

# Planting trees for the NHS Forest



**NHS Forest**  
Green space for health

Thank you for volunteering to plant trees for the NHS Forest project. Every site that becomes part of the NHS Forest project helps to make the NHS a greener and healthier place. You can learn more on the NHS Forest website about the wellbeing benefits of greening the NHS estate - [www.nhsforest.org](http://www.nhsforest.org). This is your guide to being a volunteer. Your organiser will be able to help you fill in the top section.

Event information

Location:

Travel arrangements:

Time:

Date:

Contact:

Today's tree target:

Toilets/handwashing facilities are located:

First aider:

First aid box is located:

1. We want everyone to stay as safe as possible. Make sure you tell the organisers about any health conditions that might affect you during the day. It's important not to overdo it or put yourself at risk.
2. Take regular breaks for refreshments and a rest - you will have earned it!
3. We want the trees you plant today to grow and thrive so it's important they are planted in the right way. The organiser will demonstrate how to do this. You can also look at the planting guide below.
4. Follow the planting plan supplied by the organisers and check the labels on the trees before planting to make sure the right trees are going in the right place. You can use the tree supports as markers to map out where trees should go - a rubber mallet can be helpful when pushing the supports into the ground.

5. It's a good idea to work in pairs. If you're new to tree planting, try to team up with someone more experienced.
6. Don't try to carry on if you hurt yourself. Let the organisers know so they can help you.
7. If your equipment is faulty or breaks for any reason make sure you tell the organisers so they can carry out any repairs after the event.
8. Remember to give yourself a pat on the back - planting trees helps improve everyone's health and wellbeing.
9. Listen to the organiser at all times - they are responsible for your safety and ensuring the trees go into the ground correctly.
10. Plan your time so you don't leave anything unfinished at the end of the day. It's better to get fewer trees into the ground properly.
11. Keep your trees in a bucket or wheelbarrow - it's surprisingly easy to lose track of them once you start planting.
12. When using a spade make sure you use the ball of your foot to prevent injuries.
13. Leave spades upright and pushed into the ground. Don't leave them on the ground.
14. Don't forget to wash your hands when you're finished or before you eat.



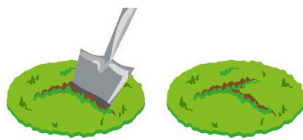
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There are different ways to plant trees, depending on your circumstances. In grassy areas, grass will need to be cleared one metre in diameter around the planting location prior to planting.

Notch planting



Create a T-shaped notch



Use a spade to open the notch



Slide the whip in



Slide the whip in



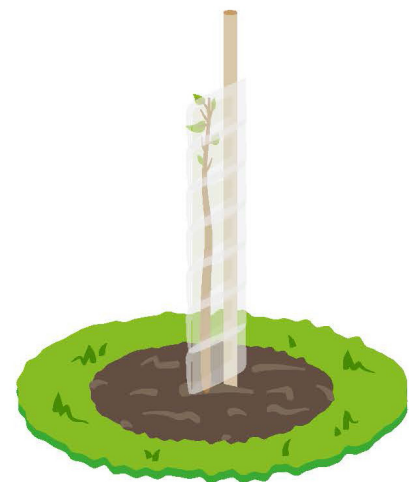
Cover the notch



**Notch planting** is often the best method for planting young trees and is fast as well. For this, you simply create a notch in the ground with your spade, push the spade backwards and forwards to open the notch. Unless the plants are very small, you should make a notch in the shape of a "T" and slide the plant in along the section of the notch that runs from the middle of the top of the T to the base of the T. Then carefully insert the roots of the tree into the notch. The soil plugs of cell grown trees should be left intact and not broken up. If planting bare-root trees, sliding them into position using a sideways wiping motion helps to spread out the roots. Remove the spade to close the notch and firm the soil around the tree.

**Pit planting** is the other traditional method of planting young trees. However, it is slower and harder work than notch planting. It is better to use pit planting if you are handling trees with bushy roots that won't fit in T notches; if you have heavy, compacted, clay soils; or if you have very crumbly or friable soils where a notch would collapse. For pit planting, dig a hole and remove the soil. Break it up and place your tree in the hole and replace the soil around the tree roots. Ensure the soil collar (the mark from where the soil came up to when the tree was growing in the nursery) is level with the surface of the soil. Firm the soil afterwards with your hands or feet, taking care not to cause compaction.

Pit planting



## Some general guidelines apply to both the above methods:

- Water the tree immediately after planting. Use around one bucket of water per tree.
- When creating holes or notches, make sure they are big enough so that no roots are bent or broken. Ensure the soil plugs of cell grown trees are not crushed or broken up and bare-roots are spread evenly rather than cramped or bent.
- Both bare-root and cell grown trees should be planted to the same depth as they were growing previously in the nursery. The root collar (where the roots meet the stem) will provide a guideline.
- Fit the shelter, stake/cane, and mulch mat (if applicable) whilst planting.
- Firm the soil around the tree after planting to securely anchor the roots without overly compacting the soil. A tree is well anchored when you gently pull on its stem and the plant does not loosen.