

# HEDGE PLANTING

**T**he Chiltern Hills were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1965 by the government in recognition that the Chilterns countryside is amongst the finest in England and Wales. This leaflet, part of the Chilterns Landowners' Guide, is intended to provide you with some basic information to help you maintain and enhance the natural beauty of your local landscape.

## Why plant hedges?

In most cases, hedges planted using locally found native plants can benefit both the landscape and wildlife, offering a much more natural form of fencing than post and wire. Before undertaking any planting it is important to ask yourself:

### Is a hedge appropriate here?

In certain parts of the AONB, such as the Ipsden prairie in South Oxfordshire and along the north west facing chalk ridge which runs along the edge of the Chilterns, the countryside has an open and un-enclosed appearance. Hedge planting here would have a negative effect on the landscape.

### Are certain plants better than others for hedges?

- Match plants to the local soil conditions and use locally sourced specimens where possible.
- The advantages of native and local plants are improved growth, better survival rates and protection of the local environment.
- Hedges can be planted as a single species such as hawthorn, beech, hornbeam, or mixtures eg. 60% hawthorn, 10% field maple, 10% hazel, plus smaller numbers of shrubs such as dog rose and holly.

### What should I buy?

- Bare rooted 'whips' (very young plants comprising a single stem with no side branches) are preferred, giving the best chance of success. They can be bought in bulk from nurseries.
- Include some natives trees in your hedgerow e.g. ash, oak. Plant sparingly at wide random spacings, e.g. about 20 metres or more apart. Mark them clearly to prevent cutting them down!

## Hedges as screens

Hedges can effectively screen buildings or provide privacy and shelter. However non-native plants such as Leylandii species and laurel are NOT suitable for use in rural situations, for example, around the edge of your garden or stables where they back onto open countryside. They are highly detrimental to the landscape as they are evergreen and not found naturally anywhere in the Chilterns. Consider using holly or beech.



*New Beech hedge planted as a screen*



*Newly planted hedge with spiral rabbit guards*

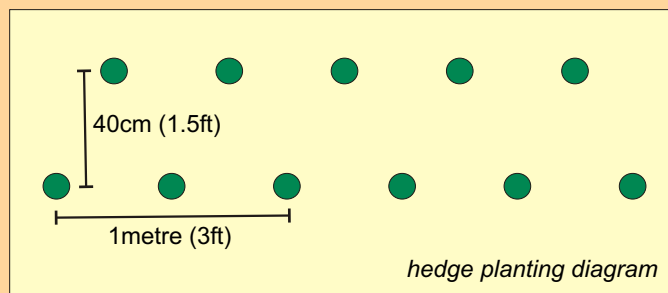
sponsored by

**Briants** OF RISBOROUGH LTD

GARDEN MACHINERY • CHAIN SAW & FENCING SPECIALISTS • GREEN CLOSE WORKS • LONGWICK • PRINCES RISBOROUGH • HP27 9SG  
TELEPHONE: 01844 343663 & 345975 • FAX: 01844 345884

## How do I go about planting?

- Plant between October and March, ideally before January while the soil is still warm and there is more moisture available. Avoid frosty/icy conditions.
- Contractors can be used or short sections are easily planted yourself.
- Plant between 4 and 6 plants per metre in a double staggered row, see diagram.
- When using bare rooted plants do not let the roots dry out or plants could die.
- Weed control is essential for a couple of years to get good survival and growth.



- Planting through a mulch such as black plastic or straw will help to reduce weed competition and retain moisture.
- Protect the plants from browsing by livestock, deer, rabbits, hares and voles, either by fencing or individual guards.

## Getting Started

- Remove surface vegetation which will compete with the hedge plants.
- Dig a trench at least 50cm deep and wide enough to allow for the roots. Below 50cm the soil should be loosened to allow good root growth.
- Place plants in appropriate position and spread out roots. Trimming long roots encourages growth.
- Replace soil around the roots mixed with improver if required and gently compact with the heel of your boot.
- Alternatively you can slot plant after removing vegetation, using a spade twice to create a T shape. This is much quicker but restricts growth and has a higher failure rate.

## Some tree and hedge species suited to the Chilterns.

Common Name	Latin Name	Hgt	Growth Rate	Wildlife Value	Comments
Apple, crab	Malus sylvestris	SML	MOD	***	Blsm & fruit
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	LRG	RPD	**	Good hedgerow tree
Beech	Fagus sylvatica	LRG	SLW	**	Good for screening
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa	SML	SLW	***	Blossom & berry(sloes) but suckering can be a problem
Buckthorn, Purging	Rhamnus cathartica	SML	MOD	***	Blossom but suckering can be a problem
Cherry, Wild	Prunus avium	MED	RPD	**	Blossom and berry
Dog Rose	Rosa canina	SML	RPD	**	Flowers and fruit
Dogwood	Cornus sanguinea	SML	RPD	***	Attractive red stems
Guelder Rose	Viburnum opulus	SML	SLW	***	Blossom, berry & good autumn foliage.
AVOID ORNAMENTAL VARIETIES!!					
Field Maple	Acer campestre	MED	MOD	**	Good autumn colours
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	SML	MOD	***	Blossom & Berry
Hazel	Coryllus avellana	SML	MOD	***	Hazeluts & stakes for laying
Holly	Ilex aquifolium	MED	SLW	**	Evergreen with berries; best planted as pot grown trees.
Hornbeam	Carpinus betulus	MED	MOD	**	Good firewood
Honeysuckle	Lonicera percylymenum	SML	RPD	***	Scented flowers & berries
Oak Pedunculate	Quercus robur	LRG	SLW	****	Good hedgerow tree
Spindle	Euonymus europeaus	SML	SLW	**	Colourful leaves, fruit & flowers
Wayfaring Tree	Viburnum lantana	SML	MOD	**	Colourful leaves, fruit & flowers
Whitebeam	Sorbus aria	MED	MOD	**	Good ornaamental & nurse tree.

SML - small; MED - medium; LRG - large  
MOD - moderate; SLW - slow; RPD - rapid

Tracy Adams  
Farming and Land Use Officer  
Chilterns Conservation Board  
The Lodge 90 Station Road  
Chinnor Oxon OX39 4HA  
Tel: 01844 355523  
email: [tadams@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:tadams@chilternsaonb.org)  
website: [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT**