

The Tree Council is the UK's lead tree campaigning partnership — an umbrella body for organisations working together for trees. A registered charity, it promotes the planting and conservation of trees in town and country.

Through its 150 member organisations, Tree Wardens and other partners, The Tree Council works towards:

- Making trees matter to everyone
- More trees, of the right kind, in the right places
- Better care for all trees, of all ages
- Inspiring effective action for trees.

This leaflet has been prepared with help from the Tree Advice Trust, a Tree Council member, and with the support of National Grid Transco.



Registered Charity No. 279000

National Grid Transco is one of the world's largest utilities. Through National Grid Company it owns, operates and develops the high voltage transmission system in England and Wales. Through Transco it owns, operates and develops Britain's natural gas transmission and distribution systems. Safety is one of its highest priorities and it has to ensure that statutory clearances are maintained between trees and its overhead power lines, underground cables and gas pipelines. Effective tree management is therefore essential.

The company has worked in partnership with The Tree Council since 1990 and has supported its national Tree Warden Scheme since 1997. The expert advice National Grid Transco receives from The Tree Council, together with the support of Tree Wardens, is vital in helping the company to manage trees in a safe and sustainable way.

National Grid Transco

The Tree Council's Hedge Tree Campaign

Hedge trees are part of the fabric of our countryside — but there are fewer of them every year.

The Hedge Tree Campaign is a national initiative by The Tree Council, in partnership with National Grid Transco, to protect hedge trees and nurture new ones to ensure there is no net loss of hedge trees in the UK. The campaign is supported by a wide range of environmental organisations, and will help deliver the national Biodiversity Action Plan for ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows.

To obtain free hedge tree tags (while stocks last) contact:

The Tree Council,
71 Newcomen Street, London SE1 1YT
Tel 020 7407 9992 Fax 020 7407 9908
Email hedgetreesmatter@treecouncil.org.uk
Website www.treecouncil.org.uk

For further information on hedge tree tagging see *The Hedge Tree Handbook*, available price £7.99 (including postage and packing) from The Tree Council.

If you have questions about trees contact:
The Tree Advice Trust's Tree Helpline:
09065 161147 (premium rate)



**The Tree Council's
Hedge Tree Campaign**

in partnership with National Grid Transco

Hedge trees matter — tag them



A guide to tagging
saplings in hedgerows



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Hedge trees matter — tag them

Hedge trees are a traditional part of the UK landscape and havens for wildlife. Yet, of an estimated 1.8 million hedge trees, nearly a third are over a century old and may disappear from the landscape at any time during the next 25 years. Without an immediate effort to establish new hedge trees, there will be profound changes to the UK landscape and its biodiversity.

With the help of its 7,500 Tree Wardens and its 150 member organisations — including many local authorities — The Tree Council, in partnership with National Grid Transco, has launched a countrywide Hedge Tree Campaign. This will increase awareness of why hedge trees matter, reverse their decline and help meet Biodiversity Action Plan target — to ensure there is no net loss of hedge trees in the UK.

Hedge saplings matter

Over the last 30 years, several million hedge trees have been lost to Dutch elm disease, hedge removal and storm damage. We need more trees — and they can grow in hedges without affecting productive land. Many hedge trees are old, and few young trees grow to maturity because mechanical hedge-cutters decapitate them. That's where tags come in.

One way to grow the hedge trees of the future is to mark existing saplings or newly-planted trees with brightly-coloured tags. That means that whoever cuts a hedge can avoid the tagged trees and give them the chance to grow to maturity.

Tree tags can be used in urban areas, parks and gardens, as well as in the countryside.

Everyone can help

The Tree Council is encouraging volunteers to help farmers and landowners by tagging hedge tree saplings for them. However, there may be reasons why trees are unacceptable in certain hedges.

It is therefore essential to approach farmers and landowners for permission to go on the land before starting hedge tree tagging, and to get their support. Please respect the wishes of farmers and landowners who do not want tagging to take place.

The success of this campaign depends on volunteers gaining permission and then tagging safely and responsibly. It is then up to the farmers/landowners to make sure that hedge-cutter operators leave tagged saplings to grow into trees.



Picture: Archie Miles

Choosing saplings to tag

- It is easier to identify species when saplings are in leaf, ideally in the summer, but tagging can be done at any time before hedge cutting
- Select saplings from a mixed hedge which has not been trimmed for two or three years
- If possible, select a sapling with a single straight stem. Stems that have been flailed, laid or coppiced will be damaged. As a result, new shoots may decay and the mature tree may lose limbs
- Saplings should be at least 20 metres or more apart (closer, if the aim is to create a screen or small copse)
- Choose saplings that are well back from public roads or tracks used by wide machines
- Do not choose saplings that are beneath or within 10 metres of overhead power lines or other overhead services.

Practical tips

- Strong gloves, coat and boots are recommended as protection from thorns and prickles
- Tag only a few saplings each year to achieve a more balanced age structure in the future
- The simplest method is to tie The Tree Council's brightly coloured tags (see back page) loosely around side shoots or main stems
- Hand-trim the hedge for about one metre on each side of the tagged sapling to make it more visible, or ask the hedge-cutter operator to leave an area to be hand-trimmed later
- If a tree is difficult to reach, put a tagged stick near it — in the ground or hedge. If the marker is temporary, do this just before hedge cutting starts
- Alternatively, consider putting a permanent, clearly visible stake in the hedge, next to the tree
- Consider using tree guards or shelters as protection from cattle and other farm animals, rabbits, mice and voles
- Record the tagged trees and show the landowner and hedge cutter where they are
- Remove tags and markers once the hedge has been cut
- Revisit the trees annually to replace the tags for as long as they are needed
- Hedge work should take place only if there is no risk to nesting wild birds.

Safety

- Always work in pairs, particularly when dealing with tall, overgrown hedges and hazardous ditches or when using a step ladder
- If tagging trees beside a road, take extra care; wearing fluorescent clothing greatly increases visibility
- Young people should always be accompanied by an adult.

Management

Even when saplings have grown above the hedge, the hedge-cutter must be reminded to avoid them. Check the saplings each year, hand trim around them and renew the tags if necessary.