

Hedgerows

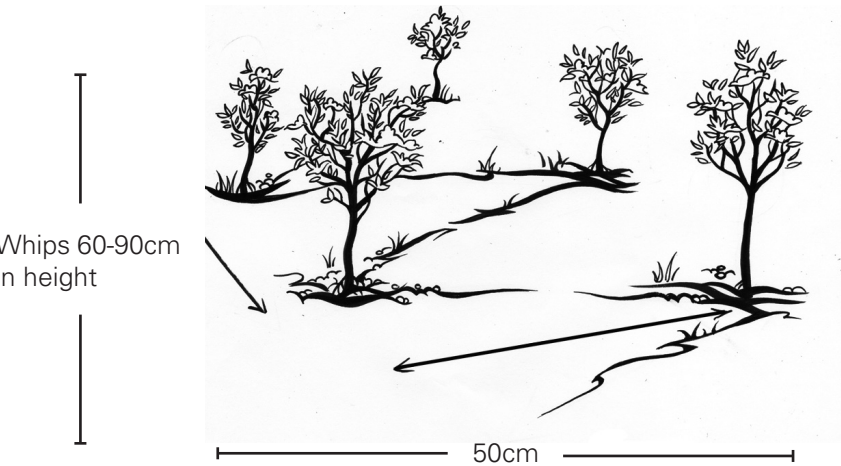


Illustrations by: Beverley Coraldean Images by Mick Wragg

Hedges are important features in the countryside, forming green corridors between habitats, along which wildlife can disperse. A mixed native hedgerow is great for wildlife and contains hundreds of species. Hedgerows are excellent sites for nesting birds and provide a rich food source of berries and nuts for insects, birds and mammals. In the last 50 years, we have lost over 150,000 miles of this habitat across the country, so having one in your grounds will certainly help wildlife.

Hedgerow Planting

- The best wildlife hedges consist of a mix of different native broad-leaved species that are allowed to grow tall (up to 1.8 metres) and thick. See the adjacent table for suitable species. Try and pick species which reflect your local environment.
- The best time to plant new hedges is between November and March when the soil is not waterlogged or frozen.
- To plant a new hedgerow, plant a double, staggered row of whips (shrubs between 60 and 90cms high) at a spacing of 20-30cm between plants and 50cm between rows to create a zig-zag pattern (see diagram). This means there should be about 6 shrubs for every metre of your hedge.
- Plant the shrubs in groups of about 5 of the same species.
- To retain moisture, and to prevent weeds from growing and competing with the shrubs, put down a mulch of bark or wood chippings.
- Remember to water the newly planted hedge during dry weather.
- You may need to put up a fence around the hedge whilst it is young to prevent rabbit damage.
- Some shrubs may die in their first year. These gaps should be filled with new shrubs the following autumn or winter.
- In their first spring you should cut shrubs to 45-60cm above the ground. This coppicing encourages the shrubs to bush out and will create a nice thick hedge.



Notch planting: make two cuts into the turf at right angles. Lift the flap of turf and insert whip.

Fact

- The most ancient of Britain's hedgerows were planted around 1000 years ago to mark Saxon boundaries. You can work out the age of a hedgerow by counting the number of different plant species supported by it. The more species there are the older it is likely to be.

Requirements and Characteristics of Hedgerow Species

NATIVE SHRUBS	Sun or shade	Soil preference	Leaves	Flowers	Fruit
Field Maple <i>Acer campestre</i>	●●	Alkaline	D	Yellow/green in May	Propeller shaped in Autumn
Hazel <i>Coyrlus avellana</i>	●●	Well drained	D	Catkins in spring	Hazelnuts in autumn
Hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	●●	All inc. clays	D	Catkins in spring	Small nutlets
*Hawthorn <i>Crataugus monogyna</i>	●●	All	D	White or pink clusters in May	Small red haws
Beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	●●	Sandy	D	Small green/yellow balls	Beech nuts in autumn
Holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	●●	All	E	Small white in May. Separate male and female plants	Red berries through winter
*Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	●●	Any	D	Pink roses in summer	Red hips in autumn
Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i>	●●	All but acidic	E	Male and female flowers on separate plants	Red fruits. NOTE: Yew is very harmful if eaten
*Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	●●	All	D	White flowers in spring	Small blue/black sloes
*Guelder rose <i>Vibumum opulus</i>	●●	All	D	Heavily scented flat white flowers in May/ June	Red berries in autumn
Wild privet	●●	Well drained alkaline	Semi	White clusters in summer	Black berries in autumn
*Spindle Tree <i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	●●	Well drained alkaline	D	Green/white in May	Red fruits in summer NOTE: Spindle is very harmful if eaten

Hedgerow Maintainance

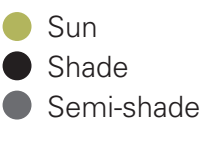
- Hedges need pruning once or twice a year, either in late summer or late winter, after the nesting season is over and the hedge has finished fruiting.
- The hedgerow should be cut into an 'A' shape rather than a rectangle. This allows sunlight to reach the lower branches.
- Wildflowers should colonise the bottom of your hedgerow naturally, but if you wish to speed things up, you could plant native climbers, such as honeysuckle and ivy, and wildflowers such as dead nettles, dog violet and garlic mustard.

D = deciduous

E = evergreen

Semi = Semi-evergreen

*Shrubs with thorns may not be suitable for planting around where pupils are active



Saving **Norfolk's Wildlife** for the Future