

A close-up photograph of several bright green oak leaves with distinct lobes, growing on a branch. The background is a blurred field of tall grass and other trees under a blue sky with white clouds. A thin white horizontal line is positioned above the text.

# **Trees Call to Action Project (TCAP) Information sheet**



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## Introduction

In July 2022, the Heart of England Forest, in partnership with Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, and Wychavon District Councils, together launched the ambitious Trees Call to Action Project (TCAP), in response to the significant climate and biodiversity crises we face.

The partnership worked collaboratively with landowners and local communities to find ways to increase tree cover across the landscape, supporting with all aspects of tree planting and maintenance, from identifying suitable locations, appropriate funding, tree stocks, and long-term care.

The project was possible thanks to a grant from the Trees Call to Action Fund developed by Defra in partnership with the Forestry Commission and delivered by the Heritage Fund.

This three-year project has now ended after successfully planting over 1/4 million trees, but advice and support about planting trees and hedges can be found below.

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## Is my site suitable for planting?

- |  | Y / N                    |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Are there Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or any other wildlife designation within a 5 km radius? .....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are there any tree protection orders in the proposed planting area? .....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are there services and utilities in the proposed planting area (such as overhead power lines/ underground gas pipes)? ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Are there any archaeological features (such as ridge and furrow) in your proposed planting area? ..                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are there any objections from neighbouring landowners? .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Are there any future plans to change land use of the proposed planting area? .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the proposed planting area currently high-grade agricultural land (grade 3 or above)? .....                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Use <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/> to help research your ecological site classification. Add in your grid reference. Under 'options', then under 'results filter' select native species only for most accurate results.

Please note, specific grants may want to know if you have public or permissible rights of way through the proposed planting site.

If you answered yes to any of the above questions your site MAY not suitable for planting.

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## Tree planting grants

There are many grants available for tree planting. The list below is not exhaustive, but is a great place to start:

### Community

- Trees for Schools and Communities – Woodland Trust
- I Dig Trees – The Conservation Volunteers
- Branching Out Fund – The Tree Council
- Severn Trent Community Fund
- Network Rail Community Fund – The Tree Council
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) – Traditional Orchard Grant

### Schools

- From the Ground Up – The Conservation Volunteers
- Trees for Schools and Communities – Woodland Trust
- I Dig Trees – The Conservation Volunteers
- Severn Trent Community Fund
- Orchards for Schools – The Tree Council
- Branching Out Fund – The Tree Council
- Network Rail Community Fund – The Tree Council

### Landowner/Farmer/Private

- Urban Tree Challenge – Forestry Commission  
(no minimum)
- MOREWoods – Woodland Trust  
(Planting area needs to be greater than 0.5ha)
- MOREHedges – Woodland Trust  
(Length of hedge needs to be 100m or greater)
- Trees for your Farm – Woodland Trust  
(To be eligible must be able to plant 500 trees or more on your landholding)
- HS2 Woodland Fund – Forestry Commission  
(If restoring plantation woodland must be greater than 0.5ha. If creating new native woodland must be 5ha or more, however if connecting existing woodland minimum of 1ha applies)
- England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) – Forestry Commission  
(Planting area must be 1ha or greater)
- Woodland Carbon Scheme – Woodland Trust  
(Greater than 5 Hectares)

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## Planting advice

### If planting within 48 hours of collection

Keep your trees in bags to prevent their roots drying out. Bags should be stored under cover away from the sun/wind. Only separate trees from their bundles at the point of planting them.

### If not planting within 48 hours of collection

We recommend taking bundles out of their bag and either:

- Heeling the trees into the ground (dig a trench to lay the tree bundles in, and backfill with the soil gently pressing the soil against the roots)
- Standing the bundles in water
- Or soaking them daily until you can plant them to prevent the roots from drying out.

When planting, ensure the tree roots are firmly heeled into ground to avoid air pockets. Tree protection should be securely fitted.

