

Hedgerow Management Cycle

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Abstract

Hedgerows are as dynamic as the plants that make them, which means it would be fighting a losing battle if we tried to keep them the same size and shape forever. Instead, work out where the hedge is on the management cycle and work according to that. The ultimate goal in hedge management is to create a thick, dense hedgerow. These are the hedges that are most beneficial to landowners as well as for nature.

When we cut hedges at the same point year after year, it will produce fewer flowers and fruits for wildlife, it will lose its lower branches and the hedge will become tall and at risk of invasion, opening up gaps and eventually even failure. Trimming to a slightly higher and wider point each year will help prevent this, and the hedge can be re-shaped when needed.

However the hedge is managed each year, at some time the lower parts of the hedge vegetation will become thin and the hedge will need more dramatic action like laying or even coppicing. This only needs to be done every 40+ years to keep the hedge healthy and valuable for our wildlife. This is shown in more detail on the hedgerow management cycle plan.

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Conflicts of interest