

Horses, Hedges and Edges

New Forest Land Advice Service



The New Forest Land Advice Service

Delivering independent land management advice across the New Forest and Avon Valley



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Importance of hedgerows

- Cultural and historical
- Landscape
- Wildlife
- Soil, pest, pollutant and water management
- Fuel and food supply
- Carbon storage





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Hedgerow Facts

- Main surviving semi natural habitat in the lowlands
- Critical to the existence of many plants and animals
- Facilitate movement through landscape for wide range of organisms
- Majority are not in favourable condition
- Most are more than a thousand years old

Ten Top Tips

- Keep it thick and dense
- Cut at the right time
- Don't cut too often or too tight
- Encourage native shrubs
- Encourage flowers and grasses at the base
- Look after trees or plant new ones
- Rejuvenate your hedge
- Link with other wildlife habitats and fill gaps
- Don't pollute your hedge
- Explore your hedge!



Management



- All hedges need to be managed
- Neglect of hedges is common and is a huge problem in the countryside
- Equally over management is a major threat to our hedges
- Best approach is to allow hedge to develop in a controlled manor and extend its life span for as long as possible before rejuvenating via laying or coppicing

Planting

- To fill in the gaps of an existing/historic hedge
- To compliment an existing hedge network
- To screen an eyesore or act as a windbreak
- Sometimes inappropriate to plant a new hedgerow – ask us for advice
- Bare root stock – plant end of Oct to end March
- Avoid freezing weather or planting into waterlogged soils
- Plant on a still, moist day



Planting

- A species mixture is always best
- Different mixes across the country – ask us
- Use native stock
- Bare rooted ‘whips’ – cheap and easy to get
- Take care to protect roots before planting
- Plant into bare soil if possible
- Double staggered row
- Wider the better
- Protect with rabbit guards
- Fence from stock – distance is crucial
- Consider planting trees at the same time





Protect when hedge is young or recently managed



New Forest species mixes

Common name	Botanical name	% of Hedge Species (up to)
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	40
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	30
Field Maple (neutral soils)	<i>Acer campestre</i>	10
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	40
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	15
Guelder Rose (neutral soils)	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	5
Dogwood (damp soils)	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	5
Dog Rose	<i>canina</i>	5
Spindle (neutral soils)	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	5
Field Rose	<i>arvensis</i>	5
Wild Service Tree	<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	5
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	40
Hornbeam (damp soils)	<i>Carpinus betula</i>	40

New hedge for the New Forest

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Species choices

- Hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel can withstand regular trimming.
- Most broadleaved trees and shrubs coppice well, with the exception of beech. Dogwood,
- Spindle and guelder-rose are difficult to lay.
- Holly and beech grow well in the shade cast by mature hedgerow trees.
- Species like ash, oak and willow can grow very large.

Rejuvenating a hedge

- Coppicing – cut at the base, protect and allow to re-grow
- Laying – lay the hedge over so it grows new shoots from lower down in the hedge again
- Gapping up – add to the number of plants to thicken it up and increase species diversity



Cutting

- In the past annual cutting was done to keep hedge stock proof, mark boundaries and supply fuel
- Nowadays the role of hedges has changed and for wildlife and landscape reasons a bigger hedge is often much more valuable
- Cutting the hedge is still required to keep it thick and bushy, control it and prevent shading out flowers at the base
- Cutting one side at a time is best, only every two or three years
- Don't cut them all in any one year.
- Avoid cutting at same height year after year



Cutting

- January and February are the best times to cut
- Avoid March until end August – bird breeding season





Machines

- Flail head – cut and mulch, eyesore with mature woody growth
- Knife blade cutter – (reciprocating knife/circular spinning blades) – light growth, neat, don't mulch
- Circular saw blade/shaping saw – good for mature growth, hands off approach to management, have to clear up brush



Edges



Edges

- 2m of rough grassy margin on either side of a hedge will hugely increase wildlife potential
- Cut the half metre next to the hedge every few years
- Cut and remove (or graze) the metre and a half along the edge every year in late July or August
- Fencing may be needed for protection from stock

Hedge Law

- Hedgerow regulations – prohibits removal of hedgerows or parts of hedgerows
- Cross compliance requirements – rules about removal, disturbance, cutting, bank and ditch maintenance, chemical use
- Wildlife and Countryside Act – birds
- Roadside hedges – landowner responsibility
- Tree Preservation Orders

Grants/schemes

- Environmental Stewardship
- Single Payment Scheme
- Verderers' small grant scheme
- NFLAS small grant scheme – no longer running but maybe in the future if funds can be found

Hedgelinek

- www.hedgelinek.org.uk
- Fantastic website with all the information you could ever need about hedges
- New Forest Land Advice Service – we are here to help

Thank you!

- The New Forest Land Advice Service would like to thank you for coming to this evening course
- Please fill in your feedback forms and leave them on your chairs before you go
- Contact us if you would like further advice