



For climate, wildlife and communities  
[www.tcv.org.uk/idigtrees](http://www.tcv.org.uk/idigtrees)



# Tree planting guide



The Conservation Volunteers are so happy to provide you with free trees, but if you would like to support another community group to receive a tree pack, you can make a donation now.

A small act of kindness now can grow into something magnificent!

Together, let's sow a legacy for climate, wildlife and communities. That's real people power.



Prefer to watch a video? Check out TCV's quick guide to planting, which makes a great training video for your volunteers too!





# The Conservation Volunteers' community tree planting programme helps people like you create pocket forests across the UK. For climate, wildlife and communities – **I Dig Trees!**

## Checklist on arrival

Unpack all of your plants and plant protection.

- ✓ Confirm species, quantity and height of plants and plant protection as per your order.
- ✓ Confirm plant roots are damp and in good order after transit. Note – the root structures can vary between being fibrous (thin and shallow) and tap-rooted (longer and deeper) depending on the species.
- ✓ Confirm that the stems are healthy. Your plants are dormant, so unlikely to have leaves in full flush so for reassurance, scrape back the stem of the plant with your fingernail to reveal green under the bark. This is a healthy plant.



Remember to **reuse** and **recycle** your forestry bags.

Depending on the species and seasonal conditions, some of your trees might arrive as cell-grown whips. This is to ensure you get the best quality trees available, and the planting process is much the same. You'll notice cell grown trees as they come with their own 'pot' of soil. Just unwrap these carefully when you're ready to plant.



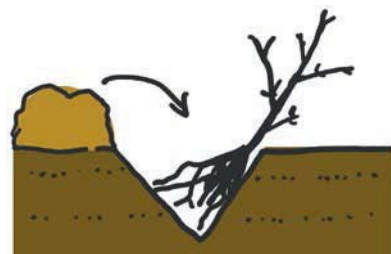
## Storage before planting

Ideally all trees should be **planted within one week** of delivery. You can **store them for up to 7 days in the forestry bags** they arrived in, where they will remain healthy if stored in a cool building away from the elements and any frost.

Alternatively, if you are unable to plant within 7 days we recommend you temporarily **'heel' your plants into the ground**, enabling them to be happily **stored throughout the winter period** until you are ready to plant them –see guidance below.

## How to temporarily 'heel in' plants

1. Dig a V-shaped trench – wide and deep enough to hold the roots of the plants.
2. Place plants in at an angle in the trench in their bundles with their roots at the bottom and the stems resting on the side of the trench.
3. Backfill with soil to cover the roots, using your heel to firm the soil and remove any air pockets.
4. Water once in position.



**Tip:** Bare root plants are better planted into their permanent position while still dormant, so avoid leaving plants heeled in beyond their bare root season, typically by mid-April, depending on the timing of Spring.



**Tip:** Avoid removing plants from the trench during frost or snow.

## Ready for planting?

### How to remove heeled in plants

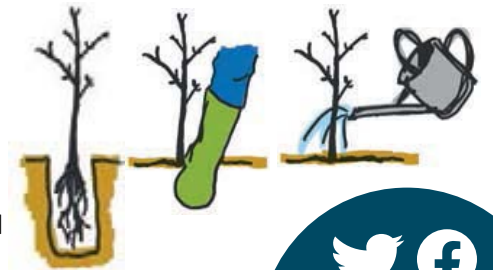
1. Gently remove and loosen the soil from the trench and around the roots using a trowel or your fingers to prevent damaging the roots. When you feel the bundle of plants coming loose, pull them from the ground. Gently shake off any excess soil.
2. If the roots have remained damp then place your plants back in their forestry bag they arrived in, ready for planting out. Alternatively, give them a 'drink' prior to planting. Fill a bucket with water and soak the roots for 5-10 mins. Drain off and place in the forestry bag ready for planting.

## Planting

Planting your trees is an easy task, however do not plant if the ground is frozen or waterlogged. Find a suitable position for your plants, bearing in mind the future growth and potential height and spread at maturity. Your trees can be 'notch' planted in four easy steps:



1. Begin by inserting the blade of a spade into the ground. Push the spade handle away from you and then bring it back towards you. Once you have removed the spade you will see that you have created a cavity or 'notch' in the ground.
2. Place plant roots within the notch and shake to ensure all of the roots are pointing downwards.
3. Use your heel to firm the soil around the plant to remove any air pockets.
4. If practical to do so, give them a good water once planted.

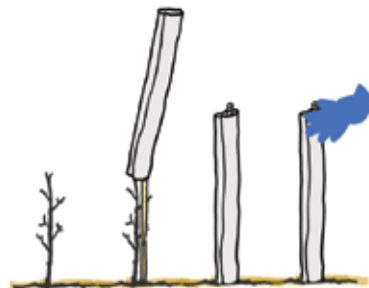


Follow and share your tree planting activities at **#IDigTrees**

## Protection

The Eco Wrap Guard plant protection we provide plays a very important role in protecting young trees from rabbits, strimming and mowing. They are easy to install in three easy steps and should be fitted following planting:

1. Push a cane into the ground next to the plant. The purpose of the cane is to support the Eco Wrap Guard.
2. Slot the Eco Wrap Guard over both the plant and the cane.
3. Push the Eco Wrap Guard gently into the ground 1cm to 2cm (this forms a safe barrier and deters small mammals from burrowing under the guard).



## Maintenance

A maintenance programme is essential to increase survival and growth rates. Weeded trees establish faster and need much less maintenance overall. Bear in mind, when planting bare root trees, it is not unusual for natural losses to occur. Always budget for a small percentage of failures to be replaced in the first two years following planting.

### Maintenance with protection

Check at least twice a year that all plant protection is securely fitted and replace where necessary. Protection should be maintained for at least three years and then removed for recycling or re-use.

### Maintenance without protection

If you do not have protection fitted, we would recommend securing weed control fabric to the ground prior to planting in order to easily suppress weed competition.



## Plant companions

Be a **Plant Companion** for up to 3 years after you have planted your bare root plants. Vital to the success of a planting scheme, Plant Companions **stay connected** by checking in on growth rates and weeding around the base of their plants. Once plants are established (typically from 3 years onwards), a Plant Companion completes this initial phase by removing the tree protection for recycling.

Thanks to the original planting team in year 1 and the Plant Companions that help the scheme take root through years 2 and 3 it is at this stage plants can 'go it alone'.

Find out more at [www.tcv.org.uk/idigtrees](http://www.tcv.org.uk/idigtrees) • Have a question about tree packs or tree planting? E-mail [idt@tcv.org.uk](mailto:idt@tcv.org.uk)