

THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE

Planting Guide

Official Publication Library

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Controlled Publication Notice

This publication forms part of the Official Publication Library of THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED.

It provides recommended planting guidance for landowners and should be read alongside the Founding Charter, Constitution, Estate Standards Manual, Estate Master Planning Standard and Food Forest Management Lease.

This publication promotes good horticultural practice and long-term stewardship. It should not replace professional advice where specialist knowledge is required.

Publication Purpose

The purpose of this publication is to establish the planting philosophy and recommended horticultural practices of The Edible Forest Estate.

The objective of the Estate is not simply to grow food.

The objective is to create healthy, productive and resilient landscapes that improve with every generation.

Every planting decision should seek to improve:

- Soil
- Biodiversity
- Food production
- Wildlife habitat
- Water retention
- Landscape quality
- Long-term sustainability

Trees planted today may still be producing food more than one hundred years from now.

Every planting decision should therefore be made with future generations in mind.

1. Stewardship Before Planting

Successful Food Forests begin long before the first tree is planted.

They begin with the understanding that we are not simply planting crops.

We are creating living ecosystems.

The Edible Forest Estate encourages every landowner to think beyond immediate harvests and instead consider how each decision may benefit the Estate decades into the future.

Ask yourself:

- Will this improve the soil?
- Will this support wildlife?
- Will this increase biodiversity?
- Will future generations benefit?
- Will this leave the Estate in better condition?

If the answer is yes, it is probably the right decision.

2. The Estate Planting Philosophy

The Estate promotes planting that is:

- Diverse
- Sustainable
- Productive
- Beautiful
- Environmentally responsible

- Low maintenance
- Long-lived

The objective is not maximum short-term production.

The objective is exceptional long-term production.

Healthy ecosystems consistently outperform exhausted ecosystems.

3. Soil Comes First

Healthy soil produces healthy plants.

Healthy plants produce healthy food.

Everything begins beneath the surface.

Good soil should contain:

- organic matter;
- earthworms;
- beneficial fungi;
- healthy microorganisms;
- adequate moisture;
- good structure;
- abundant life.

Avoid practices that unnecessarily damage soil.

Instead, encourage soil regeneration through:

- compost;
- natural mulches;
- leaf litter;
- green manures;
- minimal disturbance;
- natural decomposition.

The Estate seeks to leave its soils healthier every year.

4. Understanding the Food Forest

A Food Forest is designed to mimic the structure of a natural woodland whilst producing food.

Rather than relying upon a single crop, multiple layers work together.

Typical layers include:

- Canopy trees
- Small fruit trees
- Shrubs
- Herbaceous plants
- Ground cover
- Root crops
- Climbers

Every layer performs a purpose.

Together they create a productive ecosystem requiring less intervention than conventional agriculture.

5. Choosing the Right Trees

Trees should be selected for:

- suitability to local conditions;
- disease resistance;
- longevity;
- biodiversity value;
- food production;
- resilience.

Priority should normally be given to species capable of thriving naturally within local environmental conditions.

Healthy trees require less maintenance than unsuitable trees.

6. Heritage and Historic Varieties

The Estate strongly encourages the preservation of historic and heritage varieties.

Many traditional varieties possess characteristics developed over centuries of cultivation.

These include:

- flavour;
- resilience;
- local adaptation;
- genetic diversity.

The continued preservation of heritage varieties helps maintain agricultural diversity for future generations.

Where appropriate, open-pollinated and seed-saving varieties should be encouraged.

7. Biodiversity

Nature performs many tasks without human intervention.

Pollinators.

Predators.

Fungi.

Birds.

Soil organisms.

Every species contributes to a healthy ecosystem.

Avoid monocultures wherever possible.

Plant diversity increases resilience.

A diverse Food Forest is generally healthier, more attractive and more productive.

8. Supporting Pollinators

Food production depends upon pollination.

The Estate encourages planting that supports:

- bees;
- butterflies;
- hoverflies;
- moths;
- other beneficial insects.

Flowering species should be selected to provide nectar throughout the growing season.

Native wildflowers should be encouraged where appropriate.

9. Water

Water is one of the Estate's most valuable resources.

Planting should aim to:

- reduce runoff;
- improve infiltration;
- retain moisture;
- protect water quality;
- reduce erosion.

Healthy soil naturally stores more water than degraded soil.

Water conservation begins with good soil management.

10. Planting Trees

When planting:

- choose healthy stock;
- prepare the ground appropriately;
- avoid planting too deeply;
- water thoroughly after planting;
- apply mulch;
- protect against animal damage where necessary.

Avoid compacting soil around newly planted trees.

