

Living Willow Structure Aftercare

To keep your structure looking tidy it will need yearly maintenance. Each willow whip planted has the potential to grow into a tree, so pruning is required to keep it under control.

First Season: Once the leaves have been shed you can start trimming and weaving (anytime between Dec-March). By now you will have new growth around the willow structure. This can be weaved back into the frame to create denser walls of foliage for the next year. The new growth can be either woven and twisted around the existing frame work or can be tied-in to cover the gaps. For this you will need string or more Flexi-Tie. Fatter whips especially need tying-in or they will simply pop back out again.

Tips:

1. Some of the structures were built with 'crossbeam' whips that weren't put in the ground to root. It's a good idea to weave new shoots around these and tie them in to eventually replace them with living versions.
2. The whips sticking out of the top of the structure will need to be pruned right back to the frame, otherwise they will try and grow into a tree! Smaller shoots can be weaved back down into the structure or along top cross beams.



3. For larger new shoots, be careful not to snap them off as you weave them, this can be done by taking the very top, more flexible part of the shoot and pulling this through first and letting the rest of the shoot follow.

4. If any of your whips didn't grow very strongly or didn't root at all you can use some of the new growth to replace it. Cut off the strongest new growth at the join to the frame. This can be planted in the same method as the old whips (insert into ground up to 12"/30cm)

Second Season: Growth this year will be much more vigorous, you will need to do some weaving similar to the First Season but this time in mid-summer. You will also need to prune back any shoots that get too big to weave. During the winter you can weave again to achieve a good dense wall of growth.

Third Season & Beyond: Maintenance now moves into the realms of hedge cutters or hand shears. Your structure will need a trim at least twice a year - this is best done mid-late Spring and again in the summer.

Note: The new growth at the top of the structure will need to be cut right back once a year to prevent the willow shooting up and growing into a tree.

If you have had any issues or problems please contact us so we can advise and resolve them.

Happy weaving!