

Woodfuel Pack

Our wood fuel pack contains a mixture of species suitable for planting for wood fuel production and includes hornbeam, birch, sweet chestnut, hazel (Willow and alder could be included for very wet sites.)

Hornbeam: Grows relatively quickly to a maximum height of 15 – 25m & tolerates shade and cutting back well. Burns hot and slowly.

Birch: Grows and dries out quickly when cut but does not coppice well. Burns well but quickly, the waxy small branches make good kindling.

Sweet Chestnut: Grows quite quickly, very good firewood but needs to be well dried for at least 2 seasons before burning. It is better for wood burning stoves as it will 'spit' on an open fire.

Hazel: Grows quite quickly and coppices easily. Dries out quickly and burns well – makes ideal kindling.

Willow: Grows fast and dries out quickly. Burns too quickly for an open fire so only use on wood burning stoves.



Planting:

The plants we will supply you with are bare-rooted and are available to plant when dormant from late October until late March.

Plant them approximately 2.5m apart (648 per acre), or 3m apart (450 trees per acre) To work out how many trees you will need for a specific area:

Multiply the length of the area by the width – e.g. 70m x 10m = 700 sq.m in total.

Planted 2.5m apart – each tree will take up an area of 6.25 sq.m (2.5m x 2.5m)

So divide 700 by 6.25 = 112 trees required.



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Grass or weeds will compete with the newly planted trees for nutrients and moisture, so make sure an area about 50cms square is kept free from grass or weed around each tree. Achieve this by either spraying off the grass/weed with a suitable broad spectrum herbicide at least a week before planting, or removing the grass with a mattock or spade when they are planted.

It is important to keep the area around the tree free from weed competition for at least two growing seasons, either by using herbicide sprays, an organic mulch, or using “mulch mats” (please ask for more details).

The trees will grow at least three times faster in clean conditions. Voles thrive in tufted grass so keeping an open space around the tree will discourage voles from damaging them.

Protecting your trees from rabbits/deer etc:

Once you have made the decision to buy and plant your trees for wood fuel, it is important that they are allowed to thrive and grow, without being nibbled by rabbits or browsed by deer.

Therefore if you have rabbits (or hares) and deer in the area where you intend to plant, you will have to consider protecting them against attack.

If your only concern is rabbits, then planting them in spiral shelters supported by bamboo canes should be sufficient. If you also have deer in the area, then you may have to consider planting them in either 1.2m, 1.5m or 1.8m shelterguards supported by timber stakes.

We are able to supply suitable spirals or shelters to protect them, so please ask for our advice on which you will need to use, and for prices.

Coppicing:

It is a common misconception that a broadleaf tree will die if it is cut back. As long as care is taken not to damage the root or allow disease into the cut, then many of them will re-grow after being cut down. In fact cutting them down – or coppicing

– will give the tree a new lease of life and it can send up as many as twenty new stems where the one old stem had grown.

“Coppicing” is undertaken on “rotation”, and on the faster growing species like ash, cherry and hazel they can be coppiced every 8 –10 years. Willow is much faster growing and can be coppiced on a much shorter rotation. Oak can also be coppiced, but as it is much slower growing it would

probably need to be coppiced every 10 – 15 years. Birch grows fast and is good as a firewood tree, but does not coppice well.



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Cutting down and storing your firewood before burning

Each autumn identify the stems you are going to cut, including any that need to be cut down because they have either been damaged or are of poor form. When the trees are young it is possible to cut them using a handsaw, but as they grow bigger you will need to use a chainsaw, and if you cut stems which are no more than 4" in diameter they will not have to be split (cut them down at a slight angle facing south to avoid rot).

It is easier to cut the stems into suitable lengths for your wood burning stove when it is freshly cut - or 'green', although cherry will leave a sticky residue on the saw.

Store your cut logs in a sunny windy, open place for at least 18 months to allow the moisture content to reduce to ideally about 20%. (The old rule of thumb is to allow 1 year of drying for every 1" of diameter). Rain water will evaporate quickly, it is the water content within the log that needs to reduce.

About 6 months before they are to be used, move a winters supply of logs undercover to dry them even more, and if possible keep several days supply in the house at any one time, once you start to burn them.

For more information or to place an order please contact us:

Perrie Hale Nursery

Tel: 01404 43344

email: sales@perriehale.co.uk

www.perriehale.co.uk

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