

# Trees & Shade Plants

## How to plant a wildlife-rich shady corner in the garden



Native trees are amongst the very best plants for wildlife, providing nectar-rich flowers, buds, berries, fruits, seeds and nuts as food for insects, birds and mammals, as well as places to breed, shelter and hibernate.

Trees in the garden can act as a windbreak, screen ugly objects,

frame views, and provide privacy, shade and height. If chosen carefully, a tree can be accommodated in the smallest of gardens; some species can even be grown in containers.

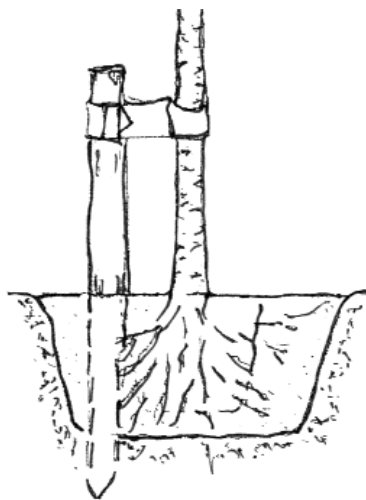
Trees cast some degree of shade. A number of native woodland and hedgerow plants are especially

adapted to cope with shady and partially shady conditions.

This factsheet shows how to plant a tree and gives planting suggestions for a colourful and interesting shady area, using both native and ornamental shrubs and flowers.

### Planting a tree

1. Plant a tree in winter between November - March during the tree's dormant period.
2. When choosing a tree, think about its ultimate height, the shade it will cast and its proximity to buildings. (A useful rule of thumb is to plant the tree at least its mature height away from the nearest building.) Some species need different conditions such as damp, acidic or alkaline soils.
3. Stand the tree in a bucket of water for 2 hours before planting. Try to ensure that the roots are covered at all times. (The delicate root hairs dry out and die very quickly.)
4. When you have chosen a spot for your tree, dig a hole twice the size of your root ball; try to keep the topsoil and the subsoil separate if you can.
5. Add some well-rotted manure or peat-free compost into the bottom of the hole. Mix the spoil from the hole with compost or with the topsoil (not with the subsoil).
6. If your tree is more than 2 metres tall, drive a metre long stake into the ground on the windward side. Smaller trees do not need staking.
7. Remove the tree from its container and place it in the hole. If it is a bare rooted tree, ensure the roots hang down straight.
8. Backfill the hole with the soil (and the topsoil / compost mix if you prepared one.) For bare rooted trees, give the tree an occasional light shake (this gets the soil particles down amongst the roots).
9. When the hole is filled up, firm the soil around the trunk with your heels and water well. Add mulch if you like around the bottom. If you used a stake, secure the tree to this with a tree tie; make sure the tie is not too tight or it will damage the tree.



### Mother Nature knows best - the importance of native trees

Native trees generally support many, often hundreds, more species than exotic and ornamental varieties, so by choosing a native tree for your garden you will be making a significant contribution to helping wildlife.

Choosing a tree that grows locally, and even one that has been reared from seed collected locally, are even better (see note about 'local provenance' overleaf).

#### Going Native:

Some trees indigenous to the UK

#### Large

(only really suitable for large gardens)  
Common (English) oak; Sessile oak; Alder; Willow; Ash; Small leaved Lime

#### Medium (for fair-sized gardens)

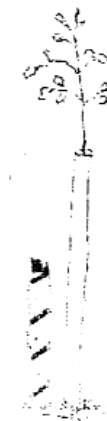
Aspen; Wild cherry; Silver birch; Holly; Yew

#### Small (For small gardens)

Bird Cherry; Rowan; Crab apple; Hawthorn; Hazel; Spindle; Guelder rose; Blackthorn

### Tree aftercare

- Water the tree well during the first year after planting.
- Weeding: remove all vegetation growing around the base of the tree during the first 5 years.
- If you attached a tree tie, remember to loosen it each year to allow the tree to grow. Remove the stake and tie completely after 3 years.
- If necessary, protect saplings under 5 years old against rabbits with tree guards. Remove the guards when the trees are 5 years old.



A short stake enables the tree to move in the wind, stimulating stronger root growth than a tall stake (smaller trees do not need staking at all).

A large, spacious planting hole promotes better root growth because fine roots are able to grow into the freshly dug soil. Roots can become restricted within a small hole.

