

DeVitre Orchard Management Plan



Year one

Pre planting whole site

Hire an individual with an industrial mower that can cut through tough weeds and tussocks and leave the ground level and ready for the ride on mower.

Once this has taken place you may re-seed any bald areas. This is best accomplished in spring or later summer. Scarify the surface using a rake and broadcast your tough seed mix at a rate of 60gms per m².

Measure and mark out using canes each of the 48 planting pits for the trees ensuring straight lines.

The hard landscaping of pathways can now be marked out and delivered.

Planting

It will take place in the Autumn but the precise dates are dependent on the nursery dispatch times and the weather.

The planting sites may be prepared prior to the arrival of the trees and I recommend this to reduce time when the trees arrive. We are planting 48 trees. Each tree site is now marked out with canes. The ground around each cane should be weeded thoroughly, lifting & removing weeds including the roots and the ground pre-dug to 40cm to loosen the soil and remove stones. At this time the soil can be assessed and any soil improvements made in terms of enrichment. I suggest Rootgrow mycorrhizal fungi. The stakes for each tree may be hammered in at this time ideally at 45 degrees and pointing windward. The trees should be tied approx 25% up the stem



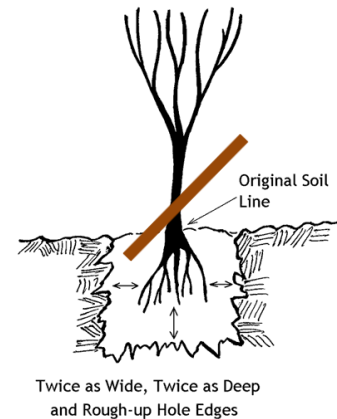
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Planting day

This involves planting the trees to the nursery collar or the same as the original soil line, tying them to the stake and watering them in. Apply woodchip & rabbit guards.



Formal hedge

This will be a hedgerow designed to be laid.



Plant choices

1. Hawthorn 75%
2. 25% is a combination of Guelder Rose, Hazel, Elm, Holly, Hornbeam
3. Dog Rose as an optional extra that may be coppiced each time the hedge is laid.

Planting format

Plants should be positioned in a staggered double row with 45cm between plants in the row & 30cm – 45cm between the two rows; approx 4-6 plants per meter. Note this wider spacing means that plants will need to be monitored and failed specimens replaced.

The steps

1. Measure the site to determine the number of plants required. Mark the plant positions.
2. Prepare the ground – remove all unwanted plants & weeds by digging out and removing the roots. Or, if you are using small saplings (60cm is ideal) you may use a membrane to cover the weeds. However, ensure it will rot away – polypropylene becomes a management problem in time!
3. The bed must be 90cm in width and to the length required.
4. Plant up your hedge using a double string line to ensure straightness.
5. Water them in.

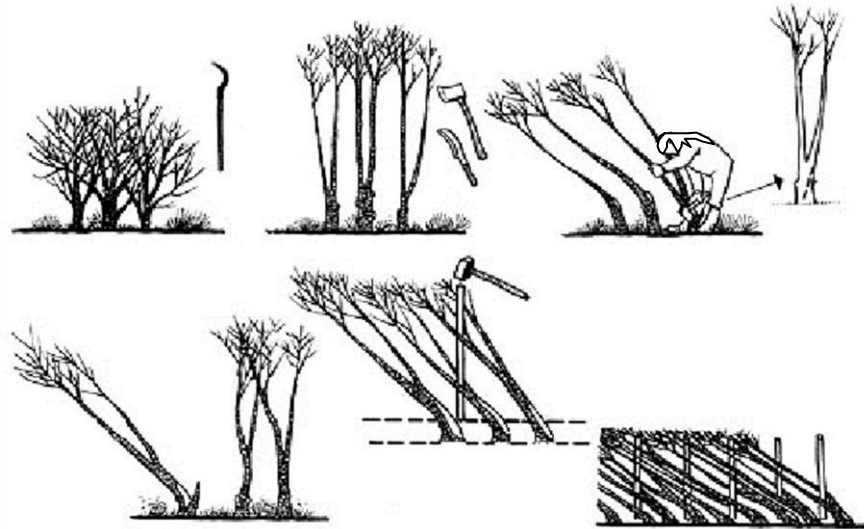
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6. Apply well rotted woodchip to 10cm deep and draw it away from the stems of your hedge.
7. Install rabbit guards.

Begin laying hedge at approx 3m in height or approx 8 years. Then repeat every 8-15years. For contractors see www.hedgelaying.org.uk



The final hedge height will be 4-5ft. The hedge may be trimmed for several years but eventually it will need to be re-laid before any lower dieback occurs.

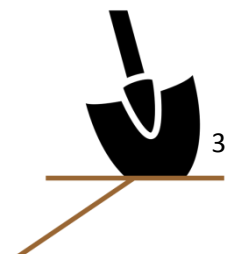
Suggested suppliers are RV Rogers for fruit trees, Weasdale Nurseries for Alders and British Hardwood Trees for the formal laid hedge.

Wildlife strip

Planting distance is 2-3m in a staggered double row. Closer planting could be done with the option of thinning later

OPTION ONE Make an application to the woodland trust and collect a tree pack collection called the working wood. This comprises of Rowan, Silver Birch, Wild Cherry, Common Oak, Grey Willow & Field Maple. This comes as 105 plants.

OPTION TWO Buy whips and make a collection for yourself – you could add, Hornbeam, Elder, Hazel, Lime, Alder and any Willow.



