

After Care Guide.

Once you have planted your trees there are a few measures that you need to take in order to help the tree grow well and protect against failure.

Weed Control

The most common reason trees fail is due to a lack of water. It is essential that once the tree breaks into leaf it is kept well watered throughout its first growing season.

We cannot over emphasize the importance of keeping a one metre wide weed free area around the tree. This can be done using a herbicide, or an effective barrier covered with mulch. This must be kept for at least the first 2 years after planting. The reason this is so important is that any grass or weeds that grow around the tree will compete for water and nutrients resulting in the same problems you get when the tree is not watered at all. Cutting the grass will not be sufficient as grass is an efficient water pump which takes up more water when it re-grows.



Correct staking

If trees are not correctly secured they will rock in the planting pit. Roots which are not in firm contact with the soil will be unable to take up moisture and nutrients. This could result in dieback or in extreme cases death. The easiest way to solve this is to use a stake to anchor the tree in the ground. Below is a list of the correct systems to use to secure your trees.

Size of plants

40-60cm 60-80cm



Items needed

Unless rabbits or deer are a problem no need to stake.

80-100cm 100-125cm



Cane and spiral guard.

125-150cm 150-175cm



1.2m square stake and a buckle tie and spacer.

175-250cm, 6/8cm girth,
8/10cm girth & 15L potted.



1.65m Tree stake and a buckle tie and spacer.

All larger trees.

2 x 1.65m Tree stakes and cross rail with 38mm
cushion spacer and 1m of 38mm strapping.



Protection from Animal Damage

If deer or rabbits are prevalent in the area you are planning on planting the tree you will need to protect it with the correct guard.

If the problem is rabbits a 0.6m spiral guard should be wrapped around the tree. When rabbit guards are to be used on whips a 0.9 bamboo cane is required to support the tree and the guard.

If roe or fallow deer are present in your locality you will need a guard 1.2m tall.

For whips use a 1.2m tubex tree shelter supported with a 1.2m X 32mm sq. stake. The stake is driven into the ground until firm, the tree is planted beside the stake, the tree is protected by sliding the shelter over the top of the tree, securing to the stake with two zip ties.



For larger staked trees it is possible to split a 1.2m tubex longitudinally and wrap it around the tree. Then use the two zip ties to connect the shelter back together.



If there is a large deer problem you should ideally use a 1.2m weldmesh guard wrapped around the tree and stapled to the stake with fencing staples.



If red deer are a problem you will need 1.8m guards.

If you are planting in a field with livestock you will need to ideally erect a timber frame around each tree to prevent browsing. This is best achieved with four, 2.4m round posts driven into the ground 0.6m to form a square with 1.2m sides. The posts are strutted to each other with 1.2m lengths of 100mm face half round rail or 75mm x 50mm square sawn timber. The sides should be faced with sheep netting or barbed wire.

Alternatively the tree can be protected with a 1.8m weldmesh guard stapled to 2.4m stake, driven 0.6m into the ground. This will however not be sufficient for horses or large cattle which will use the post for rubbing and may push it over.



Mechanical Weed control

It is sometimes necessary to mechanically cut long grass or weeds adjacent to newly planted trees usually with a strimmer or mow grass close by.

When performing these operations no matter what the age of the tree it is important not to damage the tree in any way. Strimmer nylon can quickly strip quite big pieces of bark off. When the bark is damaged it has an effect on the trees ability to transfer moisture up from the roots to the leaves, can let in diseases and disturb the anchoring of the tree.

All these could cause the tree to die, at the very least will mark the bottom of the tree causing an unsightly scar, large scars will not heal easily.