

Supporting guidance for Small-scale Tree and Shrub Planting

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Small-scale tree and shrub planting can provide habitat for wildlife, shelter for livestock, and connectivity – benefiting a wide range of species by linking semi-natural habitats. Small wooded areas can greatly enhance ecosystem services, for example by storing carbon or stabilising soil and by holding water in the catchment for longer, so helping to reduce flood intensity downstream and mitigate against drought locally.

Which species should I plant?

Plant native species. A list of tree and shrubs considered to be native in different parts of Scotland is provided in Scottish Forestry's [Guidance on Seed Sources for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs in Scotland](#).

Choose a mix of species appropriate to the local soil and site conditions. We recommend you consult Scottish Forestry Bulletin 112 – [Creating New Native Woodlands](#), and the Scottish Forestry's [Ecological Site Classification](#).

Where should I plant?

Small-scale tree and shrub planting can enhance, create or restore woodland habitat in many situations and soil types, from riparian woodland through lowland scrub to montane scrub, by increasing the network of small woods, wood pastures and extended hedgerows.

Under this item, you can plant up to six separate parcels of 0.25 hectares (at least 15 metres apart) up to a total area of 1.5 hectares per contract.

This item cannot be applied for on any land classed as sensitive by the [EIA\(Forestry\)\(Scotland\) Regs 1999](#) (i.e. National Parks, Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, National Scenic Areas, National Nature Reserves, SSSIs, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas) unless you have prior approval.

Avoid planting habitats with an intrinsic value of their own, like species-rich grassland, fen, and lowland heath, unless the tree planting would complement and enhance the open ground habitat(s) by creating increased species and structural diversity.

Avoid planting where it could reduce biodiversity, such as on habitats for breeding wading birds like curlew, lapwing and redshank, in accordance with the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

Wildlife benefits from riparian planting

Small-scale tree and shrub planting can help stabilise river banks, limit erosion, provide shelter and create visually attractive wildlife habitat. Trees overhanging river banks support wildlife by providing a source of insect food for fish, leaf litter to feed aquatic invertebrates, and fishing posts for kingfishers.

Small-scale riparian planting can benefit river SACs with fish spawning sites and freshwater pearl mussel sites because planting can stabilise banksides, reduce soil erosion and help to keep the river bed free from a build-up of silt. They also provide shade, keeping summer water temperatures down for both pearl mussel and fish populations.

Planting tips

Protect trees from damage by herbivores, normally by the use of an appropriate tree stake and guard. Place the stake into the ground to a depth of at least 30 centimetres, with the tip below the lip of the tree-shelter and 10 centimetres above the upper tie.

Make sure ties do not encircle the tree, so that they can be removed later.

Make sure the top of the tree shelter is rounded or folded to reduce the risk of damage to the emerging tree. Push the tree shelter into the ground to reduce the likelihood of damage by voles. The length of tree shelter required depends on the type of browsing that is likely to occur.