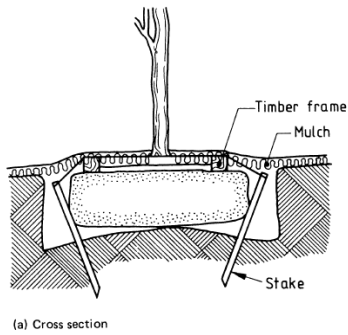
4. Remove the protection from the planting area. Mark out new planting locations along the pits/trench as per the chosen plant size used and the supplying nurseries recommendation.
5. Upon satisfactory marking of future planting pits, hedge plants and trees should be well watered in their pots/containers 24 hours prior to planting. Holes in the planting line should be excavated and the removed material kept as back fill.
6. Remove the hedge plants/trees from their pots, tease out girdling roots and place into the pit no deeper than the nursery line. Back fill. Firm in the plant making sure the nursery line is still visible at the lower stem root collar.
7. Fit support cane/stake if plants/trees are over 1m in height taking care not to damage roots during insertion into the planting pit base.
8. Water each plant/tree well and carryout post planting pruning to remove dead or damaged foliage. Remove all labels from crown, stems and branches and re attached neatly to the planting support if required.

Planting and aftercare notes

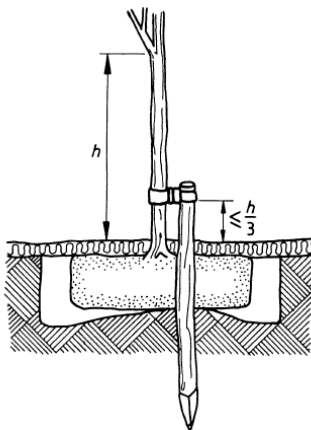
Note - Planting information and guidance can be found in BS8545 2014

1. General- A survey of the soil conditions should be made at the planning stage. Trees will not tolerate highly compacted soil, which should be broken up over as large an area of the site as possible or replaced. Planting pits should be provided with drainage to remove excess water. NOTE: It is recommended that professional advice be sought on techniques for overcoming drainage problems. General guidance can also be obtained from BS 4428. False economies on drainage provision may prejudice the success of a planting operation.
2. Tree pits - Tree pits should have a diameter at least 500 mm greater than that of the root ball and should be the same depth as the root ball. During digging operations topsoil should be stripped and put to one side for reuse and as much of the indigenous soil as possible should be retained, to avoid a distinct interface between the planting pit and the surrounding soil. NOTE Shaping the floor of the tree pit to give a domed centre will assist in the final positioning and orientation of the tree.
3. Planting General - Unnecessary movement of a tree should be avoided to prevent disturbance to the root ball. Before unloading or moving a tree from temporary storage, the depth and diameter of the root ball should be measured so that, if necessary, adjustments to the size of the tree pit can be made. Crown wrappings and fastenings used to tie in the branches for transport should be removed. Any branches damaged in transit should be removed (see BS 3998). The tree should be set in the tree pit and should be positioned with the minimum of delay. When finally set, the top of the root ball should not be below the surrounding soil.
4. Backfilling - Before a tree pit is backfilled all wrapping, insulation material and padding should be removed from around the root ball and from the pit. NOTE Non-galvanized wire mesh containers can be left in position. The pit should be backfilled using previously saved soil or, if necessary, an imported soil of similar texture. If considered necessary to improve root growth away from the root ball, a non-bulky organic fertilizer, e.g. Bonemeal, should be mixed with the backfill at the rate of approximately 2 kg/m³. Backfilling should proceed in layers, with firming, to ensure that no air pockets are left around the root ball. The newly planted tree should be watered slowly to moisten the root ball thoroughly.
5. Anchoring of root ball - The root ball should be supported to prevent disturbance while new roots develop that will secure the tree in its new site.
6. Mulching - A mulch extending 150 mm beyond the perimeter of the tree pit should be used to conserve moisture and minimize weed growth. Mulches, e.g. pea gravel, ground bark, bitumen felt or ultraviolet stabilized polythene sheeting, should only be applied when the soil is moist. Granular and loose organic mulches should be at least 50 mm deep.
7. Protection - Newly planted trees should be protected from stripping of bark by mammals and mechanical damage by grass-cutting machinery. Physical barriers of appropriate materials and size should be constructed to keep mammals away (see BS 1722). NOTE Above-ground support may be sufficient to prevent mechanical damage. Weed-free areas around the tree may obviate the need for machinery to be near the stem base.

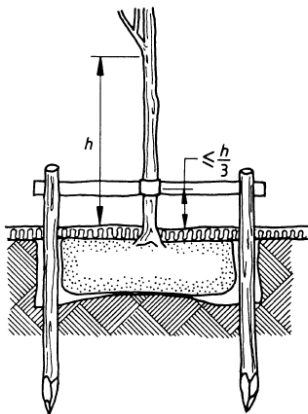
Supports



Trees can be secured in the following method using underground guys and anchor systems. This method is very good as it leaves a much better visual appearance and requires no tree tie maintenance.



