

Help Grow Trees for the Future: Constructing a Tree Nursery

There is a nationwide push to plant more trees and Parishes and Community groups around the country have been actively doing so with the help of various organisations such as the Woodland Trust. However, there is a shortage of tree seedlings and whips so communities are being encouraged to grow their own trees!

Yealm Estuary to Moor (YEM) Wildlife Corridor Project ([link to website](#)) involves creating more natural spaces along the river catchment including planting trees. We are therefore working with community groups along the river Yealm (Newton and Noss, Wembury, Brixton, Yealmpton, Cornwood and Sparkwell) to grow trees ahead of needing tree samplings and whips to plant out. To help communities get going we have produced simple guides on growing trees from seed. The first is about collecting and growing seed and this one on constructing a raised bed to bring seedlings on to a size ready for planting out in their final location. Both guides also provide information on other sources great advice.

Tree seedlings can be grown on in cellular root trainers in a protected area. This a simple and convenient system but as is very compact and requires care to ensure they don't dry out or get mildew on the leaves if too wet. Packs of root trainers may be obtained from Devon Wildlife Trust (rcotgreave@devonwildlifetrust.org) or Moor Trees (<https://moortrees.org>)



Seedlings being grown in root trainers by WRT (Photo P.Brown)

Alternatively seedlings can be grown in a raised bed which may need occasional weeding but is less likely to dry out, and can be kept moist with a low volume “leaky hose” on a timer.



Raised bed at Noss Mayo
(Photo P Brown)

This raised bed was made from pressure treated, rough cut timbers, 24M long by 2M wide (so that the centre of the bed can be reached from either side), held in position by 45cms long posts. The bed has a stock and deer proof with fencing around it all.



Planting out and protecting seedlings (photo WRT)

The seedlings should be transplanted and well watered in and protected from birds and mice. Some seeds can also be germinated in raised beds but DWT warns about mice pinching the seed such as acorns and hazel so a protective netting is recommended. The net can be supported hoops made of flexible plastic piping.

Further excellent guides and videos are available on line:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtmRdzb5UdQ>

<https://fellowshipofthetrees.org/ctnc/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmnUIKWkHXRUzCDjHNOwfg>