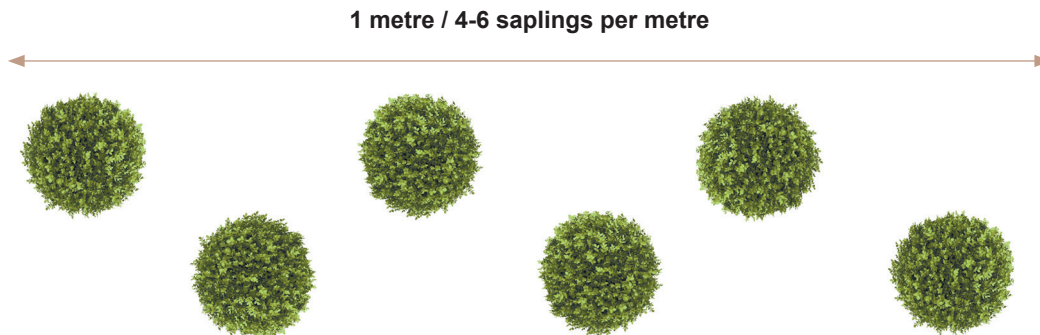
Avoid planting during excessively wet conditions or when the ground is frozen.

## Tree planting

- Choose a site carefully. Trees can be planted anywhere on your site but do think about the impact it will have on existing habitats before you plant them, and allow open space to give you access for future maintenance
- Do not plant trees in flower rich pasture or hay meadows. We do not have much of this habitat in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, so it is very special. Help identifying rich grasslands can be found at <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/habitats/grassland/>
- Do not plant large trees on the south side of flower rich habitats as this will lead to shading
- If planting trees in groups, in corners of fields/woodland, plant at a spacing of approximately 2m.
- Try to plant in wavy lines.
- The Heart of England Forest has a 2-minute video that shows you how to plant a tree on clay soil using pit-planting: <https://youtu.be/cILVPutspCs>
- The Woodland Trust have advice on planting and how to use spirals and canes: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/>

## Hedge planting

Plant 4-6 trees per metre in a double staggered row with each tree approximately 30cm apart. Planting in a single row creates a thinner hedge.



‘Gapping-up’ hedgerows’ - If planting a tree into an existing mature hedgerow, either plant in a gap or plant slightly out of the hedge to ensure the new tree has enough light and water. If you would like the tree to grow to its full size and become a standard tree within your hedgerow, you can tag them with a brightly coloured durable material to remind you or your contractor where they are.

### After planting trees or hedges

- If we have a dry spring and summer some watering may be necessary.
- Grass competes particularly well with trees so aim to keep the base of young trees low on weeds for their first 2-3 years. You can apply a thick layer of mulch once a year around their base to keep grasses low.
- Remember to remove tree ties and protection when it is no longer needed.

A really useful guide can be downloaded from the from The Tree Council - Hedge Planting and Growing. Link to - <https://treecouncil.org.uk/guidance-resources/hedge-planting-and-growing/>

