



Oxfordshire Trees Collaborate

Garden Tree Guide

Introduction

Why plant a garden tree?

By planting a tree or a hedge in your garden you can make a very positive contribution to improving our environment. The right tree planted in the right place supports nature and the climate, whilst providing an attractive addition to the garden. In the case of fruit and nut trees, they can also provide food as well.

Trees are of vital importance in both the rural and built environment: they help to reduce flooding and soil erosion, they provide shade and reduce air pollution and they provide vital habitat and food for wildlife.



The Garden Tree Giveaway

This Autumn, International Tree Foundation is supporting Oxfordshire Trees Collaborate in an Autumn Garden Tree Giveaway.

Oxfordshire Trees Collaborate is a partnership of community tree planting groups and supporting organisations working together to encourage appropriate tree planting in the county.

We have a variety of free saplings to give away for you to plant in your garden. In order to help you choose an appropriate tree, we have put together this simple garden tree guide. It offers practical considerations and planting guidelines as well as a seasonal photo guide to native species suitable for small, medium and large gardens (all of which are available through the giveaway but can also be purchased at low cost from local nurseries).



Points to consider when
choosing a garden tree

Whilst many of us have access to a garden or a community garden, space is often limited. It is therefore important to choose a tree that is appropriate for the surroundings whilst at the same time providing the maximum benefit for wildlife. Hedges offer another way to introduce trees into your garden. In place of fences they provide a rich variety of habitat for wildlife and can make a beautiful feature with colour and seasonal interest.

The following section gives a series of points to consider when choosing the right tree for your garden.

This is followed by a more detailed description of 15 examples of native trees suitable for small, medium and large gardens. The photos illustrate how the trees will look in the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter and details of their height and soil and light requirements are given. Many of the trees listed in this document can be incorporated as mixed native hedging.

Size of the tree

Make sure you know the eventual size of the tree - although slow to grow, even a small tree will reach a height of 6-8m (20-26ft), and when considering spread, the roots of the tree will extend as far underground as the canopy does above ground. Weeping forms of trees are useful, as they rarely increase much in height, and columnar or ballerina trees can be planted where space is at a premium, as they do not have much spread.

Characteristics

Trees can be planted for foliage, flowers, fruit bark or leaves, each making a feature of the tree in different seasons. So think about when you want your tree to stand out, with respect to where it is planted in the garden and what is planted near it. Some trees, such as flowering cherries, have more than one season of interest, such as spring flowers and autumn foliage and so are useful where there is only room for one tree.

Habitat

Trees can be a fantastic haven for wildlife. They provide berries and perching and nesting sites for birds and homes for countless insect species. When you choose trees, consider ones that provide berries as food for birds, and leaves as cover. Choosing trees native to the UK is particularly important for much of our local wildlife who depend on them for their survival, as well as being well adapted to local soil types and climate.



Deciduous vs. evergreen

If the tree is planted for cover, e.g. to prevent being overlooked by neighbours, then year-round coverage is obviously an advantage. Additionally, as the trees keep their leaves no sweeping up of fallen leaves is needed. Conversely, the display of autumn colours given by many deciduous trees is a lovely point of interest in a garden.

Trees in small spaces

Trees can be grown in containers in small gardens or on patios, and can be a useful architectural point. They need to be planted in the right size of container, with plenty of drainage. Remember that trees in containers dry out more quickly than those in the ground, and so will need regular watering. Japanese maples, bay trees or even olives make excellent container trees.

Trees near buildings

Trees planted near a building can in some cases cause subsidence, blocked drains and raised pavements, but planting wisely can avoid these problems. Most trees cause no damage, but it is worth thinking about when choosing a tree. Heavy clay soil poses the greatest risk, as trees planted here can aggravate subsidence.

Cost

This varies hugely depending on the size and age of the tree. Native bareroot trees are less than £2 for the bare root tree plus a protective tree guard and cane, whereas a 120cm tree in a 9L pot comes in at around £60, and bigger specimens will be more than that.

Bare root, cell grown and potted trees

Saplings or small trees can be bought in three forms – bare root, cell, or in a pot. Bare root trees are the cheapest and easiest to transport, but have no soil around their roots, so they are prone to damage. Therefore it is very important to keep the roots of bare root trees damp until they are planted. Put the saplings in a bucket with moist soil or water. They are the recommended form for hedges and larger scale plantings.

Cell grown trees come in a small pouch or cell containing soil or compost. As their roots are shallow, they need to be regularly watered until they are well established.

Trees in pots can be larger, and are the type commonly found in garden centres.

Trees suffer less damage if they are dormant, so for bare root trees the main tree planting season in the UK is November to January. Cell or pot-grown trees can be planted at any time but must be well watered during dry periods.



