



Hedgelaying Skills - Introduction to Hedgelaying

At a glance...

Customised Provision

Duration Notes:

Delivery Method: Practical Observation

Recognised by: National Hedgelaying Society

Introduction

The National Hedgelaying Society offers training and assessment in hedgerow management. This 3-day training course is designed to provide beginners with the basic knowledge and skills needed to carry out the traditional craft of hedgelaying

Overview in brief

The demand for training in the craft of hedge laying is increasing.

A traditionally laid and sensitively managed hedge allows farming and conservation interests to meet; for the farmer a natural barrier to confine and shelter stock is erected, whilst for the conservationist, a wildlife habitat is created.

Government commitment to hedgerow protection was included in the 1990 Environment White Paper, and appropriate legislation is included in the Environment Bill. Hedgerow Protection.

Encouragement for new hedge planting and management through Environmental and Countryside Stewardship Schemes has led to an increased call for hedge laying and traditional craft skills.

The demand for hedge laying craft is no longer confined to agriculture; private estates, parks and other public areas, nature reserves, schools and gardens are increasingly employing this traditional skill.

The finer details

In addition to the delivery of training in basic hedgelaying techniques, the course offers an optional assessment of the skills learnt on the course. This basic level assessment is completed as part of a beginner training course. An Assessment Certificate confirming the standard



achieved at the beginner training course will be awarded for candidates that attain a pass level. This is a stand-alone assessment and does not form part of the National Hedgelaying Society Accreditation Scheme. If you would like to increase your proficiency in hedgelaying or you are part of a traditional skills training programme, you can progress to the National Hedgelaying Society Bronze Accreditation by completing further training and assessment . The National Hedgelaying Society has affiliated groups throughout the country who offer beginner training in Hedgelaying. To find out the location of your nearest training provider and to apply for an “Introduction to Hedgelaying” Training Course please contact the National Hedgelaying Society Secretary who will put you in touch with your local Hedgelaying Group and offer information on training courses taking place at locations throughout the country .



Further information on Hedgelaying, technical workbooks and training course dates are available on the Society’s website www.hedgelaying.org.uk.

National Hedgelaying

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Who should attend?

Open to anyone with an interest in traditional countryside crafts and those looking for a career in land- based skills.

What will be covered?

The description below gives an overview of the elements that will be covered during the training. More detailed information is available in the Hedgelaying Technical Guide available from the National Hedgelaying Society.

1. Pleach

- Starting the cut at the correct height for the size of the stem.
- Smooth finish to the cut with no ‘hacking’





2. Heel

- All heels taken off
- Heel taken of low to the ground
- The cut sloping away from the pleacher (varies from style to style)
- Smoothness of cut with no damage to the Bark below.

3. Stakes Crooks and Binders

Stakes-

- Stakes chosen suitable for the style and of correct quality.
- Stakes sharpened at the thick end and placed thick end in the ground
- Stakes in a uniform pattern, at the correct angle and trimmed to the correct height above the binders
- Stakes forming as straight a line as possible within the hedge as dictated by the style. Correctly and evenly spaced.

Binders

Started at the correct end and woven in the correct manner for the style

- Finished height level and correct.
- Binders inserted behind each stake correctly and not protruding.
- Not cracked or damaged during the trimming of the stakes.

4 . Appearance -true to style

Guidance sheets on each of the regional styles is available from the National Hedgelaying Society.

- The finished height and width of hedge generally even and true to style
- Bindings, if used, running generally level with correct placement within the stakes
- Stakes or Crooks placed well, at correct angle, firm and holding the hedge well
- Styles with a Back of hedge: Even brash along the back of the hedge showing few holes. Adequate 'flying brush' for appropriate styles
- Styles where hedge is same on both sides: Even finish with both sides matching and built to a high standard
- Overall appearance, balanced, neat and well built

5. Tools

- Correct use of tools . Knowledge of tool care

6. Questions and Answers -



- Be able to explain the basic principles of hedgelaying, reasons for the style, and how to maintain the hedge once it has been laid.



7. Health and safety

- Work area safe and clear of brash
- Correct PPE
- Awareness of possible risks
- Good hand eye co-ordination and safe working practices.
- Demonstrate good working practice.
- Not cutting in sharply and then splitting stem downwards in a long tongue.
- Thinning the pleach down in an even manner with no kicking back into an open mouth

Other areas of interest

Progression to the National Hedgelaying Society Accreditation Scheme levels via Courses and Assessments offered at:

- Bronze - Competent level
- Silver - Proficient level
- Gold - Advanced level

Other Interest - Traditional Boundary restoration e.g. dry stone walling