## Orchard planting

Key planting design & considerations

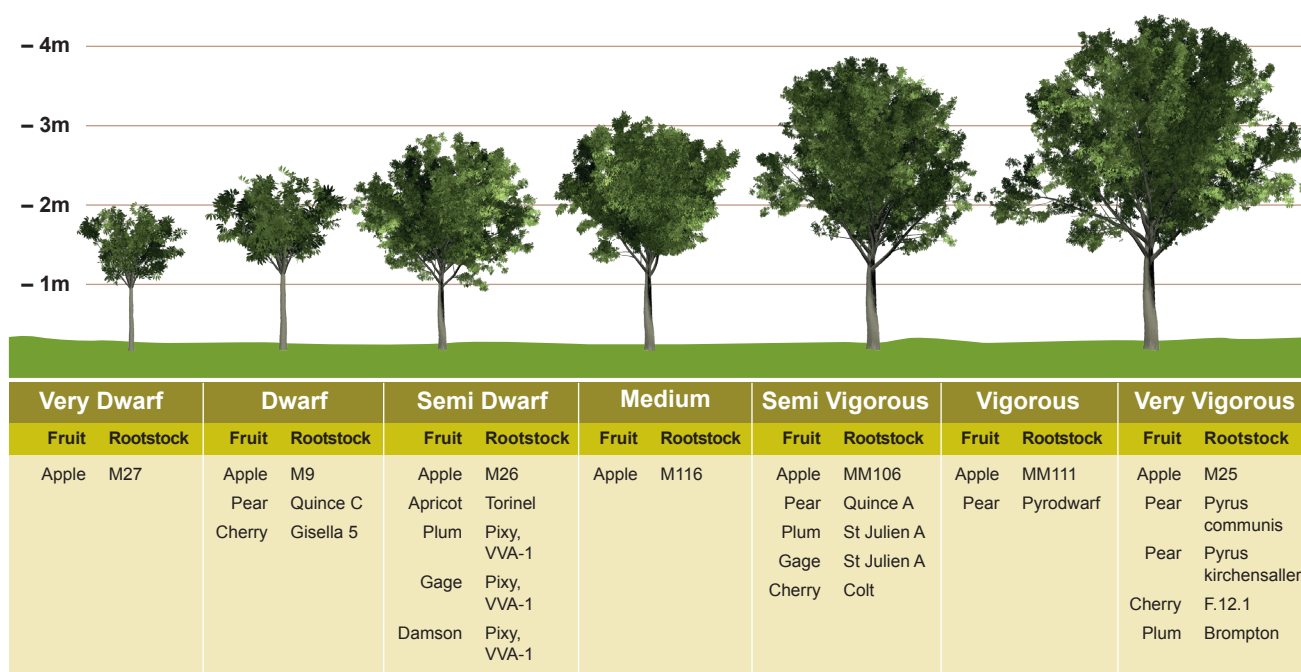
### Planting pattern

The simplest orchard pattern is the square where the distance between rows is the same as the distance between each tree, the four adjacent plants of two rows forming a square.

Another pattern is the quincunx, which is an arrangement of five units in the same pattern as the five spots on die or domino.

## Planting density

The appropriate traditional spacing for tree planting depends on the tree species/ rootstock.



It is recommended that the spacing is around what the maximum height of the tree is.

## Planting hole

- Prepare the planting hole by digging it slightly larger than the root system. A square-sided hole with each side about two spade widths wide and a spade length deep is a good guide. Ensure the hole comfortably accommodates the roots without curling them back on themselves.
- Remove any large stones and vegetation from the hole, and fork over the bottom and sides to loosen the soil.
- Additionally, prepare the surrounding ground by clearing a one-meter diameter of grass and weeds, paying special attention to removing strong, invasive plants like dock, dandelion, buttercup, and couch grass.

## Staking & backfilling

Staking is crucial when planting in windy or exposed locations. Install stakes and canes into the ground prior to planting to prevent root damage. To avoid friction between the stake and the tree, position the stake on the upwind side (typically the southwest) of the tree, ensuring that the prevailing wind blows the tree away from it.

- Once you have dug your hole, place the tree roots in it to check the size is suitable, pruning any roots that are too long.
- Holding the tree upright, offer up your stake up, close to the trunk, passing it through a suitable gap in the roots.
- Plant the tree and backfill the planting hole, aim to match its nursery planting depth, keeping the graft union above the soil level and the roots just starting to emerge at the soil surface. As you backfill, ensure there are no air pockets among the roots, compacting the soil gently as you go.
- Secure your tree to the stake with a buckle tie to prevent swaying in strong winds, attach the tie at least 80cm above the ground to leave space for the tree shelter.
- Add the tree shelter by separating it and wrapping it around the base of the tree, cable ties can be used to fasten the shelter to the stake if required.
- Ensure the tree does not come into contact with its support to avoid damage.

