



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*

## Guide to the planting and aftercare of new trees



Please see Leaflet 5 for advice on choosing and buying the right tree

## Preparations for planting

If you are planting a bare root tree, it is essential that the roots are prevented from drying out at all times (it takes less than 30 minutes for roots to be killed when exposed to the air, less in windy conditions).

It is important to prepare a large enough hole for the size of tree you are planting. The following table is a guide. The girth (stem circumference) is measured 1 metre from the ground: -

<u>Size (metres)</u> (metres)	<u>Overall height</u>	<u>Girth</u>	<u>Suggested pit size</u>
Light Standard	2.5-3.0 metres	6-8cm	1 x 1 x 0.5 deep
Standard	2.5-3.0	8-10cm	1 x 1 x 0.5 deep
Selected Standard	3.0-3.5	10-12cm	1 x 1 x 0.75 deep
Heavy Standard	3.5-4.25	12-14cm	1 x 1 x 0.75 deep

## Planting the tree

- Position the tree to avoid overhead cables or underground utilities (drains etc.).
- The base of the pit should be broken up to a depth of 15cm to aid drainage.
- Place any turf in the bottom of the pit but chop it up first.
- Position the tree so that the stake is on the windward side.
- For bare rooted trees, spread the roots naturally in the pit, do not bend or cut them to fit. With container grown trees remember to remove the container if not biodegradable.
- The backfill should be of a suitable material to allow for drainage and root

- Nail ties to the stake (never to the tree) after fitting spacers to prevent the stem rubbing on the stake.
- Where vandalism is not a problem use a short stake with a single tie. This will encourage the tree to make good root and stem growth quickly because it will be able to sway a bit. Where vandalism is a problem, a taller stake should be used with two or three ties. The top tie should be within 5cm of the top of the stake. The stake should be driven into the undisturbed ground at the base of the pit.

## Aftercare

This aspect is often overlooked or ignored and is one of the main reasons why newly planted trees struggle or fail completely.

## Weed control

The control of weeds and grass is essential as it reduces competition for nutrients and moisture. This is especially so for regularly mown lawns as these are extremely competitive. A minimum turf free area of 1m<sup>2</sup> is ideal. Weed control can be achieved by hand, herbicide application (be sure to read and follow the manufacturers instructions), mulching (e.g. shredded bark) or by using a plant mat, preferably a biodegradable one.

## Watering

Newly planted trees generally require watering during dry periods particularly in the first summer after planting.

## Stakes and ties

These should be checked periodically to ensure they are not too tight or too loose. After 2-4 years when a tree should be established, short stakes can be removed. If a longer stake has been used, it should be gradually reduced in height over several years as the stem increases in girth before final removal.

## Formative pruning

This can be carried out when necessary to maintain a single leading shoot or to remove any dead, damaged, diseased or crossing branches. Please refer to leaflet 2 'Guide to proper pruning'.