

INTRODUCTION

Parkland trees are attractive and traditional features of the Welsh countryside. Most long lived tree species can be grown as parkland trees providing a wide range from which to choose (see box 1 for suggestions). However there certain species which are unsuitable, these include: birches, poplars (except the native black poplar), willows (unless managed as pollards) and alders.

MANAGEMENT

Parkland trees are more vulnerable to windblow than woodland trees, but healthy trees with undamaged root systems will survive for centuries. Care taken in the early years will ensure a stable and long lived tree. A small transplant left undisturbed in its final location will produce a better root system than a pot-grown standard tree. Although standard trees produce instant results, they are expensive and less windfirm than transplants.

Newly planted trees need protection from grazing and from competing vegetation. If the parkland is grazed by livestock it is worth building a post and rail enclosure 8 feet (2.4m) square around the tree, primarily to prevent horses and cattle from reaching it, but also to prevent stock from compacting the soil around the tree which will inhibit its growth.

The tree itself is best protected against rabbits and voles with a plastic tree guard. Grass growing around the young tree will compete for moisture and nutrients. It is best controlled by mulch mats, herbicides or hand weeding.

If standard trees are to be used, staking and tying will be necessary. They are also particularly vulnerable to damage by grey squirrels, which must be controlled by trapping or shooting. Species like walnut and sycamore are particularly susceptible, but all species are vulnerable.

Maintaining parkland trees in good health is straightforward. Avoid ploughing or any other cultivation under the canopy and maintain the post and rail stockade to prevent compaction and erosion around the buttress. Eventually age and the elements will damage the trees but unless they are dangerous they should not be felled. Hollow stag headed trees can live on for centuries providing interesting form, nest holes for birds and they support many lichens.

FRUITING TREES

Fruiting varieties of many species can be grown as long lived standards in parkland but it is important to select the correct variety and rootstock.

Many trees are produced specifically for small gardens by selection or by grafting on to dwarfing rootstocks. While these may be highly productive at a very young age they will never grow into standard trees.

Suitable fruiting trees include: mulberry (white mulberries grow into the largest trees and are cold tolerant.); pear (grown on seedling rootstock); apple (choose varieties suited to the locality on standard rootstocks for dessert, culinary and cider apples); plums and damsons (selected varieties).



Fig 1: Beech parkland trees

Box 1 – suggested species for use as parkland trees

Native broadleaves: oak, ash, beech, lime and black poplar

Other broadleaves: - horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, sycamore and walnut (European & American)

Conifers: - cedars (not western red cedar), Wellingtonia and some pines



Fig 2: Pollarded willow