

Local provenance

When planting or gapping up a hedgerow, it is important to ensure that plants and seeds are of stock that occurs naturally in our local area. For details of local provenance suppliers, please contact the Biodiversity Action Group.

Funding

Hedgerow management and restoration will form a key component of DEFRA's Environmental Stewardship Package. This package of agri-environment grant aid consists of three strands: Entry Level Stewardship, Organic Entry Level Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship.

The Sherwood Forest Trust runs a grant scheme for small-scale hedgerow restoration projects within the Greenwood and Sherwood Forest areas. Funding is available for planting new mixed hedgerows (including gapping up existing hedges), traditional hedge laying and planting of native trees into the hedge line where appropriate.

Landscape Character

The Nottinghamshire countryside has a rich and diverse character, which falls into several different landscape types. Each landscape type has particular characteristics, created by a combination of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, field pattern and human settlement. Hedgerows in different parts of the county will be characterised by different species. When planting a hedge or gapping up a hedge, you should refer to the Landscape Character Guidelines and Guidance Cards for your particular character area. Further information and advice can be obtained from Nottinghamshire County Council, on (0115) 977 2166.

Sources of help

A range of local organisations can provide advice on hedgerow issues, from the best species to plant through to the most appropriate management and sources of funding.

For a list of sources of help, or for more information on biodiversity, please contact the Biodiversity Action Group:

(0115) 977 4213
www.nottsbag.org.uk

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Managing Hedges for Biodiversity

A good practice guide for landowners and managers



Although hedgerows remain a widespread feature of Nottinghamshire's landscape, they have suffered a large-scale decline over recent decades; between 1947 and 1985 the East Midlands lost an estimated 16,000 miles of hedgerow.

Today, with much of rural Nottinghamshire dominated by intensive arable farming, the remaining hedgerows provide a haven for flora and fauna where other refuges are limited.

What is a hedgerow?

A hedgerow generally consists of a line of shrubs, sometimes with trees and a layer of herbaceous vegetation beneath, and often has an associated feature such as a field margin, bank, ditch, or road verge.

Why are they important?

Hedges are important for wildlife; they provide a source of food for insects, which in turn support predatory invertebrates and larger animals. Hedgerow fruits and seeds are an important food source for birds and mammals. In addition they are important breeding sites, providing cover (e.g. for nesting birds) and shelter from the elements. Mature trees within hedgerows can provide roosts for bats and owls. Hedgerows act as wildlife corridors for animals such as butterflies, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, allowing dispersal and movement between habitats. They are also used as linear feeding routes by bats.

Cover picture reference:

Top - lane bordered by two hedges, left - hedge planting, right - Hawthorn.

Dos and Don'ts of hedgerow management

- ✓ **Do** trim sections on at least a three-year rotation. This ensures that thick nesting cover and insect habitat is available somewhere on the site every year, and reduces management time and cost. Sections should be blocks across the hedgerow, as some species are restricted to one side of a hedge. Furthermore, many insects depend on the tips of hedgerow branches, so cutting an entire hedge at once may render those with an annual life cycle locally extinct.
- ✓ **Do** undertake trimming work in December or January. Management at the wrong time of the year can disturb breeding birds and remove fruit - an important winter food.
- ✓ **Do** consider leaving one or two hedges untrimmed for up to ten years then re-shaping using a sharp circular saw attachment.
- ✓ **Do** allow the hedge to increase in height by up to 10cm at each cut thus avoiding severe damage to branches.
- ✓ **Do** undertake winter restoration work, e.g. traditional hedgelaying or coppicing and planting up gaps where necessary to prevent hedges becoming 'gappy' and losing base structure. Bats are unable to use hedges as a feeding corridor where gaps along the hedge length are too wide.
- ✓ **Do** keep, plant and replace mature hedgerow trees, which are important for species such as barn owls and bats. Tag young trees during felling, to ensure they are not cut.
- ✓ **Do** leave field margins alongside hedges.
- ✓ **Do** consider the shape of your hedge - an A-shaped hedge is good for birds such as yellowhammers, and for hibernating rodents.
- ✗ **Don't** cut hedges too low - this will eventually damage the hedgerow and result in loss of habitat. A minimum of 1.5m is recommended but the higher the better.
- ✗ **Don't** cut hedges in large blocks - gaps are too large for insects to cross to reach their food source.
- ✗ **Don't** remove dead standing trees - these are important feeding and roosting sites. If health and safety is an issue, consider other forms of management, e.g. crown reduction.
- ✗ **Don't** cut undergrowth or hedges can become leggy at the base, minimising shelter.
- ✗ **Don't** strim the base of hedgerows or disturb the leaf litter - this is an important refuge for many animals and rare hedgerow plants.

Newly laid hedge



Badly felled hedge



Species which benefit from good hedge management

The following are examples of species of conservation concern in Nottinghamshire, which are likely to benefit from good hedgerow management:

Birds

Kestrel
Grey partridge
Turtle dove
Barn owl
Duncock
Lesser whitethroat
Song thrush
Yellowhammer
Reed bunting
Bullfinch
Linnet
Tree sparrow

Reptiles

Common lizard

Plants

Bluebell

Mammals

Hedgehog
Common shrew
Daubenton's bat
Brown long-eared bat
Pipistrelle bat
Noctule bat
Brown hare
Harvest mouse
Badger
Stoat
Weasel

Butterflies and moths

Small eggar
Scarce vapourer
Brown hairstreak
Purple hairstreak
White-letter hairstreak