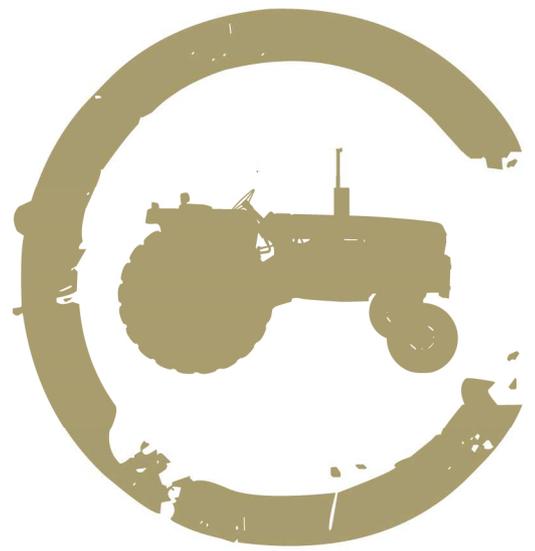


SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Community Supported Woodlands and Hedges

Wood fuel and other benefits from small woodlands and hedges
A Tool-kit for Communities - v1.0 July 2013

Chapter 7: Assessment and Identification Tools and Aids

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CORDIALE was selected under the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the ERDF.

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Chapter 7 Assessment and Identification Tools and Aids

A number of tools and aids have been developed to help community groups, land owners and others understand the potential from their woodlands and hedges. There are also many online resources and publications which can be very useful. A number of these are included in the Background reading and Resources section of this report. Of particular note is The Conservation Volunteers publication 'Woodlands: A practical handbook' which is referred to a number of times in this toolkit.

7.1 Overview of Tools and Aids available

There are eight tools (or methods) and aids that have been developed as part of the Cordiale project or we have found particularly useful. These cover a range of different functions. They are introduced below with a short introduction and a comparison table.

Identifying species in woodlands and hedges

The 'Winter Bud Identifier' from Bovey Climate Action, and the Woodland Trust Identification Guides are invaluable aids to identifying species.

Assessing the production capacity of wood/land and hedges

The 'Estate Production Template' and the detailed 'Farm Audit Tool' can provide detailed assessments of the production capacity of woodland and hedges.

Assessing the natural and historic value of hedges

The 'Significant hedge survey' tool identifies hedges (and potentially woodlands) for their natural and historic environment value.

Assessing the heat load requirement for a building or buildings

The 'Woodfuel Assessment Template' gathers information for an initial specialist appraisal of the site suitability for biomass and heat load requirement; and the 'Estates Utilisation Template' calculates the heat load required in some detail for estates.

Forming and managing a community supported woodlands partnership between users and owners

Woodland from Hedgerows: A Toolkit for Communities addresses woodfuel from hedges and was the inspiration for this publication – Toolkit for Communities – Small Woodlands and Hedges.

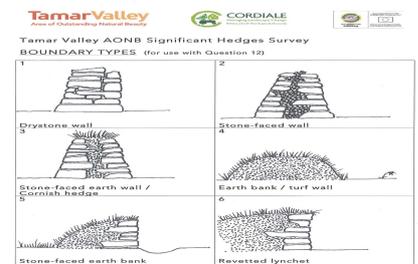
7.2 How to access the tools and aids

Identifying species in woodlands and hedges

There are a number of tools and aids that can help identify species in woodlands and hedges. Understanding which species of tree are present in the woodland/hedge helps to determine which may be best for fuel, require coppicing etc. When the trees are not in leaf a winter bud identifier is useful. The 'Winter Bud Identifier' is a hand drawn chart designed by Audrey Compton from Bovey Climate Action. This is appended and can also be downloaded as part of the Dartmoor Circle Toolkit. The Woodland Trust also has a comprehensive range of identification guides available at http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/pack_spotting.htm.

Hedge Survey Tool

This tool is designed to enable individuals and groups to assess the natural and historic significance of a hedge and its value to the landscape. It has been developed by the Tamar Valley AONB team, and has been used extensively by local volunteers. The tool is available to be downloaded from the Cordiale website (Tool 02¹). Support in its use is available from Samantha Barnes at the Tamar Valley AONB.



Farm Fuels Audit tools: A Landowner Quick Appraisal and a Toolkit and Guidance for detailed agent surveys.

These two tools have been developed by the Silvanus Trust to enable farmers to assess the biomass potential of their woodlands and hedges. The first tool enables a quick assessment to be made. If the results seem interesting the farmer may decide to undertake a detailed audit of the woodland and hedge assets using the Agent Survey tool. The tool can be downloaded from the Cordiale website (Tool 12²); and support in its use is available from the Tamar Valley AONB.

