

Essential tree planting guide

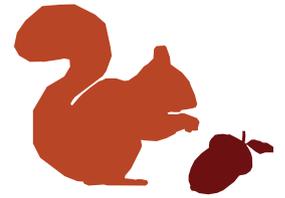
Rowan factsheet

1. The rowan has leaves divided into opposite leaflets like those of the ash. In fact, its other name is mountain ash. It has white flowers and produces red berries in the autumn.
2. This tree likes light, peaty soils that are well drained but is very adaptable. The rowan can be found growing to an altitude of 1,000m, and even in steep, rocky places.
3. The berries can be used to make a jelly rich in vitamin C, which is eaten with game. The wood is strong enough for fence posts, broom handles and walking sticks, and flexible enough to weave fishing baskets called creels. In the Middle Ages, rowan wood was used to make bows, as well as tool handles, bowls and platters.
4. Rowan berries are very attractive to fruit-eating birds, which is reflected in the old name 'bird catcher'. The fruit is soft and juicy, which makes it a very good food for birds, particularly waxwings and thrushes.
5. The name 'rowan' is derived from the Old Norse name for the tree, 'raun' or 'rogn'. This could have the meaning 'getting red', which referred to the red foliage and red berries in the autumn.



Myths and folklore

Like other red-berried trees, rowan was said to offer protection against evil spirits. This explains why rowan is often found planted round Scottish houses, often by the door, to prevent evil spirits entering the house. Some trees in the Highlands have even outlived old, deserted crofts. Magicians' staffs were also reputedly made from rowan because of its protective qualities for safe night journeys.



Planting instructions

Ensure that the planting site has been agreed by all concerned and you are certain you are planting in an area that is free from any services that run under or over the site, these include: water, gas, electricity and communications. Your local service providers will be able to help you with this. Also, do not plant too close to any buildings – remember, these trees can grow quite tall and have a similar spread for branches and roots.

Before starting to plant, it will be useful to mark out the positions of each tree. Use a tape measure or pace out and use sticks or markers as required.

We suggest the trees are planted at least a metre apart. They don't have to be planted in a block and your site may dictate otherwise. Some have been planted as avenues, others as small groups of trees or in wildlife gardens.

When you plant the trees, keep them in their containers until the last minute, as this will protect the roots from the weather, especially drying winds. The tree roots can be immersed in a bucket of water just before planting if they are very dry.

Each tree will require a small pit to be dug with a spade (use junior spades as these spades are easier for children to use). The pit needs to be at least several centimetres wider and deeper than the fully extended roots of the tree to be planted. A spade's width will be

more than sufficient for the pit. If planting into grass, the turf should be dug up and set aside. The bottom and sides of the pit should be loosened with a fork or spade, especially in hard or wet ground.

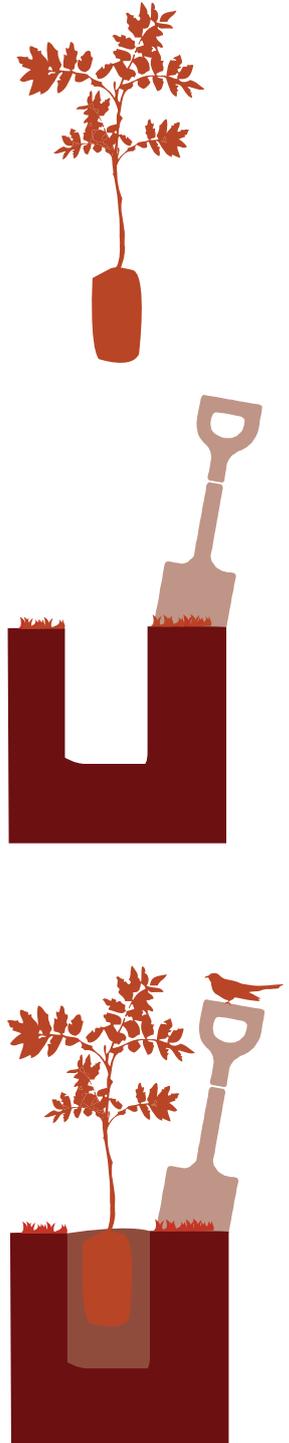
If the soil is particularly poor, you can add a few spadefuls of compost, leaf mould or well-decayed manure into the bottom of the hole. However with most soils this is not necessary.

