

Living Willow Setts - Planting Guide

Provided by Kings Barn Farm

1. Living willow setts grow in most soils but avoid free draining soils as willow prefers ground that's wet / moist.
2. Avoid planting living willow near building foundations or drainage pipes - at least 1.5 x the maximum intended hedge height away.
3. Plant willow at the right time of the year when the living willow is dormant— Beginning of December to the end of March.
4. Plant the willow setts as soon as you can after delivery.
5. Don't plant if the ground is frozen.
6. Living willow setts grow much better without competition ! So clear existing vegetation to establish a clear border of at least 0.25m from the willow setts, using Roundup or similar. For a more eco friendly method lay a mulch sheet on the planting area to kill off the vegetation. It's easier to lay the mulch mat if you mow the area beforehand.
7. It's not essential to use a mulch mat, in fact it's easier to plant the living willow setts without a mulch mat getting in the way.
8. If you do use a mulch mat, use pegs to hold the mulch mat in place or 'slit' the edge of the mat into the ground using a spade or edging tool.
9. Plant each willow sett 300m apart.
10. A metal spike fractionally larger in diameter than the living willow sett is the best method for making a hole for planting. We supply a tool for this purpose which makes the job easier especially for a large number of setts.
11. To plant the living willow setts, push the metal spike 200mm (8") into the ground, and as soon as you withdraw it, insert the

willow sett. This is especially true if you're making a hole through the mulch mat with the spike as it's all too easy to 'lose' the hole under the matting.

12. Don't slit the mulch mat as the extra gap you create will only help grass and weeds to get a hold right next to the willow.
13. Insert the living willow setts leaving 50mm (2") remaining above the ground.
14. IMPORTANT - plant the willow setts with the slanted cut end in the ground. The square cut end needs to be visible above the ground and it's good practice to go back and check they're the right way up.
15. Don't force living willow setts into the hole as it may damage the bark and decrease the chances of success. Use a larger diameter spike if necessary or 'wiggle' the spike around to enlarge the hole. Ensure the hole is not collapsing as the spike is removed and that the willow sett is not being inserted at an angle.
16. Tread the soil in around the willow to ensure the rod is bedded in. If you are using a mulch mat you won't be able to see if the sett is a snug fit in the hole or not, so tread in regardless.
17. Give the living willow setts a good watering after planting.
18. Cover the ground either side of the living willow hedge with mulch to keep the moisture in and to keep the weeds at bay. Even covering a mulch mat with mulch, helps and improves the aesthetics.
19. One other way of planting willow setts if you don't have a suitable planting spike, is to plant the willow using a spade to slit open the ground. The willow sett can then be inserted easily. Tread in the soil around the sett, making sure 50mm (2") on the willow sett is still above the ground. Mulch mat can still be used by laying it over the willow setts and using a sharp knife or a pair of scissors, cut the mat where the willow setts are holding the mat up.

Planting willow is easy as long as you are careful. It's immensely rewarding seeing the results of all your effort in the spring as the setts start sprouting. Please see our guide on how to care for willow to ensure your work results in healthy and long lasting willow hedging.