

# Seed Collection & Propagation



**Belfast Hills**  
Partnership

**Belfast**  
**One Million**  
**Trees**

# Tree Provenance & Benefits of Propagation

A tree's provenance - where its seed source comes from - is very important. We plant native trees that are UKISG certified. This means that they are UK & Irish sourced & grown. This avoids importing trees which may bring in pests or diseases, & also means that the trees will have the best chance of thriving here.

It's best to collect seed from long established woodlands as the trees are well adapted to local conditions & have the best chance of survival. Places around Belfast such as Cave Hill, Belvoir Forest & along the Lagan tow path are good spots to start.



We encourage only collecting seed from trees that are native to here. These will be most suited to our climate, growing conditions, & of most benefit to our wildlife.



The best time to collect most tree seeds is usually September-November. Make sure to only collect a small proportion of seeds & leave plenty for our wildlife to feed on.





# Growing Trees from Seed

<b>Oak</b>		Place acorns in water & dispose of ones that float. Plant out the rest in a single layer 5cm down. Cover 3-4" of extra soil. Remove extra soil in March after frost.
<b>Hazel</b>		Place nuts in water & dispose of ones that float. Plant out the rest in a single layer 5cm down. Vulnerable to predation. Can stratify over winter & sow in Spring.
<b>Hawthorn</b>		Pick Sept-Oct when berries ripe. Soak berries to extract seed & then stratify in compost over Winter. Sow out in spring in a single layer.
<b>Elder</b>		Collect Sept-Oct when berries ripe. Soak berries to remove flesh & release seeds. Sow in Spring. Can also take hardwood cuttings in Winter.
<b>Rowan</b>		Collect Sept when berries fully ripe. Mash berries to remove seeds from flesh & stratify over winter. Sow in spring approx 3cm down.
<b>Guelder Rose</b>		Collect Sept-Oct when berries are red & soft. Extract seeds & stratify over winter. Sow in spring.
<b>Willow</b>		Take hardwood cuttings in winter & plant directly in the ground to take root. Cut horizontally below a bud, cut off shoot tip at an angle & trim to approx. 20cm.

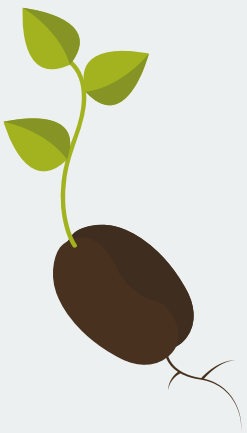
For further expert guidance, as well as tips for other species like Crab Apple & Blackthorn, check out the guide from The Conservation Volunteers which is listed at the end of this guide.

# Things to Think About

Consider covering beds with a fine mesh to prevent seeds (Hazel & Oak) being eaten by birds/mice. Be sure to water them during dry spells &, during summer months, regularly weed them so that they're not competing for water or nutrients.



After growing your saplings for a year (or two) they'll be ready for planting out! As they'll be bareroot, it's best to lift & plant them while they're dormant in winter, usually between November & March. Once dug out, plant straight away or bag & plant within a few days before the roots dry out. Don't leave roots exposed during frost.



Make sure you have the landowner's permission, & that the ground is suitable before you plant. Places with important habitat like species rich grassland, heathland or bog are not suitable for tree planting.



There are lots of other things to consider before planting out your trees. Check out our other short guide, 'Planting & Aftercare of Trees' for further advice

# Why Plant Trees?

- ✓ To reduce carbon & tackle climate change
- ✓ To improve & support biodiversity
- ✓ To mitigate flooding across the city
- ✓ To provide shade & urban cooling
- ✓ To provide privacy & shelter
- ✓ To improve soil health & structure
- ✓ To improve air quality
- ✓ To improve physical & mental health & wellbeing

## One Million Trees

Belfast City Council's One Million Trees project is a major programme to support climate adaptation across the city & aims to plant one million native trees across Belfast by 2035. Belfast City Council is working with partners such as Woodland Trust, Belfast Hills Partnership & The Conservation Volunteers, among others, to achieve this.

For more information please follow the relevant links below:

For further advice on seed collection & propagation, as well as general planting

<https://treegrowing.tcv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/handbook.pdf>

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/)

Belfast Hills Partnership Woodland Officer:  
[woodland@belfasthills.org](mailto:woodland@belfasthills.org) 028 9060 3466

<https://belfasthills.org/projects/woodland-project/>



SCAN ME



SCAN ME