Native Species of Trees

Trees and shrubs for Small Gardens	Trees and shrubs for medium gardens	Trees and shrubs for large gardens
Dog rose*	Crab apple*	Small Leaf Lime
Spindle*	Mountain Ash	Beech
Wayfaring tree	Hawthorn*	Oak
Guelder rose	Hazel*	Field maple *
	Hornbeam*	Wild cherry*
	Silver birch	
*Suitable for mixed native hedging		13

Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>)	4m (in 5-10 years). Can be bush like or trained to scramble along walls.	Hardy shrub with fragrant flowers and red hips – the summer flowers are important sources of nectar for insects and the hips an food for birds and mammals. Hips are rich in Vit C and can be used to make rose hip syrup.	Grows in full sun and tolerates shade. Prefers moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil. Will grow in most soils types.



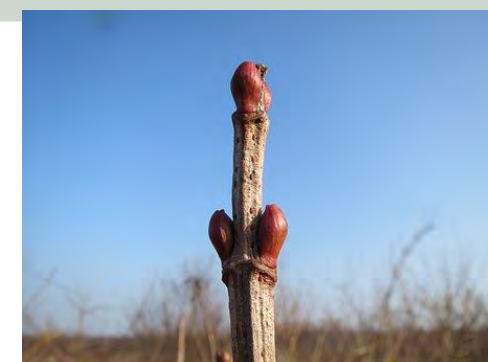
Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>)	Can grow up to 9m but generally smaller.	A delicate tree with beautiful orange and pink fruits, loved by wildlife. As the name suggests spindle wood was used to make spindles among other things, and now important for making charcoal for artists. Spindles are a sign of ancient woodlands and berries and leaves are toxic if eaten.	Grows in full sun and partial shade. Prefers limestone soils but grows well in most soil types. Water well when first planted.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Wayfaring Tree (<i>Viburnum lantana</i>)	Can grow up to 5m	Deciduous shrub. Attractive clusters of cream flowers and fruits which start off red and then turn black. Named wayfaring tree as it grows close to paths and is still an indicator of ancient byways.	Grows in full sun and partial shade. Prefers chalky soils.



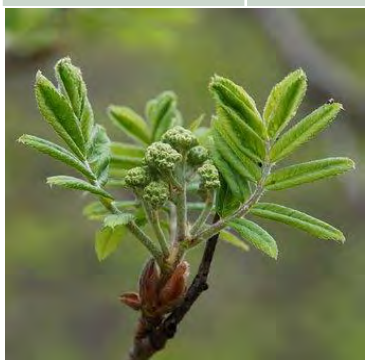
Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Guelder rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	2-5m.	Deciduous shrub. Snowball white flowers; attractive Autumn colour and berries for birds. The guelder rose is one of the national symbols of Ukraine and appears in folk songs, art and embroidery.	Grows in full sun and partial shade. Will grow in most soils but prefers damp, neutral or chalky soils, well drained. They will tolerate both acidic and alkaline soils.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Crab apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>)	10m and can live up to 100 years	Attractive blossom and fruit; Associated with fertility, love and marriage. One of few trees to host to the parasitic mistletoe. Fruit can be made into crab apple jelly.	Hardy trees, tolerant of most soil types. Grows best in full sun and partial shade. Require ample watering when young.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Mountain Ash (Rowan) (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	12m	A fast growing, elegant tree with a mystical history. Believed to protect the spirits of the dead. Large clusters of flowers and brightly coloured fruits make it an important tree for wildlife.	Prefers loamy or sandy soil, acid or neutral. Grows best in full sun and partial shade. Tolerates exposure conditions.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	15m as a bush (or smaller as a tree with a single stem)	Attractive spring blossom and fruit. Can be grown as hedge. Very important for a variety of wildlife. In Gaelic mythology the hawthorn was the entrance to the otherworld and associated with fairies.	Will grow in most soil types. Grows best in full sun and partial shade (will not grow in deep shade) Tolerates exposed conditions and urban pollution.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)	Hazel is often coppiced but when left to grow trees can reach a height of 12m. If coppiced they can live for several hundred years.	'Lambs-tail' catkins and autumn nuts. Bendy stems can be coppiced for hurdles or poles. Nuts loved by squirrels and people alike. Associated with love and fertility.	Will grow in most soil types, prefers well drained loamy or sandy soil. Grows best in full sun and partial shade