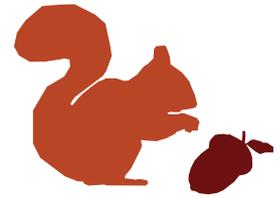
The tree should then be placed in the pit. Cover the root plug with 25mm of soil and firm down well around the roots. If working as a pair, one person backfills the soil carefully around the root plug, using the most friable soil first, while the other person keeps the tree upright. Then use the remaining soil to fill the pit to the original ground level, press down each layer as the pit is filled, using hands or feet, but don't stamp too hard or you are likely to both over-compact the soil and scrape the bark of the stem.

If the turf has been reserved, this can now be cut in half, and each piece placed upside down around the stem and firmed into the soil.

If you can obtain any mulch, e.g. shredded woodchip or grass clippings, this can be applied around the base of the trees to help retain moisture during the summer months and to reduce the amount of competing vegetation around the trees.

Finally, the trees can be watered if the ground is dry.





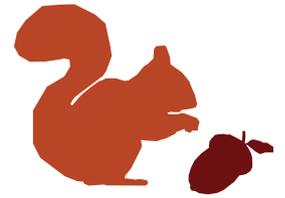
Step-by-step summary for planting your trees:

- Remove the tree from the container.
- Inspect tree and remove any broken twigs and roots.
- Soak dry roots before planting.
- Mark out planting area as required.
- Dig tree pit with spade.
- Check depth of pit, length of the root plug + 25mm, adjust if necessary.
- Enlarge pit if necessary to avoid bending roots.
- One person holds tree and a second puts soil over roots.
- Firm soil lightly with feet.
- Continue filling and treading more firmly but do not firm too hard in wet conditions.
- Replace turf upside down on top of soil around tree.
- If dry, water well.
- Tidy up and apply mulch around the base of each tree.

For planting in a pot

If planting your tree in a pot, follow these simple steps:

- Select a pot that it is at least 20cm in diameter. A half-barrel will be ideal, providing room for the tree to grow. (Small pots will require very frequent watering.)
- Plant as if in the ground using general peat-free compost but one that doesn't dry out too quickly. You can always use garden weed-free soil with perhaps some added sharp sand and good, well-rotted manure or ready garden compost material to give it a bit more substance.
- After a few years, you may note that your rowan tree is filling the pot. A good indicator will be if the leaves of the tree have spread out much wider than the pot diameter. At this point, you can either re-pot into a larger pot or find a location to plant it out.
- When re-planting, make sure the roots are leashed out if required i.e. if it is pot-bound, plant in good ground, not too dry or waterlogged. Your tree can be planted out at any time of year but if you choose the summer you will need to keep it well watered initially as it gets established. It is best to plant in winter during the dormant period.



Ongoing tree care

Newly planted trees do not require much ongoing maintenance though they will benefit from watering during the drier months. This can be a great way of encouraging children to care for the trees, perhaps by setting up a watering rota?

It can also be beneficial to keep the mulch topped up as this will ensure the trees don't have competition for water from weeds. If weeds do grow through the mulch, these can be removed by hand.

After a relatively short time, the small trees will start to bush out. During the summer months, check for any branches that may not have survived and cut back with secateurs.

If you have any queries about maintaining your tree there are some helpful contacts on the Breathing Places website.

bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/schools

Other resources for Tree Day

You will find resources which can be downloaded from **bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/schools** which will help you through the day.

They are:

Leaf Collecting Bag template

Identification sheets for twigs, leaves and tree fruit