## Plants for shade and partial shade

### Latin name

Aconitum napellus  
Ajuga reptans  
Anemone nemorosa  
Aquilegia vulgaris  
Arum maculatum  
Iris foetidissima  
Digitalis purpurea  
Euphorbia amygdaloides  
Galium odoratum  
Primula vulgaris  
Dryopteris felix-mas  
Helleborus foetidus  
Silene dioica  
Ranunculus ficaria  
Vicia cracca  
Stellaria holostea

### Common name

Monkshood  
Bugle (G)(N)  
Wood anemone (N)  
Columbine  
Lords and ladies (N)  
Stinking iris (E)  
Foxglove (N)  
Wood spurge (E)(N)  
Woodruff (N)  
Primrose (N)  
Male fern (E)(N)  
Stinking hellebore (E)(N)  
Red campion (N)  
Lesser celandine (G)(N)  
Tufted vetch (N)  
Stitchwort (N)

### Latin name

Glechoma hederacea  
Hesperis matronalis  
Hyacinoides non-scripta  
Symphytum officinale  
Lamium aurantiacum  
Lonicera periclymenum  
Lazula sylvatica  
Narcissus pseudonarcissus  
Polygonatum multiflorum  
Vicia sylvatica  
Viola riviniana  
Galanthus nivalis  
Helleborus viridis  
Myosotis sylvatica  
Hedera helix

### Common name

Ground ivy (G)(N)  
Dame's violet  
Bluebell (G)(N)  
Comfrey (N)  
Yellow archangel  
Honeysuckle (N)  
Great wood-rush (N)  
Wild daffodil  
Solomon's seal  
Wood vetch(N)  
Dog violet (N)  
Snowdrop  
Green hellebore (E)  
Wood forget-me-not (N)  
Ivy (E)(G)(N)



**Arum maculatum**  
**Lords and ladies**



**Native wood anemones**  
**indicate that a wood is very old**

## Shrubs for shade

Guelder rose (N)  
Skimmia (E)  
Holly (E)(N)  
Hawthorn (N)

Christmas box (E)  
Mahonia (E)  
Fuchsia  
Hazel (N)

Yew (E)(N)  
Viburnum tinus (E)  
Daphne laureola

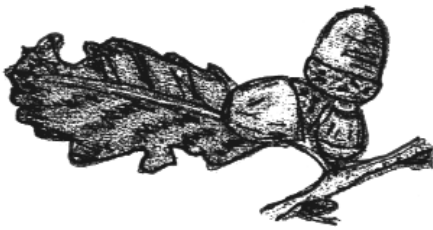
Aucuba (E)  
Euonymus (E)  
Rose of Saron (half E)

**(E) = evergreen**

**(G) = ground cover**

**(N) = native**

## Local Provenance



Trees and plants that grow in the wild locally are specially adapted to local conditions, and the seed they produce will be genetically unique to one area and locality.

Pollen and seed can travel great distances and trees from gardens and suburban parks might easily exchange pollen with trees in the wild. This is why it is important to try to make sure that native trees in gardens and landscaping schemes, and the seeds from which they are grown, have a UK, and preferably, a local origin. Native plants should not be dug up from the wild. Fortunately many nurseries now specialise in growing native trees and plants from locally derived stock.

A logpile is an excellent feature to include in a shady corner.

See our factsheet ***Creature features*** for more details

## Special branch: Trees and the Law

Trees can be one of the best wildlife features in the garden, but they can also cause concern to neighbours. If a friendly discussion does not work, here is a short guide to tree law.

There are no laws controlling the height of hedges and trees but there are guidelines on hedge height and light loss. However, they must not overhang or endanger a highway or block a vision splay. (For more details contact your local Highway Department).

There is no 'right' to light, unless you have lived in your house for 20 years or more without obstruction.

You are allowed to remove branches overhanging your boundary from a neighbour's tree, but must not enter their property to do so. Offcuttings must be offered back to the neighbour, but if they do not want them, you are responsible for disposing of them.

If the tree has a Tree Preservation Order, is in a Conservation area, or is subject to a Development Condition, you must seek permission from your Local Authority before any works are done.

If your actions cause the tree to become unstable, you will be liable for any resulting damage caused.

If your tree damages someone else's property, you will be liable for damages. However, the complainant must prove it is your tree at fault. If you suspect a neighbour's tree is causing subsidence, you should contact your house insurance providers. They will carry out some tests.

For information on hedgerows and caring for bare-rooted shrubs and trees, see our factsheet ***Hedges for Wildlife***