

How to...

Establish a community orchard



Who is this guide for?

This is for people who want to get an orchard planted on a local greenspace or in a park for the use of the community.

What will this guide help you to do?

It will help you to identify the steps you need to take to make this happen from land permission to funding as well as how to look after and maintain your orchard.

The importance of orchards

Orchards have played an important role for hundreds of years. They provide a community space for celebrations, are a source of food as well as creating fantastic places for people to come together. They also encourage healthy eating and outdoor activities improving wellbeing and making our cities and neighbourhoods more pleasant places to live. Even small patches of land can be used to create a community orchard. An orchard normally consists of a minimum of five fruit trees with types to include apple, pear, plum, cherry and damson.

1 Who owns the land?

The first step is to find out who owns the land you would like to create the orchard on. If it's a park or greenspace, it's likely to be owned by your local council and you should contact your local councillor to find the best person to speak to in order to seek permission. It could also be owned by a private landowner or a housing association.

2 Making it happen

Once you have sought permission from the landowner, the next step would be to **make sure that the site and soils are capable of sustaining fruit tree growth** – remember to ask permission first if you intend to dig any holes. To find out about this assessment visit [/theorchardproject.org.uk/guides_and_advice/things-to-look-out-for-when-planning-an-orchard](http://theorchardproject.org.uk/guides_and_advice/things-to-look-out-for-when-planning-an-orchard) If the site is suitable, you'll then need to **access funding** to help create your orchard. The most likely sources are small community grants such as Tesco Bags of Help, as well as other local pots. A useful starting point is your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) if you have one, or you could try Manchester Community Central which has a portal where you can search for funding (you need to register as a member – it's free) [/manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/search-funding](http://manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/search-funding)

3 Getting your trees in the ground

If you have the land permission and funding in place, now you can order your trees and help them take root. You'll need to make sure that the fruit variety you're planning to plant is suitable for our part of the country and will grow well on your site. Another consideration is pollination – fruit trees need to be pollinated by insects and some varieties need to be matched up or near to others to ensure good fruiting. Nurseries should be able to discuss your options and many offer suggestions and advice on their websites. Helping Britain Blossom have useful guides on how to involve your community so when planting day comes you know exactly what to do! Visit [/theorchardproject.org.uk/guides_and_advice/involving-the-community-in-your-orchard/](http://theorchardproject.org.uk/guides_and_advice/involving-the-community-in-your-orchard/)

Our handy guide to planting a fruit tree can be found on our website here – [/cityoftrees.org.uk/resource/planting-guides](http://cityoftrees.org.uk/resource/planting-guides)

4 Looking after and maintaining your orchard

Once you have planted your trees it's important you take care of them to enable them to thrive and be fruitful! This can include things like weeding around the trees to ensure they aren't choked by grass and other plants; watering them in hot weather, as well as pruning.

Helping Britain Blossom has a whole host of free resources include information on grafting and orchards throughout the seasons.

They also often run free events and training. Visit [/helpingbritainblossom.org.uk/](http://helpingbritainblossom.org.uk/) for more.

Get in touch with city of Trees

We're always keen to hear from people who are looking to establish a community orchard. As a charity we need to seek funds for all our projects, but we may be looking to work in your area or might be able to support with grant applications. For more information email beth@cityoftrees.org.uk

CASE STUDY: salford's community orchards



City of Trees planted 157 fruit trees in eleven different orchards across the city, with types including apple, pear, plum and cherry to name just a few.

Working alongside local residents, schoolchildren and members of the community some parks including Monmouth Park in Salford also benefitted from other improvements such as new benches and community seating.

The project was supported by Tesco Bags of Help, Friends of Ordsall Parks, Greggs Foundation and Salford City Council.

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