

# Poplar and willow planting guide

Sustainable Land Management Programme

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## Poplars

Variety	Colour	Timber potential	Possam resistance	Wind resistance	Siting
Toa	Fluoro Blue	Good	Average	Poor	Sheltered slopes and gullies
Kawa	Fluoro Orange	Excellent	Average	Average	Sheltered to semi-exposed slopes
Yunnanensis	White	Average	Excellent	Excellent	Sheltered and moderately exposed hillsides. Will tolerate some wind

## Willows

Variety	Colour	River stabilisation	Possam resistance	Wind resistance	Siting
Booth	Fluoro Pink	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Riverbank stabilisation, gully control

## Storage

- Store in cool shady area away from direct sun and wind. In the absence of water, lie in long wet grass.
- Maintain moisture levels by soaking ends in a fresh water creek or dam. If these are not available, store with ends in a trough. Where possible, avoid storing in stagnant water.
- Do not store in the presence of stock.

***It is essential to soak poles for 1-2 weeks prior to planting, with one week being ideal. The water taken up by the poles assists in establishment, especially during dry weather. Poles should not be over-soaked, as they start developing roots which will be damaged at planting.***

## Protectors

**Dynex sleeves** are a solid plastic sleeve that can be fitted before or after planting. Some of the benefits of Dynex sleeves are that they:

- swivel when rubbed by stock, thereby reducing damage from rubbing
- help prevent possum damage by making access more difficult
- provide protection from goats, and to a lesser extent horses
- have a slit imprinted on each side of the sleeve to facilitate natural removal
- last for up to 5 years
- can be recycled
- do not require stapling top and bottom

***A recycling scheme for Dynex sleeves is available and freight costs to Auckland are paid for 2 tonne loads. Anyone with used sleeves to recycle, please deliver them to the Regional Council to make up the required loads.***

**Netlons** are black criss-cross mesh sleeves, that can also be fitted before or after planting. The benefits of netlon sleeves include the following:

- cheaper than dynex sleeves
- last for up to 5 years
- break down quicker once in contact with soil and grass

**Possum guards** can be purchased separately to both Dynex and Netlons, and attached to the top of sleeves to prevent access by possums.

***1.7m Dynex and Netlon sleeves are available from the Regional Council and should be ordered in advance to the planting season. Both shorter and longer sleeves are also available if required.***

## Planting technique

### 'Y Bar' (recommended)

- Establish a pilot hole to 750mm depth (to footpegs).
- Thump the pole until firm at an optimum depth of 750mm.
- If necessary, ram topsoil area tight, but avoid damaging the bark.

### Digging and post hole borers

- Create planting holes to a depth of 750mm.
- Ram soil firm around pole, ensuring bark is not damaged.

***It is essential to re-ram poles in late spring/early summer when soil dries out and shrinks around trunk, as a thin (sometimes unobservable) gap develops, assisting air penetration and resulting in damage to roots.***

## Siting

- Check tables for recommended siting of poles
- Site poles in hollows and depressions where moisture is likely to accumulate in summer.
- Avoid dry windy ridges, spurs and upper slopes .
- Minimise poles around stock access tracks to reduce the effect of rubbing and loosening.
- When planting to control gully erosion, establish poles in pairs each side of the channel to avoid restricting the flow.
- Lean tops away from banks to avoid stock browsing.
- The ideal spacings depend on location, and type of erosion to be controlled. Guidelines are:

Open planting on hill slopes to prevent erosion on susceptible slopes	10-20 metres
Spaced planting on hillslopes to control active erosion sites	2-12 metres
Pair planting in gullies to control/prevent gully and streambank erosion	2-10 metres

## Maintenance

- Form prune to a single leader at around age 2 to improve final tree form.
- Re-ram when ground dries out in late spring/early summer is essential.

- Extreme care must be taken in re-ramming poles during this stage of growth, as most roots develop near the soil surface in the top 8 inches.
- Check poles regularly from around age 3 to ensure sleeves aren't starting to cause strangulation.

***A cut line is imprinted on both sides of the Dynex sleeves, which should split when trunks put pressure on the sleeve. This is not 100% reliable and requires checking. If the sleeve is not splitting correctly it can either be removed or a slit can be placed at the top of each side to initiate the process.***

- Care with cattle grazing is required following the removal of sleeves until bark hardens.
- Thin poles planted at close spacings on hillsides once erosion has been controlled.
- Remove heavy branching that threatens to split and break out.
- Remove low growing branches that shade pasture and are in the way of stock.

***Please order poplar and willow material before 31 May to guarantee supply .***

***In future a wider selection of poplar and willow material will be available from the Council.***

**For further information please contact the Land Management section of the Taranaki Regional Council:**  
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