



Orchard Tree and Hedgerow Pack Application Guidance

This document will guide you through the process of applying for Orchards for Schools orchard tree and hedgerow packs from The Tree Council.

Make sure you complete all the fields required in the online application form, unless indicated as optional.

A practical guide about how to plant and care for your trees and hedgerow will be emailed to you before your they arrive. You will also receive a resource pack including an A2 planner poster and stickers to support your Orchard for Schools project.

About the application form

This guide takes you through the 7 sections of the application form:

1. Getting started
2. Essential school contact details
3. Planning your project
4. Number and variety of tree packs
5. Delivery details
6. Data protection - GDPR
7. Summary

1. Getting started

Creating a school orchard enriches learning and school life in so many ways. We're here to help you design and create a high-quality outdoor teaching resource, right on your doorstep, that will engage and inspire your students, providing learning opportunities across the curriculum.

Who is eligible to receive an orchard tree or hedgerow pack?

Orchard tree and hedgerow packs are available to all schools in England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland. All nurseries, primary, secondary and special schools, youth organisations and other community organisations are eligible to apply.

Orchard tree and hedgerow packs are only available to schools who have **not previously participated in the Orchards for Schools programme.**



2. Essential school contact details

Who should be the lead contact?

It's important that senior management allocate time for an enthusiastic member of staff to be assigned lead contact for the project. Typically, the lead contact is a teacher, school caretaker or local volunteer parent/carer such as a member of the parent association/advisory group.

They should have access to the school and agreed allocation of time by senior management to complete the application process, if relevant, receive and plant the trees soon after they arrive and manage the care of the trees, especially during their vital first two years of establishment. The lead contact must also be available to take delivery of the tree pack and know what to do with it when it arrives!

3. Planning your project

Careful planning at the start of your project will go a long way to ensure healthy trees, a good harvest and successful learning. It is important to ask yourself:

Why do I want to create a planting project in my school and what is the aim?

Consider why you want to deliver an Orchards for Schools project. Will the activities support wider initiatives, (healthy schools, eco-schools), is there opportunity to embed new teaching and learning opportunities across the curriculum? Also consider what you want to achieve on the ground, do you want to create a teaching space as well as an orchard, or a wildlife or vegetable growing area?

How much time will my orchard project take to manage?

Compared to growing annual plants like tomatoes and salads, fruit trees and hedgerows require much less annual care once they are established. There is, however, more to do in the first few years in order to get them established; the young trees and hedgerow whips will need to be watered, weeded and guarded from strimmers, rabbits and deer for the first three years.



It's important that senior management allocate time for an enthusiastic member of staff to be assigned as lead contact for the project. The lead contact will need to complete the application process and make sure there is a plan in place to involve students in your school to help plant, connect, learn, share and care for your fruiting orchard or hedgerow.

Do I need landowner permission for my new orchard or fruiting hedgerow?

Yes. Make sure you have permission to plant trees from the landowner of the proposed location before completing the application form. It is worth checking your school improvement plan for any proposed developments onsite.

Where is the best location to plant and how much space will I need?

If you apply for an orchard tree pack, you will need to ensure a minimum distance of c4-5metres between the trunks of each fruit tree (5 trees per pack). If you apply for a fruiting hedgerow pack, you can chose from a pack of 60 whips which equates to a hedgerow up to 10-15 metres long, or a pack of 100 whips which equates to 16-20 metres. Hedgerow will require space at least 1 metre wide (planted at 5-6 whips per metre).

Make sure you have permission to plant on the land you plan to use for your orchard and/or hedgerow. Consider any new developments that may be proposed onsite. Plant where your trees can receive lots of sunlight and where the drainage is good. Also consider a location that is accessible to all and allows you to easily water your young trees and whips regularly (near an outdoor tap). Also consider getting help by setting up a Young Tree Champion club, as these students could then be involved with the ongoing care and maintenance of your orchard or hedgerow. Visit [our website](#) for more details on the Young Tree Champions scheme.

It is important to consider your planting location carefully to give your trees the best chance to thrive. The fruit and hedgerow trees we have selected are hardy and versatile, but the minimum site requirements include:

- Good drainage – avoid boggy areas
- Reasonable soil – avoid compacted soils
- Air drainage – avoid frost pockets
- Sunshine – find the sunniest place possible
- Shelter – find somewhere sheltered from strong wind



You should also consider ease of access and an external water supply as your young trees will need regular watering for the first two years - consider making a plan for children living locally or any local volunteers to water the trees during the summer holidays. Make sure you have enough space to plant your trees at least four metres apart so they have the room they need to grow and mature. A native apple, pear, cherry or plum tree will grow to approximately three to four metres high.

Can our fruit trees be planted in pots?

Yes, fruit trees can be planted in pots - the trees you'll be provided are the maximum size recommended for containers, and you'll need pots/containers of 1 metre x 1 metre x 1 metre. The pots should also be covered with a c10cm layer of mulch, to help provide vital nutrients for the young trees and retain water. Pots should have drainage holes in the bottom to prevent roots becoming waterlogged if overwatered or due to rain.

When will I receive my orchard tree or hedgerow packs and when should I plant my trees?

Successful applicants will receive their orchard tree and/or hedgerow pack(s) in February/ March 2024. We will notify you of the exact date of delivery at least one week in advance.

Once received, the trees must be planted within five days otherwise the young trees will die. When they arrive, open up the box and dip the roots of each tree in water. Then put them back into their bag and keep the packs in a sheltered spot outside. Check the tree roots daily and keep them damp until planting takes place.

