

# Tree Shelters

*Carolyn Locher takes us through our annual round-up of products available.*

Tree shelters, first trialled by the Forestry Commission to protect broadleaf plantings in the early stages of growth in the 1980s, are now accepted by the global forestry industry as an aid to the establishment of conifers, broadleaves and hedges.

Tree shelters can offer faster establishment, increased survival rates, root protection, fewer side shoots, easy tree identification and protection from grazing animals (voles, rabbits, hares, squirrels, deer and sheep). Additional benefits include herbicide protection, weed control and the creation of a microclimate within the tube that encourages rapid stem growth in a tree's early years, again enhancing establishment and survival rates.

Shelters come in various forms. Rigid plastic tubes are common but need replacing as the trees outgrow them. Expanding guards last longer but are more expensive. Spiral guards are a flexible, low-cost alternative. Mesh shelters allow saplings to move more freely and the resulting flexing can strengthen the stem and encourage root development. Some experts suggest that these suit our warming climate.

Tree stakes should be used in conjunction with some of the products detailed below; the companies listed will be happy to offer further

advice.

Questions to consider when choosing a style of tree shelter include the size and type of the planting stock, the site and planting conditions, the local climate and local growing conditions, the risk of animal damage, the management regime, budget and availability of labour.

Acorn Planting Products Ltd, based near Norwich, has 25 years of tree shelter manufacturing experience.

Their Shelterguard tree shelter has a unique two-stage degradation process, designed to provide a full shelter environment for the first 3–5 years, offering protection from herbicide sprays and stimulating growth. As the polythene film begins to degrade it offers prolonged browsing protection in a well-ventilated and sturdy netting guard.

Shelterguard tree shelters come with pre-fitted nylon ties in diameters of 80 to 110mm and in a range of heights – 60cm, 75cm, 90cm, 1.2m, 1.5m and 1.8m. Where 'one size does not fit all', Acorn offers 50-metre Shelterguard rolls in widths of 30cm, 46cm and 60cm. The whole range is complemented by a wide selection of ancillary products.

Acorn has also launched their



*Tubex Ventex tree shelter, with twin-wall tubular construction, laser-generated perforations, and abrasion-reducing flared rim.*

'Bio Shelter' range, designed in conjunction with a specialist plastics firm. Bio Shelters ensure browsing protection along with biodegradability after 7 years, for just 20% more than the cost of a standard shelter. If price proves prohibitive, Acorn has finalised an arrangement with Agri.cycle, a farmer-owned company operating to make it possible for all spiral, tree guards and packaging to be recycled through a series of collection 'hubs' ([www.agri-cycle.uk.com](http://www.agri-cycle.uk.com)).

Acorn has also developed a new 80mm Squirrel Guard designed to stop squirrels climbing up the trunk and damaging bark and the crown. Enquiries from parties interested in

trialling the product are welcomed.  
Acorn 01508 528763  
[www.acorn-p.co.uk](http://www.acorn-p.co.uk)

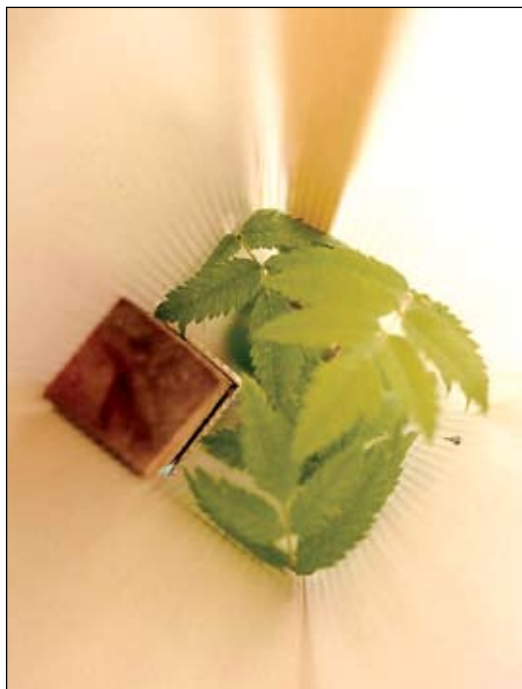
Based in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, Ansini's Spiral Tree Guards offer sapling protection made from 100% recycled plastic, in finishes of clear, brown or green, with 'ventilation' if required. The tubes are 40mm or 50mm diameter, with lengths of 45cm, 60cm or 70cm, wrapped together in nests of 5 in boxes of 250.

Ansini's spiral guards offer protection from rabbits, hares and systemic herbicides for up to five years and expand with the growth of the tree or shrub. After five years, the plastic starts to degrade, becoming brittle and breaking down into harmless small particles, thus reducing the need for staff to spend extra time on removal.

Ansini 01623 812333  
[www.spiraltreeguard.com](http://www.spiraltreeguard.com)

Used within the UK forestry and landscaping sectors for 20 years, Defender Tree Shelters are made from 100% recyclable twin-walled polypropylene, and offer a perfect microclimate for saplings, whilst protecting against herbicide and small animal damage.

