

NICHOLSONS *Forestry*

Screening - A Guide to Plant Sizes and Growth Rates

Plants are available in many sizes, and in selecting you need to be mindful that as a rule, plants over 2.5m in height are more likely to need watering during their first two years. You will need to make sure that you can easily access the plants and a water supply, and be prepared to water them every fortnight during the growing season. Bare-rooted and smaller pot grown plants are much more self-sufficient.

Growth rates will vary – and depend on site factors such as fertility and exposure. Use of tree shelters and container grown trees will typically improve growth rates. The planting density given is what is typically applied in a standard planting situation. Trees can be planted at much closer or wider spacing, and it very much depends on the effect you are wishing to achieve, and ability to maintain the trees at a later stage.

Species	Height when planted	Anticipated Height at end of Year 1	Anticipated Height at of Year 3	Anticipated Height at Year 5	Anticipated Height at Year 10	Mature Height	Planting Density (if planted in groups or rows)	Maintenance	Notes
		Height is estimated based on an annual weeding programme up to year 3 or 4 to secure establishment.							
Saxon Hedge	0.45-0.6m	0.75	1.2	2m	3m or more depending on hedge cutting regime.	Dependant on hedge cutting regime.	4 plants/m to optional 6 plants/m	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4. Consider trickle tape if close to a water supply.	A mixed hedge consisting of 60% Hawthorn and 40% mixed native shrubs (such as Blackthorn, Guelder Rose, Spindle, Dogwood, Field Maple etc). We would suggest a mix of at least four or five different species of shrubs, planted in groups within the hedge.
Mixed Native Woodland	0.45- 0.6m	0.9m	1.2 -1.5m	2m+	4-5m	15-25m	2m x 2m to 3m x 3m spacing	Growth depends on protection and site. Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Formed with a combination of locally native shrubs, small and large growing trees and areas of open ground. A great option especially if you plant areas 15m or more in width. Good long-term wildlife and screening benefits, especially if you can develop a shrubs structure in below the major tree species and along the edges of the wood. Shrubs can be coppiced to rejuvenate the understorey.

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Pedunculate (English)Oak	Various. 0.4 -2.5m	0.9m	1.5m	2-3m	7m	20m+	2m x 2m to 3m x 3m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Forms an excellent hedge tree, though will need to be protected from flailing. Irregularly spaced specimens look quite natural along a hedge line. Needs plenty of light.
Ash	Various 0.4-0.9m	1m	2m	4m	8m	20m+	3m x 2m to 3m x 3m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Vigorous & spreading and requires frequent thinning from age 15 onwards to improve girth and canopy.
Field Maple	Various 0.4-1.75m	1m	2m	3m	6m	9m	3m x 3m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Grows vigorously initially, so should be planted in groups so it does not out-shade adjacent trees.
Hazel	0.6-1.2m	0.9m	1.5m	2.5m	4m	6m	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Cut back to encourage coppice by year 5 however there is a need to maintain protection from browsing. Often planted to provide an understory.
Alder	0.6-0.9m	1.2m	2m	4m	8m+	18m	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Tolerates damp soils well. Fast growing.
Willow	0.6-1.25m	1m	2-3m	3-5m	10m+	Dependant on maintenance	3m x 3m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Can be pollarded from a young age. Avoid planting close to buildings due to vigorous rooting which can affect drains and foundations.
Wild Cherry	0.6-0.9m	1m	1.5-2m	3m	8m	15m+	3m x 3m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Growth is heavily dependent on the species planted.
Walnut	1.5-2.25m	~ 2.5m	3.5m	4m	7m	8m+	7m x 7m to 10m x 10m	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Typically planted as a pure crop in an Orchard style. Can be planted out as individuals or in mixed woodland but does need ample light.
Birch	0.6-2.5m	1m	2m	4m	7m	14m+	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Fast growing initially. Provides structure to native woodland plantation in the early years.

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Beech	0.4-2.5m	0.9m	1.5m	2m	5m	20m+	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	A shade tolerant but also heavy shade casting species. Can be grown as a hedge or tree.
Hornbeam	0.4-3.25m	0.9m	1.5m	2m	5m	15m+	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Species can be managed as coppice however there is a need to protect from browsing.
Yew	0.4-0.6m	0.7m	1.2m	1.8m	3m	7-10m	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Can be grown as a pure crop, a hedge or mixed with other species. Avoid planting close to buildings due to vigorous rooting which can affect drains and foundations.
Poplar	0.6-0.9m	1m	3m	5m	10m	20m+	10m x 10m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Whilst fast growing, the tree is not long lived and loses lower branching early on. Avoid planting close to buildings due to vigorous rooting which can affect drains and foundations.
Sweet Chestnut	0.6-1.75m	1.5m	2m	4m	7m	20m+	2m x 2m spacing	Bi-Annual weeding – years 1-4.	Species can be managed as coppice however there is a need to protect from browsing.