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>)	Usually around 12m but up to 30m when mature Can live for more than 300 years.	A tough tree with attractive foliage with hop-like fruit clusters in late summer and Autumn. Can be grown as hedging	Will grow in most soil types ad likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Up to 30m when mature	A pretty and striking tree with white papery bark, a symbol of purity	Will grow in most soil types ad likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Small Leaf Lime (<i>Tilia cordata</i>)	Up to 20m. Can live for 50 years.	Attractive tree, blossom produces a sweet scent, leaves support a number of moth species. Lime trees were often planted along roads by royal decree to get good luck in harvests.	Will grow in most soil types and likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	Up to 40m. Average life span of 150-200 years.	Majestic tree, supporting many unusual wildlife species. In Celtic mythology, the tree was thought to have medicinal properties and its leaves were boiled to make a poultice which was used to relieve swellings	Will grow in most soil types and likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	20-40m . Long-lived, can live for hundreds of years.	The majestic 'wise old oak' supports more biodiversity than any other tree. In England, the oak is a national symbol of strength. Couples were wed under ancient oaks in Oliver Cromwell's time	Will grow in most soil types and likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	A mature tree can reach 20m and live for up to 350 years	Beautiful autumn leaves, excellent at withstanding pollution. Supports a variety of wildlife. Medieval superstition said that if you passed a maple branch over a child, it would remove all traces of witchcraft.	Will grow in most soil types and likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun or partial shade.



Name	Height	Key Features	Growing Conditions
Wild Cherry (Prunus avium)	Mature trees can grow up to 30m can live for 60 years	A very pretty tree with beautiful blossom and bright red fruits. In Highland folklore, wild cherry had mysterious qualities, and to encounter one was considered auspicious and fateful.	Will grow in most soil types, likes moist but well drained soil. Grows best in full sun.



How to plant a tree

Planting a tree is straightforward but there are several steps to consider. Our partner, Harvest at Home have produced a clear step-by-step guide to planting a tree and with links to informative videos.

Tree Planting Step-by-Step guide



PRIOR TO PLANTING

Food security from the ground up.

Planting and looking after a tree is very simple. We've covered every step of the process in a series of short videos you can access via this QR code:



Fruit and nut trees provide food to harvest in the autumn and have a positive impact on the environment.



Planting trees is best when they're dormant, meaning the trees are "sleeping". Tree planting season in the UK runs November through March.

Cell-grown trees (the ones with roots surrounded by soil) can be planted all year round in moist ground. The soil is easier to dig when damp.

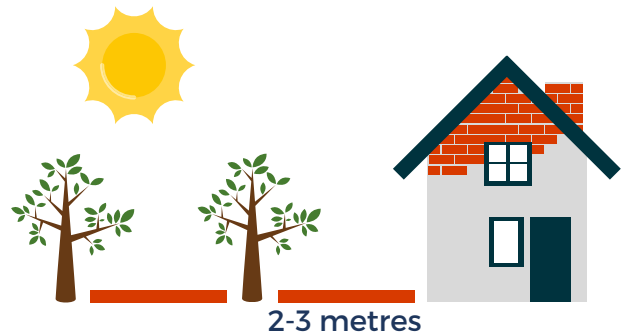


It is important to keep the roots of your saplings damp by placing them in a bucket with some water or moist soil until you plant them.



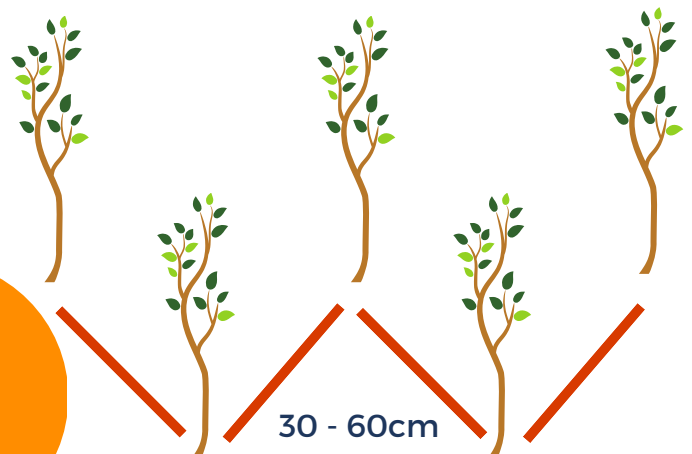
TREE
PLANTING
STEPS
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Trees require full sun and deep, well-drained soil to grow well. Plant your sapling at least 2 - 3 metres away from buildings, fences, other trees and phone lines to avoid damage in years to come as the tree extends its roots, trunk, and branches.



Many species such as Dog Rose, Hazel, Crab Apple, and Blackthorn can be grown as hedges, which is ideal for small spaces.

If you are choosing to plant a hedge, plant the saplings 30 to 60cm apart.



You need:

- Sapling
- Tree guard
- Bamboo cane
- Spade
- Scissors
- Cardboard (e.g. pizza box)
- Mulch (e.g. wood chips, decaying leaves, bark, or compost)



STEP 01



Dig a hole! Ensure your hole is bigger and deeper than the roots of your sapling. Keep your soil nearby. Place the grass layer you have dug up upside down at the bottom of the hole to provide extra nutrients for your tree.

