

Soft landscaping – in perpetuity Maintenance Plan – trees/hedging/shrubs and perennials

In perpetuity from the date of planting, the following maintenance procedures should be followed.

- Establishment watering and regular pruning should be carried out in accordance with best practice and BS 8545.
- Formal assessment of health and development of the new trees/shrubs should be carried out annually. This assessment should include foliar appearance, leaf size and density, extension growth and incremental girth development (of trees) in accordance with BS 8545.
- All stakes and ties should be checked at least annually to ensure that the root system remains stable and firm in the ground, and that ties are still effective and not causing any damage to the tree. Any stakes and ties that are found to be not fit for purpose should be adjusted or replaced.
- All climbers should be tied onto wires as they grow using flexi-tie and pruned at the correct time of year.
- If any of the new trees/shrubs dies it should be replaced with one of the same species and size as that originally planted.
- Throughout the garden, seedheads will be left overwinter to provide sustenance for birds.
- No cutting of trees, shrubs and hedges should take place during peak bird nesting season, which runs from March to September. Where possible, delay any maintenance work until January or February, as berries provide a valuable autumn and winter food source for overwintering birds.

In perpetuity - Hedgerow Management Plan

New areas of hedging:

Immediately after planting, the hedge should be cut to an even 150cm above the ground to encourage it to 'bush out', creating even denser growth. During the first and subsequent summers, weed around the base of the shrubs to prevent competition, while watering regularly. In late summer, if any plants have died; replace them with new ones in autumn/winter to prevent gaps forming.

Established hedgerows:

No cutting should take place during peak bird nesting season, which runs from March to September. Where possible, delay any maintenance work until January or February, as hedgerow berries provide a valuable autumn and winter food source for birds like redwings, blackbirds and fieldfares.

Hedges should not be cut every year, as flower buds often form on second-year growth. Trimming hedges on a two or three year rotation, targeting different sections each year, will make sure there are always flowers for pollinators in spring and berries for birds in autumn. Hedges cut every three years can produce two and a half times as much blossom as those cut annually.

Hedges are often trimmed to an 'A' shape, which is thicker at the base and gets narrower at the top. This provides maximum protection for wildlife, while allowing light to reach the ground flora.

Buffer strips are important for most species. By allowing the growth of uncut grass next to the hedge, wherever possible, this provides ideal nesting, feeding, egg-laying and overwintering habitat for birds, insects and small mammals. Where trees are planted into the hedgerow, these can be used by birds as song perches as well as creating more habitat for wildlife.