

Small-scale Tree and Shrub Planting (on a site not exceeding 0.25 hectares)

Date published: 26 January, 2024

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

Aim

The aim of this item is to benefit biodiversity, climate change and / or water quality by planting new or expanding existing areas of native trees or shrubs of conservation value.

Small-scale woodlands or scrub of up to 0.25 hectares can provide multiple benefits, such as enhancing habitat networks, improving water quality by providing a buffer area, or maintaining water temperatures, providing a diversity of habitats and contributing to carbon sequestration.

Eurasian Beaver

Beaver have been reintroduced to parts of Scotland and are a European Protected Species protected by law. The enhancement of riparian woodland is beneficial where beaver are or may be present in the future, for the reasons set out above, and by increasing the winter forage available to beaver, thereby making the woodland network more resilient to localised/temporary impacts.

While AECS can fund traditional tree protection, this may not be effective where beaver are active. Advice on alternative approaches is available from [NatureScot: Beaver](#).

There are several different approaches that may be taken to protect young trees and shrubs from beaver impacts including modified stock fencing, individual tree protection using weld mesh and by altering the species mix and micro-siting of trees.

Where beaver activity impacts on work being undertaken under your AECS contract, no penalties will be accrued.

Eligibility

All land is eligible, with the exception of land classed as 'sensitive' by the EIA (Forestry) (Scotland) Regs 1999, unless you have prior approval.

You must combine this item with at least one of the following items*:

- [Stock Fence](#)
- [Vole, Rabbit or Hare Guards](#)
- [Scare and Temporary Electric Fencing](#)

* see ' [Requirements](#) ' below.

Application requirements

You must mark the proposed location(s) of areas where small-scale tree or shrub planting is proposed on a map.

Requirements

- you must plant using native species only, unless you have been given prior approval during the application process. The plants must be of UK provenance.
- you must establish a plot with no more than 1,100 trees per hectare (275 trees per 0.25 hectares) but lower planting densities are permitted.
- you must protect the new plants from damage by wild and domestic herbivores. There are associated capital items to support this as outlined in the ' [Eligibility](#) ' section. If there is existing protection in place, for example an existing stock proof fence, this will be considered meeting the eligibility criteria.
- each planted area must be at least 15 metres apart.

Payment

You can claim £3.00 per tree or shrub planted.

Each area to be planted must be no more than 0.25 hectares and you can claim for up to six separate areas of up to 0.25 hectares each, per contract.

To support small-scale tree or shrub planting you can select this item with one of the following management options:

- [Managing Scrub of Conservation Value](#)
- [Water Margins in Grassland Fields](#)
- [Grass Strips in Arable Fields](#)

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the location and extent of the work
- you have established no more than a maximum of 1,100 trees per hectare (275 trees per 0.25 hectares)
- you have protected the new plants from damage by wild and domestic herbivores.
- each planted area must be at least 15 metres apart

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this item.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Aim	Added text covering Eurasian Beaver
Requirements	Amendment to second bullet point

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.