

The Hedgerow Management Cycle

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HEDGELINK









































































Tree reached
max size, rings
now regular size

Very dense
central core
of 71 rings
when hedge
was cut until
WW II

Period of rapid
growth once
hedgelaying ceases

1940

1869

1875

1869 central ring very
large suggesting
growing from a large
rootstock, probably
meaning regrowth
from copiced hedge

First seven rings
large, then thin
suggesting left 7
years before first
cutting

HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT CYCLE

- **1** Heavily over-trimmed with many gaps and sparse stems, their bases gnarled or rotting. May be invaded by elder, sycamore or other invasive species.
- **ACTION** Coppice and re-plant gaps. Grub out or poison invasive species.

- **2** Over-trimmed, infrequent stems too far apart to be 'let up' for laying perhaps evidence of laying in the past. Hard knuckle trim at trim line, shrubs developing mushroom shaped growth form.
- **ACTION** Coppice and re-plant gaps.

- **3** Over-trimmed, frequent stems. Stems still healthy but require more height. Hard knuckle may be starting to form at trim line.
- **ACTION** Allow incremental height gain at each cut or 'let up' up for laying.

- **4** Recently layed, coppiced, or planted hedgerow.
- **ACTION** Trim lightly for first few years, then cut on a two or preferably three or more year rotation, allowing height to increase a little each time.

- **5** Healthy, dense hedgerow with frequent stems and more then 2m in height.
- **ACTION** Trim on a two or preferably three or more year rotation. Raise cutting height if hard knuckle forming at trim line.

- **6** a) Hedgerow more than 3m high and trimmed on rotation. b) May also be non-intervention hedge, having intentionally been left un-trimmed for several years.
- **ACTION** a) Enter hedge into non-intervention period. b) Re-shape with circular saw then return to rotational trimming or non-intervention period.

- **7** Hedgerow with frequent healthy stems more than 4m high
- **ACTION** Lay or reduce height and width with circular saw blade. Would also respond well to coppicing.

- **8** Mature tall hedgerow with spreading tops. Stems still healthy (although they may be infrequent) and too large for laying.
- **ACTION** Lay if possible . Or either reduce in height and width with circular saw blade or coppice and re-plant gaps if necessary.

- **9** Over mature hedgerow with tops dying back, collapse possible. Perhaps becoming dominated by tree species such as oak, ash or sycamore.
- **ACTION** Coppice, retaining a few selected healthy trees and plant up gaps.

- **10** Hedge developed into line of trees
- **ACTION** Manage as a line of trees, if necessary undertake selective thinning. If shrubs still exist beneath trees raise height of tree canopy to allow in more light.

1

Heavily over-trimmed with many gaps and sparse stems, their bases gnarled or rotting. May be invaded by elder, sycamore or other invasive species.

ACTION

Coppice and re-plant gaps. Grub out or poison invasive species



3

Over-trimmed, frequent stems. Stems still healthy but require more height. Hard knuckle may be starting to form at trim line.

ACTION Allow incremental height gain at each cut or 'let up' up for laying.



5

- Healthy, dense hedgerow with frequent stems and more than 2m in height.
- ACTION Trim on a two or preferably three or more year rotation. Raise cutting height if hard knuckle forming at trim line.
-



6

- a) Hedgerow more than 3m high and trimmed on rotation.
b) May also be non-intervention hedge, having intentionally been left un-trimmed for several years.
- ACTION
 - a) Trim lightly or enter hedge into non-intervention period.
 - b) Re-shape with circular saw then return to rotational trimming or non-intervention period
- .



7

- Hedgerow with frequent healthy stems more than 4m high
- ACTION... Lay or reduce height and width with circular saw blade. Would also respond well to coppicing



9

- **Mature tall hedgerow with spreading tops. Stems still healthy (although they may be infrequent) and too large for laying.**
- **ACTION Lay if possible, or either reduce in height and width with circular saw blade or coppice and re-plant gaps if necessary.**



10

- Hedge developed into line of trees.
- ACTION
- Manage as line of trees, if necessary undertake selective thinning. If shrubs still exist beneath trees raise height of tree canopy to allow in more light



Over Management and Neglect



























Recommendations

- 1) That Policy recognises the life cycle approach and encourages the rejuvenation of hedgerows.
- 2) That funds for rejuvenation are firstly focused on hedgerows approaching each extreme of the life cycle scale ie over trimmed and neglected.
- 3) That any funding of specific trimming regimes (2 or 3 year cutting) also recognises that hedges must slowly develop and not stay at the same height for ever.
- 4) That the concept of life cycle management is used to educate and communicate with landowners to help stop the decline in condition of hedgerows.

