

Wider application

The establishment of a community tree nursery is a good way to engage the local community and schools in the improvement of their own environment. It is also a valuable educational resource which can look attractive. The process of setting up a nursery and then growing and tending the plants encourages a greater sense of ownership. This helps to increase commitment to care for the trees once they have been planted in their final positions.

Further information

National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies or their application, or if you have examples of good practice to share with others, please contact:

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Further reading

Aldhous J (1972)

Nursery Practice Forestry Commission Bulletin **43**, The Stationery Office, London

Beckett K & Beckett G (1979)

Planting Native Trees and Shrubs Jarrold & Sons Ltd, Norwich (Now out of print)

Browne D (ed) (1996)

Our Trees: A guide to Growing Northern Ireland's Native Trees from Seed Available from CVNI, Ballyleidy Cottage, Clondeboye Estate, Bangor, BT19 1RN.

BTCV (2000)

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Pickerden C (1999)

Forests for our Future BTCV, Wallingford

Rodwell J & Patterson (1994)

Creating New Native Woodlands Forestry Commission Bulletin **112**, The Stationery Office, London

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Urban Forestry in Practice

Setting up a community tree nursery



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Setting up a community tree nursery

Introduction

A community tree nursery can act as a vehicle for empowering local communities, whilst increasing the numbers of trees of local genetic integrity. It can also help to increase awareness of environmental issues and demonstrate the benefits of people working together to improve their environment.

Specific examples

Project name and location

PHILIPS PARK TREE NURSERY, Whitefield, **MANCHESTER**, UK
Grid reference SD 796 041

Project partners

- BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Prince's Trust

Project objectives

- To propagate trees for use in local planting schemes
- To extend local native woodlands by planting trees from seed of local provenance
- To develop wider community involvement and awareness through nursery work

Site description

The site was a triangular plot of land of approximately 400m², adjacent to Philips Park and owned by Bury Council. It was flat and relatively sheltered with weedy but fertile soil.

Implementation

There are four key requirements for a successful tree nursery:

- Land with some protection
- A team of enthusiastic, inventive (scavenging!) volunteers
- A suitable source of tree seeds
- A good reference book: the team used *Tree Planting and Aftercare*, published by BTCV

The land, which had become a derelict tangle of weeds, was part of a grazed field. In 1996, a team of ten Prince's Trust volunteers helped to construct the tree nursery and the first job was to clear the site.



Old railway sleepers make ideal edges to the raised nursery beds

Nursery beds can be of any length but, ideally, should be no more than 1m wide. This allows for access without the need to trample on the soil. Seven beds of varying lengths were constructed over a 12-15 month period to provide a total growing area of 200m². Pathways between the beds were about 1m wide to allow wheelchair access.

The beds were raised by 100mm to assist drainage and prevent waterlogging of the seedling trees. Old railway sleepers which had been stored on the site were fastened together to form the edges. A trench about 500mm wide by 700mm deep was dug out at one end of each bed. A 100mm layer of woodchip was laid in the bottom to act as a sump of water available to the trees during spells of dry weather. The surface grass and weeds were buried by turning over the soil to a depth of 700mm.

Management programme

Volunteers collect and sow seeds as well as tending the beds. A 50mm layer of mulch is placed on the beds after planting to suppress weeds and help conserve moisture. Woodchip or shredded Christmas cards from Bury Council have often been the source of this mulch.

The seedlings are kept well watered for approximately three weeks after germination whilst they become established. Good construction and preparation of the beds, excellent weed control and the deep mulching strategy mean that water supplied from improvised, on-site rainwater collection and storage facilities is generally adequate and extra piped water is hardly ever needed.



Rigorous weeding is essential in the early stages

The amount of input required to manage this nursery to a good standard is around 3-4 volunteer days per week during the summer months and 2 volunteer days per week during other periods.

Results

The nursery consistently produces over 8 000 transplantable trees (up to the 600 - 900mm tall) each year. The majority of plants are supplied to local BTCV planting projects.