



GUIDANCE:

PLANTING GUIDE FOR BIODIVERSITY-FRIENDLY TREES

Planting new trees is not a difficult job, but one to get right, to ensure the trees have the best start in life. The most important considerations are: root health, depth of the hole you dig, soil conditions and aftercare.

What you will need:

- A clean spade (ensure it's clean to avoid invasive species and pathogens)
- Tree sapling
- Gardening gloves
- Watering can
- If you're planting on stony soil you will need compost or mulch (such as bark chips or straw bales.)

Tree Care Pre-Planting



The Strabane Sigersons Green Club Planting Team

- The bare-root saplings (saplings where there is no soil on the roots) are dispatched in plastic bags.
- When your trees arrive, don't open up the bag until you are ready to plant.
- Make sure they are tied tightly (to keep in the moisture).
- Keep trees upright once you receive them
- If you are not ready for immediate planting, store the trees in a dark cool area, sheltered from frost and wind. (Tree should be planted within two weeks of receiving them)
- If the roots look like they're drying out, give them water to keep them moist (no more than a litre or two at a time.)

TOP TIPS

Every local community has horticulturists and tree planting experts. It is good to bring them in to support you where possible.

All good local garden centres and nurseries have experienced, knowledgeable staff members that will be able to guide you directly.



Step 1 - Choose your spot

- Trees thrive in healthy soil where they will have a lot of light.
- Ensure there are no electricity or telephone wire overhead or drains or electric cables below your planting areas
- If your planting area is overgrown, cut the grass short and weed it.
- Avoid planting under existing trees, as shade and lack of water will seriously restrict growth.
- Allow plenty of distance from existing hedges
- Avoid planting in weed-infested soil, compacted ground filled with buried rubble or very poor-draining area

Step 2 - Tree & Ground Preparation

- Plant your trees as soon as possible after you receive them
- Stand the tree upright in water to ensure its roots are damp. Make sure to give the roots good watering 30-60 minutes before planting.
- Remove any wrapping from the trees when you're ready to plant.
- Dig a planting hole that is no deeper than the roots, but is ideally at least three times the diameter of the root system.
- Break the soil up with a fork before planting.

Spacing of Trees

- The trees can be planted between 1 to 5 metres apart, depending on your space and plan. A c.2m spacing is usual.
- Wavy lines look more natural than regimented rows of trees. Wavy lines also help with biodiversity in the undercurrent of the forest.

Step 3 - Planting

- Plant with the top of the rootball at soil level
- Backfill around the rootball with the excavated soil, very gently shaking the tree a little to help the soil settle around the roots.
- Then **gently** use your foot to firm all around the rootball and ensure there is good contact between the roots and the soil and that the roots aren't sitting in an airpocket
- Lightly fork the around the planting area to ensure the soil isn't too compacted

AFTERCARE

WATERING Generally, trees will adapt to natural conditions so shouldn't need much watering. However, in the first year, ensure trees are watered during dry spells.

WEEDING & MULCHING Keeping an area immedaite around the trees clear of weeds and grass for the first 2-3 years will reduce competition for moisture and nutrients. You can also suppress weeds with natural mulch, such as bark chips or straw bales.

MOWING & STRIMMING Make sure everyone involved in maintenance of the space knows where your trees have been planted to avoid mowing or accidental damage. Consider signage if necessary

PROTECTION Protect from deer, mice or rabbit damage where necessary by using tree spirals, chicken wire guards or similar.

PRUNING & THINNING If prunign and thinning is necessary in later years or for early management & shaping, consult local horticulturists and tree planting experts or https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/crops/forestry/advice/Teagasc_silvicultural_guidelines_Broadleaves.pdf

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>
- <https://www.treecouncil.ie/>
- <https://pollinators.ie/planting-native-trees-for-pollinators/>
- <https://easytreesie.com/>

TOP TIPS

IMPORTANT: Plant at the right depth. The most common mistake is to plant too deeply. Planting too deeply may kill the tree.