

TREE SHEPHERDS

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The aim of Tree Shepherds is to restore native broad-leaved trees to the hills and valleys of Snowdonia using 'no-fence planting' techniques especially developed by them which require no protective fencing or stock removal and no change of land use or loss of grazing.

When travelling in Snowdonia it can be seen that very few trees have survived grazing by sheep to reach maturity and that such survivors are usually found on sloping ground and have a 'sabre' or curved shape to their trunks. Ground cover – thick gorse or bracken – has initially protected the young trees. Thereafter, only leading shoots which are growing out over slopes and drops or from the densest of thickets have grown on to maturity. Tree Shepherds grows trees to a minimum height of 1.00m. and 'sabre-plant' these at an angle to the slope; it has established thousands of trees at over fifty grazed sites.

Other 'no-fence' methods include planting trees amongst protective thorny or unpalatable species such as gorse, bracken and even rhododendron. Tree Shepherds also plants giant stock-proof willow-cuttings on marshy land and taller half-standard trees (1.50-2.00m.) on flat land unsuited to 'sabre-planting'.

Trees planted by such methods have a natural appearance, provide shelter for livestock and habitats for wildlife. No-fence planting is a special project within 'Tir Gofal'. Every farm will have potential for some form of 'no-fence' planting.

Tree Shepherds is establishing a website containing detailed information on every aspect of its work which it hopes will serve as an online training manual, and is happy to offer advice and/or provide and plant trees free of charge.

Status of organisation: Registered charity

Area: Snowdonia