

100 Mile hedgerow project

Urban Tree Huggers



Starting this year, one hundred miles of hedgerow are being planted all across Kirklees by the Urban Tree Huggers, who are led by Glennis, Mary and Richard. The project is growing and gaining momentum as more people find out about it and participate.

The idea to plant one hundred miles of hedgerow came about because the Urban Tree Huggers feel that a big project like this is needed in order to take significant action against climate change and restore natural wildlife in Kirklees.

Hedges are vital for ecosystems. Not only do they protect our climate by producing oxygen and storing carbon, they also provide wildlife corridors that birds and other animals need in order to move around freely. Unfortunately, during the 20th century due to industrial farming about 50% of hedgerows were lost.

Now it is up to us to recreate this important part of the ecosystem. It is also vital that we teach our children to love and care for nature by involving them in the project. When they grow up, what we plant now will flourish into many beautiful nature reserves.

A day of hedge planting

This time of year is the best time for planting, as there is only a small timeframe from October to the beginning of March in which the plants are dormant and ready to be planted.

Want to join but not sure about how it will be?

I joined the Tree Huggers for a planting session on the 4th of February at their first site at West Nab and put together my experience for you.

On arrival, a big planting sign welcomed us at the entrance to the farm that was on the hillside looking out onto the broad landscape. The planting site at West Nab was right next to an enclosure with alpacas.

Lots of work had already been done on the previous weekend. You could see a double row of young trees in protection tubes that stretched about 70 metres from the farm entrance towards the house and another row that stretched over the hill out of sight had also been done.

Today, the group was joined by several volunteers and the landowners, Hester and Steven.

For planting the hedge, there is always a double row (see pictures) that is 50cm apart and every tree in one row has to be 40-45 cm apart. The holes had already been prepared and bamboo sticks to hold up the trees put in and young trees laid out.

As Urban Tree Huggers are a charity, they rely on donations and grants; Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Hazel, Hedge Roses and Dogwood. So far, the Woodland Trust and TCV - I Dig Trees have been very generous in their donations towards this project.

For planting, it's a case of loosening the ground with a spade and putting in the tree – careful to press the earth down firmly afterwards, because it is important for the survival of the tree that the soil reaches the roots with no air pockets. Once this is done, a plastic protection tube is put around the tree, which is necessary so deer, rabbits etc., who do like young trees as a snack, can't damage them.

Even though it was more physical effort than I had expected, by the time we took a tea break I felt quite invigorated and refreshed by the activity. In our conversations Glennis and Mary mentioned that tree planting can prove to be very good for our mental health as you naturally befriend people and the activity is in the fresh air. It is also a strong antidote against climate anxiety, which many people feel today.

I went happy and exhausted from the successful day, looking forward to the next session. As mentioned previously, the project is still young and all help in growing it is welcome – be it taking part in the planting by volunteering, spreading the word or even lending your land to pledge a hedge

How to join

Their next planting session will be in Slathwaite at Nield's J, I&N School.

Check their Facebook for all dates

Remember: Wear wellies & warm clothes. Gloves provided (but if you can, please bring own ones)

Planting on your land

If you own land, consider offering it to plant a hedgerow and be part of the 100mile project. Simply contact the Urban Tree Huggers via Facebook or Email about it. It will even have a little plaque saying it is part of the project!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kirkleesurbantreehuggers>

Email: urbantreehuggers100@gmail.com