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You do not need to prep the ground other than removing brambles. Using T cut method plant the trees into rough ground in Autumn. Add canes and spiral rabbit guards

Suggested supplier is from British Hardwood trees

Grass maintenance

Mowing regime should be approx every 2 weeks (warm weather with rainfall may increase this) using the ride on mower. You will need to mow throughout the growing season from March to October. Since you have employed woodchip at the base of the trees and hedge there is no likelihood of nicking the tree stems.

Additional planting

This is an optional extra for inside hedgerow, wildlife strip and inside existing tree lines.

They would complement the orchard, add standards to the scheme increase the shelter belt, benefit wildlife, improve pollination and offer an interesting comparison with the cultivars. Manage as in Italian Alders.

Malus sylvestris - Wild Crab Apple

Pyrus communis - Wild Pear

Prunus domestica - Wild plum

Prunus avium - Wild cherry

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Year 2

Young tree care

The tree health check should involve

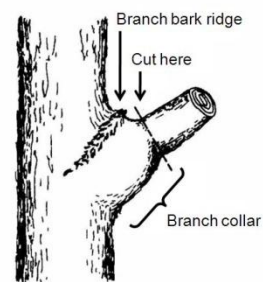
1. Ground work – maintaining the flay pit
2. assessment of efficacy of the stake
3. whole crown flushing
4. good leaf colour
5. epicormic growth.
6. Removal of dead, damaged, disordered or diseased branches

The trees should be health checked as part of a thrice seasonal workday – one in March, the second in June and the third in October. All trees will be bought formatively pruned so no work is necessary.

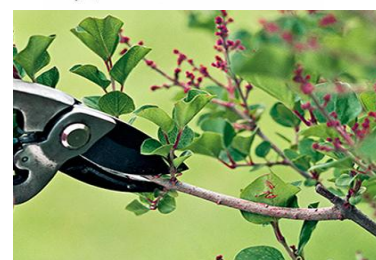
Each tree will need the flay pit weeded & edged to one meter with additional well-rotted woodchip added to 4 inches. This is done in the March and October work day. In subsequent years only 2” is applied because the hummus layer in the soil builds. The June work day will involve additional weeding if required and June drop fruit thinning.

AVOID PRUNING TREES – it is usually unnecessary (this is not a commercial orchard) and causes wound points that are attractive to pests and diseases. In most cases the tree will created a well formed crown without human intervention.

Caveat – in the event of diseased, dead disordered or dying limbs some pruning will be necessary. Ensure a good target prune (see diagram) that is a clean cut. For a whole branch cut - support the limb being pruned to avoid tearing. Do not cut into the branch collar. Remove damaged portion cutting into undamaged wood.



To remove the tip of a limb,(called heading back) support the damaged shoot tip and snip back to just above a healthy, outward facing bud.



Fruit spur thinning involves thinning out (by snipping off) congested spurs so that there is a good spacing. This is usually unnecessary in the first 10 years.

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Tree Stake removal

This is undertaken within 2 years of planting unless the wind is excessive. Do it in spring.

A well planted, formatively trained tree in good health, will grow away well & regulate its own shape, resist pests and diseases whilst producing good fruit. The weed free circle of woodchip at ground level will regulate soil temperature, attract fungal mycelium, regulate and hold water, suppress weeds and slow release nutrients. This woodchip should be maintained until enough canopy casts shade on the ground beneath the tree.

NB Young tree care ends when the plants cast enough ground shade to prevent grass growth beneath the canopy!

Check the hedgerow

1. Remove weeds
2. Re-edge the bed
3. Top dress in spring & autumn with well rotted woodchip to about 2".
Maintain/replace rabbit guards if necessary
4. Replace failed saplings

This annual care ends when hedge casts weed suppressing shade as in trees.

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Year 3

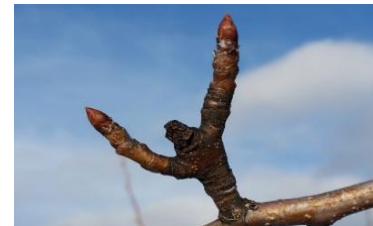
Continue young tree care as in year 2.

June drop

June drop is associated with apple trees but is a period of time when most fruit trees shed excess fruit. In a good year the bees have been busy and pollinated the majority of the flowers and the tree is covered with small fruitlets. However the tree ensures fruit ripening and seed maturity by shedding excess fruit; in doing so focussing its resources strategically. This, as the name suggests, occurs in June and you can see the fruitlets scattered on the ground when it happens. As part of the



young tree care and generic fruit production you can thin the fruit to one or two per spur (a short fruiting side branch). By doing this you will capitalise on a natural tree strategy and the fruit will



ripen to both larger size and higher quality.

Additional information

Alnus cordata require the same ground work and health care as the fruit trees (except for June drop) and nothing else! <http://www.britishhardwood.co.uk>

Pergola Climber

Kiwiberries grow up to approx 4m with a spread of 2.5m. They are unfussy, hardy and need very little work. Plant at least 4 in total, 2 of Kiwiberry Issai & 2 of Kiwi Anna (double this as there are 2 pergolas). Issai is self fertile but will produce more with Anna close by. Plant towards the end of the long sides of the pergola and provide wires to tie them on to the frame. They twine their way around but develop strong woody stems.



Prepare a planting pit of approx 50 cm in the same ways as the orchard trees and maintain the woodchip each year until enough shade is cast to suppress weeds without intervention.

Suggested suppliers Agroforestry research Trust