

This type of hedgerow –using cuttings- is easy to plant, grows quickly and is usually very suitable as a shelterbelt.

plants and tools required to plant 100 metres:

cuttings and trees required:

- source appropriate shrubs/trees (native and/or introduced) dependent on objectives and preferences
- number of cuttings required depends on species (see further)
- 5 hedgerow trees (oak, rowan, birch, whitebeam, wild cherry or bird cherry)

materials, tools and labour required:

- ground rock phosphate, compound fertiliser (10-10-20) or rotted farmyard manure (if necessary)
- hire of small digger / JCB with 18"-24" bucket
- hedging plastic (black, UV-stabilised polythene, 1m wide, 120 micron thick)
- pair of secateurs
- ± 5 tonnes of fine quarry dust (alternatively use a mulch)
- appropriate fence type
- 1 manday

before you start...

- the secret of planting a hedge successfully depends mainly on using good quality plants, cultivating the soil prior to planting, controlling grass and weeds and keeping browsing animals away for the first few years
- consider location, access points and traffic safety carefully
- start planning in summer, do it well and try to plant a short run of hedge every year
- fence off if necessary



site preparation is essential for successful growth

- spread well-rotted farmyard manure, compound fertiliser or ground rock phosphate where hedge is to be planted
- using a JCB or mini-digger, dig soil over to 25cm (10") deep and 50cm (2') wide, flip soil over and with the bucket teeth, loosen soil
- ensure the site has sufficient top-soil and avoid waterlogged, shallow and very exposed sites
- keep at least 1m (3.5') away from any fence or wall
- if planting (or infilling) on the site of an old hedge: remove old soil and add fresh topsoil together with some well-rotted manure
- spread out black polythene
 - 1m wide, 80-120 micron, UV-stabilised

preparing and planting cuttings

- use healthy, non-flowering cuttings
- cut into 15-30cm (6"-1') lengths just above and below a healthy bud
 - appropriate diameter and length depends on species
- prepare cuttings immediately before planting
- plant between November and February
- ensure to plant cuttings correctly by marking top and bottom differently!
- push cuttings down through plastic by punching a hole in plastic with a big nail
- plant a single or double row (avoid wet, windy or frosty conditions)
- plant density:
 - willow: 1 cutting/m and fuchsia, griselinia, escallonia, ivy,...: 3-5 cuttings/m
- spread thick layer of quarry dust, blinding, gravel, etc. over plastic
- if required: plant other plants such as blackthorn, holly, guelder rose... along plastic edge



Planting a Hedge from Cuttings



after planting care

- water newly planted cuttings during dry spells
- cut tall weeds (such as thistles, nettles, docks, etc.) growing between the plastic's edge and the fence, twice during the growing season
- pull re-colonising weeds (couch grass, buttercups, etc.) back off the gravel 3 or 4 times during the growing season using a rake or billhook

early hedge management

- monitor weed growth and carry out weeding if required
 - majority of all new hedgerows / shelterbelts fail or struggle due to poor weed control
- replace dead cuttings every winter

- trim hedge as appropriate (depending on species)
 - willow: let grow, do not cut back
 - fuchsia, griselinia, escallonia: trim regularly, cut back to 25cm (10") of current year's growth

weed control alternatives:

Biodegradable mulches

Organic mulches (straw, bark, etc.) work very well in sheltered areas. Kill off vegetation prior to soil preparation (light exclusion or herbicide). Carry out soil preparation and planting as described above but without using any plastic.

Plant trees and shrubs directly into the prepared soil. After planting, apply a thick layer of organic mulch such as straw, shredded bark, cocoa shells, rushes, etc. between the plants. For this layer to be an effective weed control barrier, it is essential to keep it topped up and raked over. Grass clippings can also be used during the growing season to control the emergence of weeds, apply well-rotted manure as mulch in the autumn.

Herbicides

Herbicides are another alternative although many hedgerows have been killed by the inappropriate use of herbicides. Use a sprayshield if required and read the label before use!

Fire brigade actions

Other weed control systems are mainly "fire brigade actions": cutting grass by using a brushcutter or hand sickle. Weeds can be pulled either by hand or by using a hoe. Weeds can also be regularly trampled. Avoid cutting or trampling plants!



general remarks:

- a range of species is more attractive and valuable to wildlife
- see the fact sheet *Selecting Hedgerow Species* for a wide range of species and ideas
- also add some trees such as ash, oak(s), rowan, field maple, hornbeam, whitebeam, elder, crab apple, wild cherry, bird cherry, wild pear (use alder or birch on damper sites) throughout the hedgerow / shelterbelt