

FREE HEDGEROW PLANTS, CANES AND SPIRAL GUARDS FROM PTES

Planting a new hedge this winter or rejuvenating an old one? The **Hedgerows for Dormice** team at People's Trust for Endangered Species **may** be able to help with free plants, canes and spiral guards for planting or stakes and binders for hedge-laying. The **Hedgerows for Dormice Capital Costs Scheme** is available to landowners, land managers and farmers who are planting a hedge which will benefit dormice or other endangered species by providing habitat or improving connectivity, and who agree to manage their hedge in a wildlife-friendly way. Get in touch to see if you qualify.

The Hedgerows for Dormice project seeks to re-establish hedgerows where they have disappeared and to encourage management to bring hedgerows into good condition for dormice in particular and wildlife in general.

We have been mapping hedgerows between dormouse woodland sites and surveying their condition to identify potential priority corridors. Where hedgerows have been removed or are not in good condition, we are working with local partners (NE, FWAG, Wildlife Trusts) to offer advice on farm management and entry into Environmental Stewardship. Our Capital Costs Scheme aims to help farmers who aren't in Stewardship, who want to undertake one-off capital works which are not covered by the Entry Level Scheme, or to enhance their planting under Higher Level Scheme. In some instances we coordinate conservation volunteers to plant and gap-up hedges by planting, laying and coppicing. We also aim to counteract a culture of hedgerow tidiness by a highly visible PTES 'Hedgerow Quality Award' to land-managers who manage their hedgerows for wildlife.

In the UK hedgerows are iconic symbols which reflect our culture, history and archaeology - recording the patterns of human settlement and landscape changes over time, and marking territorial boundaries, as well as providing ecosystem services such as flood defence and stock-proof barriers. But hedgerows also represent a vital component of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes: providing an important food source, as well as acting as



wildlife corridors allowing dispersal between isolated habitats. However since the Second World War, agricultural intensification and the loss of traditional management practices have been key drivers in the massive loss and deterioration of hedgerows in Britain, which in turn has had a dramatic impact on many of our native wildlife species. Whilst the length of hedgerows in the UK has stabilised, only 22% of managed hedgerows are in good condition.

Once widespread throughout much of the country, Britain's only native dormouse species, the hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), is now rare and vulnerable to extinction. Hazel dormouse distribution has generally been reduced to the southern parts of England and Wales due to changes in woodland management, farming practices, loss of hedgerows and the fragmentation of woodlands. There has been a resulting 64% decline of dormouse occurrence in hedgerows since the late 1970s. Hedgerows historically linked large areas of woodland, whilst supporting populations of dormice in their own right and their decline has had catastrophic effects on the species which depend on them for survival.

For further details about the Capital Costs Scheme contact Jim Jones, hedgerows for Dormice Project Officer at jim@ptes.org or 02074984533. See www.ptes.org/hedgerows for further details about the project.

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