

There are British Standards for tree selection (BS3936\_1), nursery stock and root balled tree guidance (BS4043) and these are available from [www.standardsuk.com](http://www.standardsuk.com)

### Useful contacts and references:

Contact the Tree Team by e-mail at [trees@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:trees@westberks.gov.uk) or phone on **01635 551111** for Council owned trees and general queries.

Contact the Tree Officers for tree works applications, trees and planning applications and trees in Conservation Areas.

#### The Tree Officer for the Eastern Area is Jon Thomas

Contact Jon at [jon.thomas@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jon.thomas@westberks.gov.uk) or on Tel: **01635 519611** ext 2611

#### The Tree Officer for the Western Area is Andrew Giles

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If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 5191111

## Environment

# Planting a tree



Planting a tree can be a very satisfying experience as it is a long term legacy for the future and will provide benefits to wildlife, you and other people as well as to the landscape and can improve an areas sense of place and quality. The main focus is to plant the right tree in the right place and this comes back to selection of the correct tree for the site and space available.

### After selection of your tree, when to plant it

Generally you plant broadleaved trees from November to March and evergreen trees from February to April. Container grown stock can be planted at anytime, if there is water available as the tree will need regular watering.

### Preparations for planting

If you are planting a bare root tree, it is essential that the roots are prevented from drying out at all times (it takes less than 30 minutes for roots to be killed when exposed to the air, less in windy conditions).

It is important to prepare a large enough hole for the size of tree you are planting. The following table is a guide. The girth (stem circumference) is measured 1 metre from the ground;

Type	Height	Girth	Suggested pit size
Light	2.5-3.0m	6-8 cm	1 x 1 x 0.5m deep
Standard	2.5-3.0m	8-10 cm	1 x 1 x 0.5m deep
Selected	3.0-3.5m	10-12 cm	1 x 1 x 0.75m deep
Heavy	3.5-4.25m	12-14 cm	1 x 1 x 0.75m deep

### Planting the tree

Position the tree to avoid overhead cables or underground utilities (drains etc.). The base of the pit should be broken up to a depth of 15cm to aid drainage. Place any turf in the bottom of the pit but chop it up first. Position the tree so that the stake is on the windward side. For bare rooted trees, spread the roots naturally in the pit, do not bend or cut them to fit. With container grown trees remember to remove the container if not biodegradable. The backfill should be of a suitable material to allow for drainage and root growth. The addition of bone meal to the backfill will provide a useful food source for the tree.

Trees should be planted to the same depth that they were growing in the nursery (soil mark around the base of the stem), with a slight crown to the backfill. Nail ties to the stake (never to the tree) after fitting spacers to prevent the stem rubbing on the stake. Where vandalism is not a problem use a short stake with a single tie. This will encourage the tree to make good root and stem growth quickly because it will be able to sway a bit.

Where vandalism is a problem, a taller stake should be used with two or three ties. The top tie should be within 5cm of the top of the stake. The stake should be driven into the undisturbed ground at the base of the pit.

### Aftercare

This aspect is often overlooked or ignored and is one of the main reasons why newly planted trees struggle or fail completely. The following provides brief guidance on the aftercare.

### Weed control

The control of weeds and grass is essential as it reduces competition for nutrients and moisture. This is especially so for regularly mown lawns as these are extremely competitive. A minimum turf free area of 1m<sup>2</sup> is ideal. Weed control can be achieved by hand, herbicide application (be sure to read and follow the manufacturers instructions), mulching (e.g. shredded bark) or by using a plant mat, preferably a biodegradable one.

### Watering

Newly planted trees generally require watering during dry periods particularly in the first summer after planting. During periods of water restriction bath water can be used.

### Stakes and ties

These should be checked periodically to ensure they are not too tight or too loose. After 2-4, years when a tree should be established, short stakes can be removed. If a longer stake has been used, it should be gradually reduced in height over several years as the stem increases in girth before final removal.

### Formative pruning

This can be carried out when necessary to maintain a single leading shoot or to remove any dead, damaged, diseased or crossing branches.