Single stake method is simple and quick to put in place for small trees/hedge plants. Six monthly stake and tie checks will be required. Do not push the stake through the root-ball during planting.



Twin stake and rail method is fairly secure but doubles the cost of single stake systems. Six monthly stake and tie checks will be required. Do not push the stakes through the root-ball during planting.

Watering trees and shrubs

Water, soils & methods

Water is vital for plants. Without the right amount of water, the plants life systems will shut down and the cells within the plant will dehydrate to a point of cell collapse. This cell collapse is irrecoverable and must be avoided by making provision for adequate watering where and when required. Approximately 25 litres of water per week while in leaf may be required.

Watering must also not be excessive as this can lead to anaerobic condition around roots which will cause roots to die and plants must also not be under watered as this leads to stress on the plant which can potentially lead to plant mortality and failed planting schemes. The extremes of drought and water-logging are very damaging to plants. Over watering free draining soils can also wash out nutrients which the plant requires.

The majority of smaller bare root shrubs and trees planted in the months of November to December may not need additional watering systems as the disturbed soil around roots will have consolidated around roots during the winter months. This consolidation of soil particles around the fine roots creates a delicate relationship. This relationship is required with roots and soil for moisture absorption to take place. The addition of water alone is sometimes not enough to allow sufficient uptake of moisture if the roots cannot access the water from the soil.

Trees and shrubs planted in the months of January to March may not have the correct relationships with soils due to a lack of soil settling and will require additional help to obtain water. Please bear in mind that certain high moisture demand species will require watering up to the first three years of being planted.

The key to successful shrub and tree establishment is settled soil of and adequate moisture content. To achieve this, it is best to plant within the early months of the planting season for bare root plants but for pot or container grown plants planting can take place all year round as long as moisture levels can be kept at the optimum.

The most effective method of watering is high volumes of water being released slowly into the soil. This replicates rainfall and allows capillary action and natural drainage to moisten the ground but not wash away nutrients in the soil by over watering. To create the high volume a mains feed or large water butt is required. This volume of water can be distributed through small holes within the container base or through a feed pipe such as a soaker hose or pre drilled hose pipe into the soils where roots are present and water required.

The amount of water released needs to be almost dripping as opposed to running and the watering system needs to be left in situ 24 hours a day during periods of dry weather to allow the soils to hydrate. Watering systems can be inexpensive as rain water can be used and they require little maintenance if set up correctly.

Replenishment of the header source will be required and this can be carried out with either a hose pipe or water butt feed and take place at a time suitable for the operator and whilst the container continues the watering process.

Watering trees and shrubs

Watering system types

Containers

The most basic types of watering device are clean polythene containers such as a 25ltr drum with a 3mm hole drilled into one bottom corner of the container. This type of container can be filled daily from a mains hose pipe or water butt and simply left stood on the edge of the planting pit draining into the root ball area until empty. This can be effective for individual tree pits.



Soaker hose & rings

Soaker hoses work as a sub-surface watering method and can be laid in the planting trench or planting pit. The pipe is flexible and porous which lets the pipe sweat water into the ground along its length. Capillary action draws the water into the soils to make moisture available to roots. This method places the water where it is needed and benefits planting schemes by not being visible. Kits can be obtained on-line which are developed to the plant's needs. This method is particularly suited to trench type hedge planting as the pipe can be laid in the trench.



Hose pipe

The use of a hose pipe is a manual method of watering but wastes water and is time consuming to use. It is easy to use though and can be carried out as regularly as required. Care must be taken to not over wet the soil though. Surface evaporation can also be an issue during hot periods of weather so remember to keep mulches topped up and weed free.



Watering trees and shrubs

Maintaining supply

Once the appropriate method of watering is chosen it is crucial that the supply can be maintained through the spring and summer months when transpiration loss is prevalent. Mains fed systems are easy methods to use as the supply can be endless. If need be these can be timer controlled to refill containers daily or as required. Water butts can be filled from out building and house roof guttering systems and can feed directly into the water system.



Water butts come in many sizes from domestic ones to 1000 litre IPC container if required.

The water butt can be connected to the watering system such as a soaker hose or if the weight of water allows a hose can also be attached.

Individual drilled containers would require filling on a daily basis through the spring and summer months and for all watering systems some form of note taking is advisable as the supplier's nursery may only guarantee plants which have been watered correctly. The supplying nursery will also advise on watering amounts per day/hour.



Plant independence

Once a sufficient relationship between the plant, shrub or tree's roots and soil is occurring the watering levels can be reduced or stopped completely to let natural watering take place from ground and rain water. Well planted shrubs and trees will have this relationship sooner than those which are poorly planted.

The supplying nursery or your arboriculturist will be able to advise on when the plant is now independent of outside watering help and will be able to sustain life without additional watering. This is often in the second or third year after planting for most species if they are larger specimens. Younger and smaller stock can establish within the soil environment much sooner or may not need much watering at all.

Remember to keep mulches topped up and weed free and to check for water levels regularly both in soils and supplying equipment until the watering system is no longer required.