

As well as the other benefits described in the *Cross-Slope Hedge Planting* specification and below, planting hedges on banks can provide more of a physical barrier to slow field run-off. If you are in a part of Somerset where this is a common landscape feature, this may be good option.

### Constructing a hedge bank

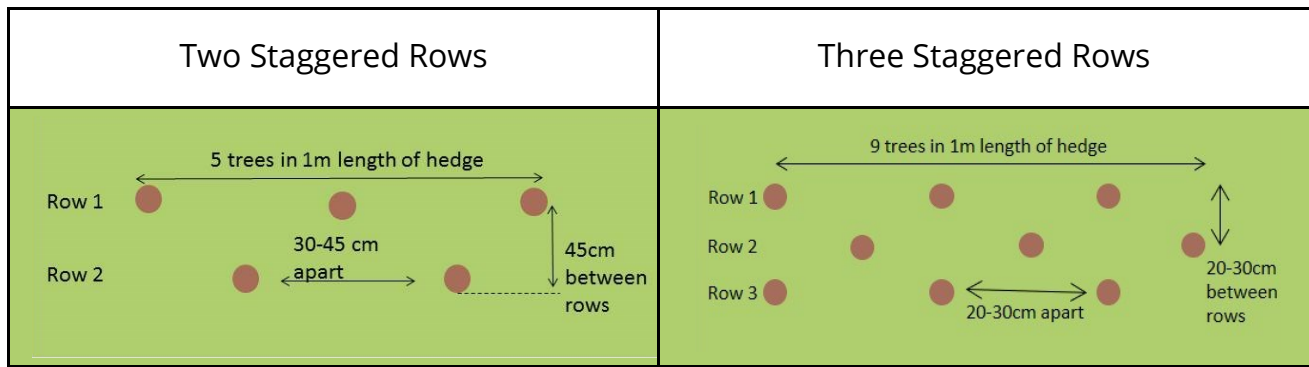
- It is best to construct an earth bank when soil conditions are dry. This will a) reduce structural damage to the soil caused by heavy machinery, and b) allow the bund to stabilise
- Hedge banks should be built to a height of 0.75 -1m
- The base of the bank should be at least three to four times its height
- Key in the base to the existing ground to prevent slumping or movement
- Build up the soil in 15 cm layers, compacting each layer as you go



*A hedge on hedge bank constructed as part of a previous auction*

### How to go about hedge planting on a bank

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



## Management of hedges

- 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 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> September (GAEC 7A & 7C), hedge laying and coppicing can take place from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## Consent and Licences

You may need to inform the Rural Payments Agency if these areas are considered Permanent Ineligible Features. 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.

**Hedges planted as part of this auction will need to be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

