

Trees for London tree planting guide

Working in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers

Thanks for doing your bit to make London greener and helping to create additional tree canopy cover for future generations. We really appreciate it. Please aim to plant your trees from November (National Tree Week is the last week in November) to the end of March – this is the tree planting season when trees are dormant, which means they will have the best chance of thriving once springtime comes around! This planting guide will help you plan your planting event, and make sure that your trees get off to the best possible start.

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MAYOR OF LONDON



Step 1 Check your trees

- Check that the species, number, and height of the trees (20-50cm tall) are correct.
- Check that the roots are damp, flexible and attached to the main stems.
- Check that the tree stems are in a healthy and fresh condition and not dried out or brittle. Remember that the trees are currently in a dormant state so don't expect leaves in full flush.
- If in doubt, scrape back the stem of the tree (using your fingernail) to reveal green underneath the bark. This represents a healthy tree.
- Check the tree to make sure no roots or stems have been broken or damaged during transit.

Step 2 Look after your trees before planting them

- All trees should be planted within one month of delivery. The trees can be stored in their container for several weeks, if you keep them sheltered and protected from frost. They come with their own little 'pot' of soil so they can retain moisture, but they may need a splash in drier conditions.
- Be wary of leaving trees beyond the planting season as you do not wish them to break dormancy prior to planting them in their permanent position.

DO NOT PLANT IF THE GROUND IS FROZEN OR WATERLOGGED.

Step 3 Planting your trees is an easy task, here's how:

- Using a spade or digging tool, scrape back any grass or weeds where you want to plant your tree, then dig a hole big enough to fit the root ball of the tree.
- Remove any wrapping so that all you have is the tree, its roots and the soil it was grown in.
- Insert the roots into the hole (tree pointing upwards!) so that the top surface of the root ball is level with the bare ground. Add a little extra soil to the hole if it's too deep or dig a bit more out if it's not deep enough.
- Fill any spaces with more soil (you can use what you removed for the hole) and use your heel to firm the soil around the tree to remove any air pockets. Once planted, give them a good watering to help them on their way.

Step 4 Fit protection for your trees

- If you've opted to receive tree protection, this should be securely fitted following planting.
- Firstly, secure the cane or stake next to the planted tree, then follow up and fit the spiral guard as the final task.
- Spirals should be placed over both the tree and the cane – the only purpose of the cane is to hold the spiral up.

Step 5 Maintain your trees

- To increase prospects for survival and subsequent growth rate, the implementation of a maintenance programme is essential. Lack of water and competition from weeds are the biggest killers of newly planted trees.
- Weeded trees establish faster and need less maintenance overall.
- However, it is not unusual for natural losses to occur, so always expect a small percentage of failures to be replaced in the first two years following planting.
- You should remove weed competition at the base of trees for the first three growing seasons.
- Check at least twice a year that tree protection is securely fitted and replace where necessary. Protection should be maintained for at least three to five years until the trees are established. Once removed, please dispose of your guards appropriately. The tree guards supplied are compostable. Check your local facilities.

 [More advice on planting trees, running a planting event, and caring for your trees](#)

 [Video tutorials are here](#)

 Have a question about tree packs or planting? Contact trees@tcv.org.uk

 [Tree care tips – caring for newly planted trees](#)



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