

Tree Planting Information 2026: Wild Service Tree, Spindle, Crab Apple & Holly

We're interested in the reasons you have taken part in our Free Tree Scheme – please get in touch and tell us why trees matter to you:

rosliston@southderbyshire.gov.uk

Your new trees are two years old and approximately 30-50cm high. Treat them gently, as rough handling or being dropped can shock the roots, then it will take the trees longer to get established.

When you get your trees home, store them somewhere cool, outside. Do not let the roots dry out, so keep them covered. They should be planted within a couple of weeks of receiving them. If you need to store them for longer then give them a temporary home in a pot and remember to transplant them during the dormant season (Nov to March).

If you have a small garden or patio you can put each in a large pot permanently. The size of the pot will determine how big the tree gets, as once the roots have filled the pot the tree will stop growing. If you put your pot over soil, the roots will grow down through holes at the bottom of the pot into the ground so do be careful!

General planting advice:

- If planting directly into the ground, check distance from your own and your neighbour's property
- Make sure your hole is big enough for all the roots to fit in comfortably
- Once planted, press the soil down firmly around the stem, making sure the roots are fully covered but that all of the stem is above the soil level
- If the soil is dry, water the tree when you have planted it.

For the first couple of years:

- Weed carefully around the base of the tree
- Water the tree during long spells of warm dry weather

Safe Planting distances (or put the tree in a large pot!)

Safe planting distances depend on the depth of your foundations (and your neighbour's) and the type of soil. Shallow foundations eg for conservatories and clay soil require the greatest minimum planting distance, making sure the tree is *as far from a building as it will eventually grow in height*.

If your foundations are deeper than 1m, or if you intend to prune the tree to restrict its height, you can plant closer to buildings than the recommended minimum distances.

Recommended minimum planting distance from buildings: see *tree listings overleaf*

Please note: you can plant as close to buildings as you wish, as long as the trees are in pots and the pots are on a paved surface so they can't root out of the pot!

Source for information and images: Cheviot Trees, Woodgrow Horticulture Limited, the Woodland Trust and other advisory websites

We'd love to know how you get on with your trees!

Please send us your photos

Instagram [@environmentaleducationproject](https://www.instagram.com/environmentaleducationproject) <https://www.instagram.com/environmentaleducationproject>

Facebook: Environmental Education Project at Rosliston Forestry Centre SDDC

<https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentalEducationProject/>

LinkedIn: Environmental Education Project at Rosliston Forestry Centre SDDC

[Environmental Education Project South Derbyshire](#)

Information about this year's trees:

WILD SERVICE TREE *Sorbus torminalis*



The Wild Service Tree is a beautiful tall tree, growing up to 25 metres in height, so only suitable for large gardens.

It is a fairly rare tree, often an indicator of ancient woodlands. Its common name is "checkers", which we think comes from the distinctive checked patterning on the bark. The berries are brown and oval shaped and can be used in some woodland recipes. As with all native woodland trees it benefits garden wildlife too.

We have included it in the scheme this year as we'd like to see more of them in the South Derbyshire & National Forest area.

Photo: C. Roger Butterfield

Safe planting distance from buildings: Wild Service Tree = at least 15metres

COMMON SPINDLE *Euonymus europaeus*



Spindle is a small deciduous tree, usually reaching 3 to 6 m tall. The flowers are small, yellowish green and grow in clusters in late spring. They are pollinated by insects.

Spindle is at its most colourful in autumn and really stands out. The fruit is bright reddish purple or pink in colour and approximately 1 to 1.5 cm wide.

When ripe, the four lobes split open to reveal the bright orange seeds (not edible for humans!). In autumn, the leaves turn a beautiful bright red colour.

Safe planting distance from buildings: Spindle = 3 metres

CRAB APPLE *Malus sylvestris*



The crab apple is a medium-sized pretty deciduous tree that grows to a height of around 5m. White flowers open in clusters during April- May, followed by small hard edible fruits during autumn. The apples are too sour to eat raw, but they can be made into jelly or added to other fruit when jam-making to improve the 'set'.

It is a good tree for wildlife, as bees and other insects visit the flowers and birds and small mammals will eat the fruit.

Safe planting distance from buildings: Crab Apple = 5-7metres

HOLLY *Ilex aquifolium*

The holly is an attractive evergreen garden tree which can reach up to 20m in height, so is classed a medium to large tree. However, it is slow growing and easy to trim to the size or shape you want.



Trees are either male or female – with berries appearing in the autumn on the female trees (but only if they have been pollinated by a male tree growing nearby).

We can't tell whether the young trees we receive are male or female. This means we can't tell if the ones you receive will have berries or not!

Safe planting distance from buildings: Holly = 7 metres

Photos: unless stated they are edited from our own stock, Cheviot Trees and the Woodland Trust