



## PLANTING GUIDELINES

# SOME TIPS TO HELP GET YOUR PLANTING PROJECTS OFF TO A GREAT START



Trees That Count is keen to support best practice planting guidelines so your planting projects have the very best chance of success. Read through our guidelines for best practice plantings below:

- **Site preparation.** All native planting programmes require careful planning. This starts with appropriate site preparation - the exclusion of grazing stock, control of wild animal pests, and clearance of exotic weed cover.
- **Plant species which are known to be native to the local area.** Have a look on your local council's website or at [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)
- **Mimic nature's process.** Mature indigenous forest develops in several steps, with each step providing the conditions that will suit the next group of plants. Your first step in forest restoration is to plant 'nurse species' that cover the site quickly, shading out grass and weeds. Nurse species are hardy and fast growing. They are good at colonising open

areas because they grow well in exposed conditions, enabling them to suppress weed species and shade out grass. Once the nurse cover is established your next step is to either plant forest canopy species or to allow forest species to regenerate naturally from seed distributed by wind, birds and water. A common mistake is to plant seedlings of forest tree species without shelter especially on exposed open sites. Many species, such as puriri and kauri, will benefit from the shelter when planted amongst nurse species. Without these conditions many tall tree species will only grow slowly and could easily die.

- **Use ecosourced plants.** Ecosourced plants are those which are grown from seeds collected from naturally-occurring vegetation close to where they are to be planted. It means the plants will be suited to local conditions and more likely to survive. By using ecosourced native plants you will help maintain the area's unique local characteristics and avoid introducing potential invasive non-local native species.
- **Use good quality plants.** Success of planting is critically dependent on using high quality, nursery-raised seedlings. Large well-conditioned seedlings at least 40cm tall are likely to give better survival and early growth, especially on sites prone to vigorous weed growth. Avoid plants with distorted and poorly formed root systems.
- **Source from local nurseries.** Trees That Count supports the use of local nurseries (whether commercial or community-based) in the production and supply of native planting stock where practical.
- **Planting methods.** Check the many guides available for planting procedures and options for planting season.



- **Give the plants room to grow.** Planting pattern and density can vary due to site characteristics, objectives of planting and resources available. Trees That Count supports best local practices including:
  - planting most sites with a nurse cover of fast growing native shrubs to provide rapid cover and suppress weed growth as soon as possible, and to shelter (especially on exposed sites) inter-planted native trees; nurse covers can be established at a plant spacing from 1.4 metres (approx. 5000 stems per ha) to 2 metres (2500 stems per ha)
  - follow with inter-planting of successional tree species at a 4 metre spacing (600+ stems per ha) amongst the shrub hardwoods. This can be done at the same time as planting nurse cover but may be delayed for one or more years on exposed, difficult sites until adequate shelter is achieved
  - plant spacing and the area required for each site will depend on local sites; in general 5000 natives planted at approximately 3000-5000 stems per ha would require a 1 to 1.5 ha site.
- **Early monitoring and maintenance.** All native planting programmes require monitoring and maintenance on a regular basis. Most plantings of natives will require control of weeds for a minimum of two years, and on sites with aggressive brush weed species for up to five years (or until the natives are approaching 2 metres in height). Some losses are inevitable so provision should be made to replant any large gaps within the first two years. Refer to our [Monitoring Guidelines](#).

## SELECT THE RIGHT TREES TO PLANT - AND TELL US ABOUT THEM!

Trees That Count is keeping a live count of native tree planting activity in New Zealand so we can measure the difference we can collectively make to climate change. But it's about planting trees that count – for restoring and enhancing our environment, for biodiversity, for the enjoyment and well-being of future generations.

## PLEDGE YOUR PLANTING PLANS WITH US AT [treesthatcount.co.nz](http://treesthatcount.co.nz)

The trees that we are counting are:

- Native – that is, indigenous to New Zealand
- Species that have the potential to reach a minimum height of 5 metres at maturity

- 'In addition' to nature – that is, deliberately planted and not counted through natural regeneration
- Planted with the intention of being maintained and protected until maturity.

You can check out the list of commonly planted trees that will count at [treesthatcount.co.nz](http://treesthatcount.co.nz)

## MORE READING

The Department of Conservation has developed some great resources, including a practical guide on protecting and restoring natural heritage which is available at [www.doc.govt.nz/documents/conservation/native-plants/motukarara-nursery/restoration-guide-complete.pdf](http://www.doc.govt.nz/documents/conservation/native-plants/motukarara-nursery/restoration-guide-complete.pdf)

Weedbusters has some good resources on types of plants to use by region [www.weedbusters.org.nz/resources/plant-me-instead-booklets/](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz/resources/plant-me-instead-booklets/)

Tane's Tree Trust has many publications and best practice guides on the establishment and early management of native forestry. Refer to their website [www.tanestrees.org.nz](http://www.tanestrees.org.nz)

Check your local Regional Council's website ([http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lcip.nsf/wpg\\_url/Profiles-Councils-by-type-Regional](http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lcip.nsf/wpg_url/Profiles-Councils-by-type-Regional)) for planting native trees and shrubs in your region.



Trees That Count is providing a way to see the collective good of the thousands of Kiwis who give their time to restore our environment for future generations.

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