Young trees require time to establish.

11. Mulching

Mulching provides numerous benefits.

It helps:

- suppress weeds;
- retain moisture;
- improve soil;
- reduce temperature extremes;
- encourage soil organisms.

Organic mulches are preferred.

Suitable materials include:

- wood chips;
- compost;
- leaf mould;
- straw;
- well-rotted organic matter.

Avoid allowing mulch to rest directly against tree trunks.

12. Pruning

Pruning should be undertaken only where beneficial.

Good pruning:

- improves structure;
- removes damaged wood;
- promotes healthy growth;
- improves access to light.

Poor pruning can permanently damage trees.

When in doubt, prune less rather than more.

13. Wildlife

Wildlife should generally be regarded as an asset rather than a problem.

Many species naturally assist by:

- pollinating flowers;
- controlling pests;
- improving soils;
- dispersing seed.

The Estate encourages coexistence wherever reasonably practicable.

14. Dead Wood

Dead wood performs valuable ecological functions.

Where safe to do so, dead wood should be retained.

It provides habitat for:

- fungi;
- insects;
- birds;
- mammals.

Only remove dead wood where safety or Estate operations require.

15. Invasive Species

Non-native invasive species should be identified and managed promptly.

Early action generally prevents larger problems developing.

Where uncertainty exists, seek advice before removing established vegetation.

16. Fertilisers

The Estate encourages building naturally fertile soil.

Priority should be given to:

- compost;
- organic matter;
- green manures;
- natural nutrient cycling.

Artificial fertilisers should not become a substitute for healthy soil.

Healthy ecosystems naturally recycle nutrients.

17. Chemicals

Chemical use should be minimised wherever reasonably practicable.

Natural alternatives should always be considered first.

Protecting beneficial insects and soil life is an important Estate objective.

18. Harvesting

Harvest should be undertaken carefully.

Avoid unnecessary damage to:

- trees;
- branches;
- roots;
- surrounding vegetation.

Produce should be harvested when ripe and handled responsibly.

Food Forest harvest arrangements operate in accordance with the Rule of Thirds.

19. Common Mistakes

Common mistakes include:

- planting unsuitable species;
- planting too closely together;
- neglecting soil quality;
- over-pruning;
- failing to mulch;
- poor watering during establishment;
- insufficient protection from grazing animals.

Patience remains one of the most valuable gardening skills.

20. Thinking in Centuries

Most gardens are planned for years.

Food Forests should be planned for generations.

Many of the trees planted today will outlive us.

Future landowners may harvest fruit from trees planted by people they never met.

Likewise, future generations will inherit the consequences of every poor decision we make today.

Stewardship requires us to think beyond our own lifetime.

21. Suggested Species

The following are examples only.

Fruit Trees

- Apple
- Pear
- Plum
- Cherry
- Damson
- Quince

- Medlar

Nut Trees

- Hazel
- Walnut
- Sweet Chestnut

Shrubs

- Blackcurrant
- Redcurrant
- Gooseberry
- Raspberry
- Blackberry

Climbers

- Grapevine
- Hardy Kiwi

Ground Cover

- Wild Strawberry
- Clover
- Creeping Thyme

Nitrogen Fixers

- Alder
- Sea Buckthorn
- Autumn Olive (where appropriate)

22. Continuous Improvement

Every Estate will continue to evolve.

The Estate encourages landowners to:

- observe;
- learn;
- experiment responsibly;
- share knowledge;
- improve future planting.

Good ideas should be shared.

Successful planting techniques should become part of future Estate knowledge.

Related Publications

This publication should be read alongside:

- TEFE-CH-001 — Founding Charter
 - TEFE-CO-001 — Constitution
 - TEFE-DE-001 — Definitions
 - TEFE-ES-001 — Estate Standards Manual
 - TEFE-MP-001 — Estate Master Planning Standard
 - TEFE-FL-001 — Food Forest Management Lease
 - TEFE-WG-001 — Welcome Guide
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Closing Statement

The Edible Forest Estate is not measured by the number of trees planted.

It is measured by the quality of the ecosystems we leave behind.

Every tree has the potential to feed generations.

Every improvement to the soil strengthens the future.

Every thoughtful planting decision contributes to an Estate that becomes healthier, more productive and more valuable with every passing year.

Our ambition is simple.

To leave the land in better condition than we found it.

END OF CONTROLLED PUBLICATION

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Every generation inherits a choice: to leave the land unchanged, or to leave it better than they found it. The Edible Forest Estate has chosen the latter.

This Charter is the constitutional statement of purpose for
THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED
and the foundation upon which the Official Publication Library is built.