Shelters are delivered flat-packed, in bundles of 10 (1500 x 1.2 metres on a single pallet) and spring back into shape when unpacked. Available in green, they are quick to install (no plastic ties) and simple to maintain, slipping on and off the stake with ease. The robust contact



*(Left)  
Green-tech's  
Fortetub  
Standard shelter.*

*(Right) Inside  
view of the  
Defender tree  
shelter.*



(Left) The Shelterguard from Acorn Planting Products has a two-stage degradation process, though Acorn now also offers biodegradable shelters. (Centre) Farm Forestry Balance 1.5m shelter splitting, with the stake still in place – no damage to tree. (Right) Ansini's spiral guard.

between stake and shelter gives maximum stability with no risk of the shelter breaking away from the stake. Eventually the Defender splits naturally along the corners to avoid tree strangulation.

Low in price, the Defender has a cross-section of 80mm by 80mm and is available in 5 lengths, 60cm, 75cm, 90cm, 120cm, 150cm. Smaller section 'Mini' and 'Mini+' Defenders are also available for hedging and budget applications. *Campbell McEwan, Shelter Woodland 01669 620000*

Green-tech has been supplying tree shelters to the UK landscape and forestry market for 15 years. Sales of the Green-tech Fortetub Standard Tree Shelter have increased due to its competitive price and its innovative and durable twin-wall construction.

Made from environmentally acceptable polypropylene, the Standard is a rigid tube with beveled edges to help prevent abrasion and comes pre-fitted with releasable cable ties. The green-tinted shelter creates a microclimate around the sapling, which prevents overheating by allowing for condensation and reducing moisture loss. The Standard shelter is available in diameters of 7.5cm or 10cm, with height options of 0.6 metres, 0.75m (nests of 5; 250 per bundle) and 1.2 metres (nests of 4; 140 per bundle).

With all the benefits of their Standard model, Green-tech's Fortetub EcoTub Tree shelter

comes in two smaller diameters of either 6cm or 6.7cm and heights of 1.6 and 1.75 metres (nests of 2; bundles of 200).

Vented tubes are available in both the Standard and EcoTub models for those customers with windy sites.

*Green-tech 01423 332100  
www.green-tech.co.uk  
www.fortetub.co.uk*

Based in Shropshire, Farm Forestry Co Ltd's British-made transparent Spiral Shelters are as ideal for hedging as they are for broadleaved forestry plantings.

Although Farm Forestry recommends transparent spiral shelters, they are also available in brown, green or tinted. The 35/40mm diameter shelters are available in lengths of 45cm, 60cm or 75cm, and sold in bags of 250.

The slightly wider 50mm diameter shelters allow longer rabbit protection and are available in 60cm or 75cm lengths, with holes for ventilation, or without for chemical protection.

Farm Forestry also offers what they consider is a lower maintenance and more economical option shelter than tubes. Their 'Continental' Fine Mesh Shelter (stretchable fine mesh from top to bottom) and New 'Balance' Shelter (with herbicide shield below and strong fine non-stretchable mesh above) are 120mm in diameter and made from photodegradable HDPE (high density polyethylene) with UV stabilisers. The mesh microclimate encourages stronger stem growth

with no moisture build-up against the side wall of the shelter, less wind resistance and better chemical control at the tree base. The mesh offers easy assessment of tree mortality in autumn and bird friendliness – allowing birds to walk up the mesh walls after eating insects. Still a relatively new product when compared to a traditional tube, maturing plantings utilising mesh shelters are now proving that they can provide a viable alternative to tube protection, with lower after-care costs.

*Farm Forestry Co Ltd  
01588 650 496  
sales@farmforestry.co.uk  
www.farmforestry.co.uk*

After nearly 30 years in the marketplace, Tubex has 'smartened up its image' with a new logo and a new strap line: 'Advancing Growth'.

Tubex tree shelters are made from environmentally harmless polypropylene and come in translucent green or brown. They are designed to break down via exposure to sunlight after a planned period of time (around five years for standard types). Features on most Tubex tree shelters include an anti-abrasion flared rim, a durable twin-wall construction with laser-generated perforation lines (which burst as the tree fills the tube), built-in strengthening rods and pre-fitted releasable ratchet ties.

As a general rule, Tubex says that slender planting stock is best accommodated in their narrower EcoStart tubes with diameters of

57mm to 73mm, in heights of 0.6m or 0.75m, delivered in nests of 3 and bundles of 150. Larger stock is better suited to Tubex's Standard Tree shelter in diameters of 73mm to 105mm, with heights of 0.6m, 0.75m and 1.2m, delivered in nests of 5 and in bundles of 100, or the Standard Plus range with heights of 1.2m, 1.5m and 1.8m, and diameters from 80mm to 120mm, delivered in nests of 5 and with 60 per bundle.

The pale green 'Equilibre', known as Ventex in the UK, is Tubex's most popular tree shelter in Europe. Warm air in the tube rises, drawing cooler air in through ventilation holes on the lower part of the tube. This cools the tree, maintaining optimum growing conditions, particularly in warmer climates. With the same specification as the Standard Tree Shelter Plus range, Tubex Ventex comes in an additional height of 0.9m.

Netguard is supplied in pre-cut pieces or rolls and is fastened with two releasable ties. Easily installed around larger trees or shrubs, it provides a guard against grazing animals only. Dark green, it comes in bundles of 100 with heights of 0.6m or 1.2m and diameters of 100mm to 250mm.

Tubex can provide stakes/canes for all types of shelter and their website offers a series of helpful customer guides.

*Tubex 01685 888000  
www.tubex.com*