

Planting Living Willow

Storing Your Willow

Your willow can be left with the black strapping around it, but the bases of the willow need to be put in water (for sets the bottom is the pointed end). Your willow can be kept outdoors with its base in water for up to 10 days before planting - any longer and willow may start to root meaning new roots would get sheared off when planting!

Site Preparation

Avoid planting living willow near building foundations or drainage pipes - at least 1.5 x the maximum intended willow height away. Don't plant if the ground is frozen. Willow grows much stronger and faster without competition from weeds and grass, clear your site of large weeds, cut grass short. You can even use a weed killer or lay down mulch mat to give your willow the best chance.

Planting

If the ground is very soft willow whips can be inserted straight into the ground. However, for ease of planting and to avoid risk of snapping the whips we'd advise using a metal or wooden rod/cane to make a guide hole for each whip.

If your willow came in a kit then follow the instructions for spacing, otherwise we'd recommend a general spacing of 30cm (1ft) for a willow hedge.

The willow needs to be inserted around 25-30cm (10-12") into the ground, any less risks the willow not rooting. Sets need to be inserted until around 5cm (2 inches) is left sticking out the ground.

Once the willow is inserted you can firm the ground around it with your foot. When finished, give the willow a good watering. It should only need watering again if there is a particularly dry spell of weather.



Aftercare

Apart from an annual trim, very little maintenance is needed for willow. Weeds should be removed any surrounding grass should be kept cut short.

Willow hedges require annual pruning to remain manageable. Every year between Dec-March the willow should be heavily trimmed back. Once established it will produce over 2m of new growth each year. If your willow is planted to screen a view you can leave this trimming until March, giving you cover over the winter and within 1-2 months the willow will have grown back to provide cover.

Pests - If you have known problems with deer and rabbits in your area you may need to provide protection. Whilst the willow is establishing itself, caterpillars can be a problem. If you have large numbers eating the leaves you may need to control them. The Giant Willow Aphid is not a huge problem, although they can attract wasps. If your hedge is planted close to a home, work or play area you may want to control them.

