

Biodiversity-promoting measures: landscape structures



Insect Responsible
Sourcing Regions

Planting and maintenance of hedges

Description of the measure

The maintenance of existing hedges is particularly important in order to preserve their ecological functions. If there is little capacity, it is better to maintain existing hedges instead of planting new ones.

Maintenance includes sectional (max. 1/3 of the hedge) pruning every 3-5 years, 20-30 cm above the ground with smooth diagonal cuts in the winter half-year. Overhanging trees can be left out and the vigour (fast, weak) of the trees and shrubs should be taken into account in the severity of the pruning. The margin must be included in hedge maintenance with mowing (not mulching) every 1-3 years.

At best, **new planting** should take place parallel to slopes running in the direction of agricultural work, field margins or ditches. When selecting the species of trees and shrubs, the site conditions with regard to soil and climate (soil acid, calcareous, etc.) must be taken into account.

The following points apply to new planting: 2-3 row structure; total width approx. 10 m, incl. 2 m wide margin on both sides; group planting of the same species (3-5 pieces); wind permeability of the hedge 40-50%; bushy planting (consequently longer hedge edge); 1-2 tree species, up to 8 shrub species (autochthonous native species).

Effects on biodiversity

Insects, small game, birds, reptiles, amphibians: hedges are important elements of the landscape. They provide nesting sites, breeding and refuge opportunities, are stepping stones between larger biotopes and stabilise the ecosystem.

Other positive effects

Hedges provide erosion protection on embankments and stream banks, regulate the water balance and contribute to reducing or avoiding chemical inputs into water bodies. In addition, they regulate the climate, provide wind and visual protection and promote biological plant protection.

Further recommendations

The protection of farmland birds (e.g. skylark, curlew) should be taken into account when planning hedgerows, as conservation objectives may collide here. Within protected areas, financial support should be clarified.

Further reading

Specialist information on hedges:

https://www.lrasha.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Dateien/LEV/LEV_Fachinformation_Hecken.pdf

Sources

www.lrasha.de/landschaftserhaltungsverband

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