

Hedgerow Management



Hedgerows play an important role on farms; helping to prevent soil erosion and water run-off, providing shelter, controlling livestock and protecting crops from the wind. They also provide habitat for a range of wildlife and are important features in the landscape.

Hedgerows are also important as corridors and links between other habitats.

The main aim of hedgerow management should be to maintain a range of different types and sizes of hedgerow to support a variety of wildlife.

Management and Restoration

Trimming

- Aim to maintain a variety of hedge heights and widths
- Trim on a 2-3 year rotation rather than annually and avoid trimming all hedges in the same year
- Trim in January or February to avoid the bird breeding season (March to August) and allow the berry crop to be eaten by wintering birds (September to December)
- Aim to maintain a thick hedge base by avoiding spray drift (buffer strips), over-trimming, ploughing too close or heavy grazing

Restoring and Planting

- Restoration work may be necessary to prevent gaps developing or hedges turning into a line of trees
- Restoration should be carried out in winter by either; coppicing (cutting the stems at ground level) or laying (cutting stems part way through and interweaving them along the hedge line)
- Plant up gaps using species native to your local area

- Undertake planting in early winter, when the ground is still warm and some moisture is available
- It may be necessary to protect young plants from grazing rabbits or deer

Hedgerow Trees

- Retain hedgerow trees and encourage the growth of self-seeded saplings
- Retain old, dying and dead trees where they are not a safety hazard

Funding Opportunities

- There are opportunities for funding to manage, restore and plant hedgerows through Environmental Stewardship



For further information please contact: