

Hedges planted across the slope (with the contours) have the following flood-related benefits:

- Provide a physical barrier to field run-off
- Improve infiltration and uptake of water
- Reduce soil erosion as roots help bind the soil

Other benefits include:

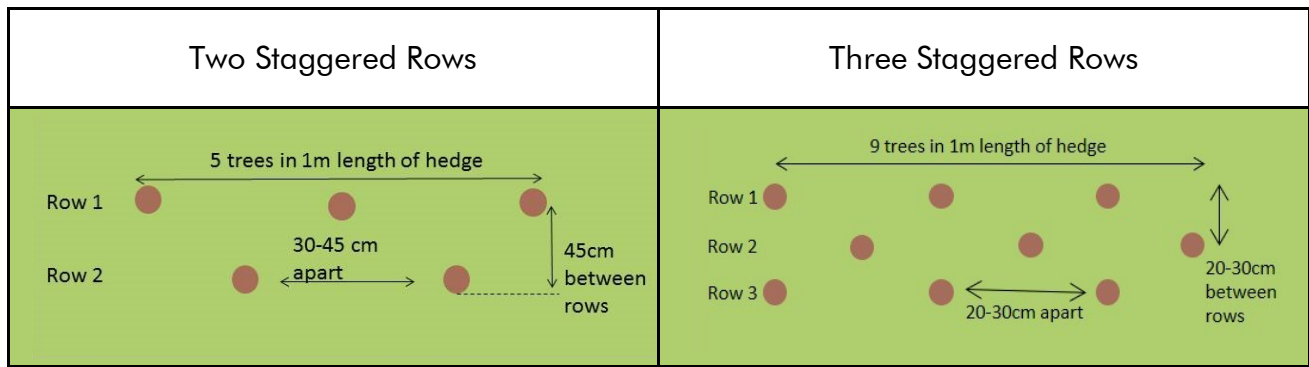
- Reduced risk of nutrient leaching into nearby watercourses by increasing nutrient uptake
- Increased habitat diversity, wildlife corridors and food sources for insects, pollinators, small mammals and birds
- Once established, hedges can act as stock-proof field boundaries



Hedge planting completed under the Hills to Levels Project

How to go about hedge planting

Hedge Planting	
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across slopes to interrupt run-off • Where grass buffer strips alone are unlikely to reduce run-off • If planting on a bank, place the whips just off the crest of the bank to avoid plants from drying out.
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant native species similar to those in surrounding hedges. • Consider what benefits the species bring, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazel is good for NFM because it creates thick structure when coppiced • Hawthorn and Crab Apple provide food source for birds • Field Maple and Blackthorn are good for pollinators in Spring.
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between October and March
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On small-moderate flow pathways and where a hedge bank is in place, plant in two staggered rows, approximately 6 plants per metre with rows 30-45cm apart • On particularly large flow pathways, plant three staggered rows or 9 plants per metre in with rows 30cm apart • Plant species in blocks of at least 1m • Where planting on a hedge bank, plant just off the crest of the bank for water conservation • Use spiral tree guards to protect the whips for the first couple of years • It may be necessary to fence the area until it is fully established to protect it from livestock



Management of hedges for NFM

- Clear weeds (particularly grass) until the hedge has established as these will compromise the success of the hedge if left unmanaged.
- Within the first two years, trim the newly established hedge to 45-60 cm high. This will encourage bushy growth, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut.
- Alternatively trim the sides in preparation for laying. Hedge laying can increase the natural flood management benefits of a hedge

Remember: don't fell trees or trim hedges between 1st March and 1st September (GAEC 7A & 7C), hedge laying and coppicing can take place from 1st March to 30th April.

Strategic planting and your farm business

Hedges can provide services on your farm, such as shelter for livestock, stock-proof boundaries and limiting erosion pathways.

Hedges count as Ecological Focus Areas on arable farms (excluding certified organic land) which is part of Greening under the Basic Payment Scheme.

Hedges may provide economic benefits in form of woodfuel and other timber-related products.

Consent and Licences

You may need to inform the Rural Payments Agency if these areas are considered Permanent Ineligible Features (if you received woodland creation grants, these features are not permanent ineligible features for a set amount of time). Inform the Rural Payments Agency if planting new hedges splits one existing field parcel into separate fields. You may need consent from Natural England if the land is designated as a SSSI or in an agri-environment agreement. Your FWAG SW adviser can help you with this.

*When bidding in the auction, please bid with a price **excluding the cost of any fencing.***