Wood Fuel assessment template

This is a simple questionnaire developed by Forest Fuels. It leads a potential user of biomass for heating through a series of questions to better understand their heating requirement and the nature of their building. It has the potential to be useful to a wide range of users and building types. It has primarily been designed so that the user can provide suppliers of biomass heating systems with sufficient information for an initial assessment as to whether the site is suitable for such a system and thus warrants a more informative site visit. Its value is twofold:

- in ensuring that the application for which the heating required is well understood by the user
- in providing potential heating system suppliers with enough detail to enable a well informed proposal to be developed.

The tool can be downloaded from the Cordiale website (Tool 12); and support in its use is available from the Tamar Valley AONB.

Estate Production Template and Estates Utilisation Template

These two complementary tools have been developed by Crops 4 Energy to assist estate owners and managers in understanding the potential production capacity of their woodlands and land to produce fuel; and the feasibility of heating estate buildings and residences with a biomass-based system, ideally fuelled from self production. The tool might also be applicable to larger farms and areas of woodland.

The tool can be downloaded from the Cordiale website (Tool 12); and support in its use is available from the Tamar Valley AONB.

Woodfuel from Hedges: A toolkit for communities

This tool has been developed by Andrew Shadrake from Dartmoor Circle with support from the Devon Hedge group and the Cordiale project. Its aim is to support the formation of small community groups who want to reach an agreement with farmers and others to undertake hedge maintenance work in return for woodfuel and/or for the opportunity to be 'working in the woods'. The toolkit is focused on hedges and includes guidance on species identification, firewood harvesting, information on insurance and risk assessment, and frameworks for a group constitution and agreement with the landowner.

The tool can be downloaded from: www.dartmoorcircle.org.uk; and support in its use may be available from Andrew Shadrake andrew.shadrake@dartmoorcircle.org.uk

Toolkit for Communities – Small Woodlands and Hedges

This publication is available to download from the Cordiale website (Tool 28³). Support in its use may be available from kate.royston@robbeesmoles.com or dreadman@tamarvalley.org.uk.

¹ http://www.cordialeproject.eu/en/toolkit/tools/tool_02_significant_hedge_identification_methodology/

² http://www.cordialeproject.eu/en/toolkit/tools/tool_12_feasibility_assessment_tools_for_woodfuel_production_and_woodfuel_b/

³ http://www.cordialeproject.eu/en/toolkit/tools/tool_28_community_supported_woodlands_and_hedgerows/

7.3 Tools Comparison Table

The table below provides a comparison between the different tools and aids as a summary.

Toolkit	Crops 4 Energy 1	Crops 4 Energy 2	Forest Fuels	Silvanus Farm Biomass Audit Tool 1	Silvanus Farm Biomass Audit Tool 2	TV AONB - Hedge Survey	Dartmoor Circle - Woodfuel from Hedges
Toolkit name	Estates Production template	Estates Utilisation template	Wood fuel assessment template	Landowner Woodfuelkit - Quick Appraisal	Toolkit and guidance detailed agent surveys - Agent guidance and method	Significant Hedges Survey	Woodfuel from Hedgerows: A tool-kit for communities
Toolkit Purpose	Estimating potential production capacity of woodlands	Potential for heating single or multiple buildings linked as a DHS	To enable wood fuel specialist/installer to assess suitability of site for woodfuel system	For hedges and woodlands - quick appraisal of biomass availability on farm	For hedges and woodlands - detailed appraisal of biomass availability on farm	Detailed ecological survey for use by trained volunteers	Development and operation of community based woodfuel group to harvest fuel from hedges
Format	Excel workbook	Excel workbook	Word document	Pdf	Excel workbook	Pdf / word?	Various downloadable docs
Contents / interaction	Workbook collecting data	Workbook collecting data	Questionnaire collecting data	Identification guide requiring separate calculation	Guidance doc + excel workbook	Guidance for volunteers, survey form, identification sheets	Guide book + template agreements etc.
How completed	By user	By user	By user on site	by user on site	by user or agent	by trained volunteer surveyor	by user group, landowner [and advisor]
Training reqd to use	Some tbc	Some tbc	Some tbc	Minimal or none	Some tbc	Tbc	Some. May need legal support
Time required	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Variable tbc
cost / free download	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc	Downloadable cost tbc
Users and uses	Estate managers assessing potential for wood fuel production from their estates	Estate managers assessing potential to heat estates properties from their [wood] fuel production	Potential wood fuel / biomass installation users	Farmers / landowners quick assessment of available biomass	Farmers / landowners detailed assessment of available biomass	Assessment of hedge by landowners/community groups before engaging in hedge management	Groups wishing to set up a community woodfuel group - guide to setting it up
Applicable to							
- Farmers & small holders	large	large	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Estate managers	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
- Householders			yes	?			
- Businesses / Facilities managers / Other buildings			yes	yes	yes		yes
- Community groups / individuals				yes	yes	yes	yes
Types of woodland / hedges/ other crops	Hedges, woodlands and other crops	Hedges, woodlands and other crops	n/a	Hedges and woodland	Hedges and woodland	Hedges [and woodlands?]	Hedges [and woodlands]