How do we keep our trees alive and healthy for years to come?

Your trees will require regular watering during the first two years of growth, especially during the Easter and Summer holidays, so it's important to consider easy access to an external water supply. Try setting up a watering rota that can be done either as a lunchtime or afterschool club activity. Use your planner poster (posted separately to your tree pack) to help schedule watering times and days.



You should also consider who is going to manage and care for your trees long term – why not consider setting up a Young Tree Champions club at school? Visit [our website](#) for more details on the Young Tree Champions scheme.

To give your trees the best chance of survival in future challenging weather conditions, follow the handy tips below:

1. **Don't let the roots dry out before being planted!**
2. **Prepare the ground** by digging a hole larger than is required for the roots and add mycorrhizae and seaweed fertiliser if you have it
3. **Plant** by refilling the hole with the soil removed (don't add more than 10% compost –
4. and make sure it is peat-free)
5. **Apply a thick layer of mulch (e.g. woodchip)** around the base of the tree to help suppress competing weeds and grasses, retain moisture and provide nutrients. Aim for a depth of about 10cm but **avoid piling up the mulch on the trunk** itself as the it could then be prone to rotting.
6. **Put in a watering plan** using recycled or rainwater where possible

How will I get students fully involved in the project?

Every stage of the project is a great learning opportunity for your students so get them involved with every step of the planning, planting, watering, maintenance and aftercare. Setting up a club of Young Tree Champions is also great way of getting students involved.

What additional teacher resources are available?

Each school will receive an A2 planner poster for teachers and a sticker set. On [our website](#) there are [informative planning, planting and caring webinars](#) which will help your lead teacher and students learn how to:

- plan your project onsite
- plant, grow and care for your trees
- meet the requirements of the school curriculum and development plan



Is there a network of volunteer Tree Wardens in your area?

In many parts of the UK, there are volunteer [Tree Warden](#) groups that may be happy to provide further advice and support for your project. Many Tree Warden Networks have organised similar projects themselves in the past and can help you make the project a success. Have a look on [our map](#) of Tree Warden networks to see if you have one in your area.

4. What is in an orchard tree or hedgerow pack and how many can we have?

There are two types of tree pack available:

Orchard tree pack

Each orchard tree pack contains five maiden (1-year old) fruit trees, which will be a combination of apple, pear, cherry and plum. All fruit trees and fruiting hedgerows are native to the UK to ensure resilience and compatibility with wider native flora and fauna. Each country in the UK will have a different mix of apple, pear, cherry and/or plum trees. It is not possible to select which fruit/varieties of tree you receive.

Your fruit trees will be a year old and between 1-1.5 metres high. A cane, hessian tie and wire guard will be provided for each tree. Each tree will need to be planted at least 4-5m apart to have space to grow to maturity, so one pack of five trees, if planted together, will require an area of approximately 10m x 10m.

Hedgerow packs

Perfect if you are more limited on space, these hedgerow whips will create fantastic mixed hedgerow – great for wildlife! You'll need a space with a minimum width of 1 metre. Depending on the thickness of the hedge you need, you can either plant the whips in one row or plant them in two staggered rows at a density of 5-6 whips per metre. The pack will contain a variety of native hedgerow species (up to 0.5m in height) including hornbeam, blackthorn and hawthorn (exact species will vary by country). It is not possible to select which varieties of hedgerow whips you receive. You can select a pack of 60 hedgerow whips that will create a hedgerow 10-15 metres, or a larger pack of 100 whips that will create 16-20 metres.



How many tree packs can each school apply for?

Each school can apply for a maximum of one orchard tree pack (5 fruit trees) and one hedgerow pack (either 60 or 100 whips) or both. Please only apply for what your school grounds can accommodate.

Choose your packs carefully based on what is most suitable for your grounds (orchard trees and / or mixed hedgerow). If you have big plans and want more packs of either trees or hedgerow whips, then please apply for a grant through The Tree Council's [Branching Out Fund](#).

Additional materials required for the planting project

For the planting event, the project lead will also need to arrange:

- Spades and forks to prepare the ground and dig the holes
- Gloves for adults and children to wear
- Mulch to go at the base of each tree if possible. With the increasingly dry spring and summers, we have found that this significantly increases the chances of the young trees' survival. This can often be supplied for free by local tree contractors either by contacting them directly or sites such as [arbtalk](#) or [freewoodchip.co.uk](#) who facilitate bulk deliveries of wood chip

5. Delivery details and timings

Please remember that deliveries must be made to manned sites, so ensure you note a delivery address where someone will be available to receive the packs during work hours.

Successful applicants will receive their orchard tree and/or hedgerow packs in February/ March 2024. We will notify you of the exact date of delivery at least one week in advance.

The Tree Council, or a nominated partner such as a tree nursery, may get in touch with you before this date to further process your order (see section 6 for more information on data protection.)



6. Data protection

We will share the details you provide us with third parties such as the nursery, contractors, couriers and sponsors and any involved directly in the funding, delivery or monitoring of your Tree Council packs. This is necessary to deliver your packs. The Tree Council, or a nominated partner, (for example, the tree nursery who is supplying your trees) may make contact in order to process your order.

We will keep your data for up to three years, we will use it only in the ways we outlined above and observe all UK-GDPR and other relevant data legislation.

7. Summary

The summary of your application form will allow you to check and keep a record of all the information you have submitted. Once you have submitted your form, you'll also receive a PDF of your application in an email confirmation.