STEP 02



Place your sapling in the newly dug pit:

- the top of the roots should be approx. 2cm below ground level.
- find the line between the stained bark and soil which is called the 'nursery line.'
- line up 'nursery line' with the top of the soil

STEP 03



Refill the hole with soil all around your tree. While you do this, make sure to hold the little trunk upright.

STEP 04



Gently, and carefully **press the soil down** with your heel all around the tree trunk. If the soil around your tree seems dry, water it.

STEP 05



Cut a cardboard circle, approx. 50cm in diameter. Then, cut a straight line from the edge of the circle to the middle of the circle. Insert the cardboard circle around the tree.

**STEP
06**



Place a 2-3cm layer of mulch over the cardboard. The mulch should not touch the trunk of your tree, as it could potentially damage it. The cardboard and mulch keep the ground moist while suppressing weeds.

**STEP
07**



Insert the bamboo cane in the ground approximately 5 cm away from the tree trunk. Roll the tree guard around the bamboo stick and tree trunk from the bottom up and let the base touch the ground.

**STEP
08**



Check your newly planted tree regularly. The soil around it has to be well drained yet moist so water your tree if required. Hopefully, over the next few weeks, you will see new leaves starting to emerge.

LINKS



If you are not sure which tree to plant, watch our YouTube playlist about various wildlife-friendly scrubs/trees which provide food to harvest in the autumn:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxNmpyt3tVgele_6-tiGb803-II7wPe1K



We are currently working on producing the next video in the series, 'Trees, shrubs and hedge maintenance.' We will share the link in due course on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/harvestathomeuk



Harvest @ Home is an organisation that provides food security from the ground up by supporting people in growing their food. Please visit our website:

<http://harvestathome.uk>



Caring for your tree

A tree is vulnerable in its first few years, so aftercare is important. Harvest at Home have produced a comprehensive guide to caring for your tree with links to helpful videos.

TREE PLANTING, PRUNING, GENERAL CARE AND HARVEST

YEARLY OVERVIEW

This list of tasks will help you get the most out of your trees or shrubs

November to March - Tree Planting Season



Join a tree-planting group such as Harvest @ Home or Oxfordshire Trees for the Future.



Watch Harvest @ Home's short tree planting video tutorials here.



Plant trees permanently with family and friends.



Collect tree seeds and willow cuttings. Plant them in repurposed pots.



Sheet mulch around your trees once a year in order to suppress weeds and retain moisture. Harvest @ Home's Step-by-Step video covers this method, watch from 05:52 into our video.



Make sure the soil around your trees is moist yet not waterlogged. Water your trees when required.



Prune rowan trees between October and February.



Prune or coppice hazelnut trees/shrubs every 5 to 7 years from December to mid-February.

Prune blackthorn before flowering.

Prune crab apple in late winter.

Harvest rose hips and make syrup with them.

Harvest sloes, freeze, thaw, and cook with them.



Check on your tree/shrub's health regularly:

Dog Rose
Hazel
Rowan
Blackthorn
Crab apple



April to October -



Make sure the soil around your trees is moist yet not waterlogged. Water your trees regularly, especially in the middle of the summer.



Prune your dog rose after flowering.



Carefully lift the tree guard and remove any grass or weeds growing inside before carefully repositioning it. Read more helpful advice, here.



Harvest hazelnuts. Ripe nuts are found around September/October. Make Hazelnut butter.



Harvest Rowan berries. They start to ripen towards the end of summer, into Autumn. Freeze them before cooking with them, do not eat them raw. Make a tart rowan jelly.



Gently harvest Crabapples around September/October, cook with them.



Once your tree is 4 years old remove the guard, as it could restrain your tree's growth.



Additional Resources

Here are a selection of helpful videos:

Woodland Trust step-by-step guide for planting a tree <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/>

Short promotional video by Oxford Friends of the Earth <https://youtu.be/xwL9Dg8kDdk>

Harvest at Home have made a wonderful series of short videos on planting trees:

‘Tree Planting, Step-by-step video guide’ <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxNmpyt3tVgei914iMA-PzclKzNgWzWOD>

They also have shorter videos on finding and selecting the right trees:

Hazel: <https://youtu.be/-tVPcDhxG1A>

Blackthorn: <https://youtu.be/Tb6fnsCRY0E>

Crab Apple: <https://youtu.be/rJri3cY0sok>

Dog Rose: <https://youtu.be/NIC3znSwPSE>

Rowan: <https://youtu.be/uuO5Eh8RCwg>

With
thanks
to



For more information please visit
[internationaltreefoundation.org/
garden-tree-giveaway](https://internationaltreefoundation.org/garden-tree-giveaway)

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