

# Hedgerow Hike - Survey Guide

This form should be printed out to take along with you on your 'Hedgerow Hike'. It includes images that correspond with questions in the survey.

Before you start your survey: Download a GPS app onto your phone. In the field this will enable you to enter the start and end location of the hedgerow.

**Importance of the survey** - Data collected by this Hedgerow Hike is used to determine whether a hedgerow is in good condition or not. This is achieved by comparing data collected in your surveys with thresholds that aim to reflect the key management factors affecting hedgerows. These can then help us monitor any changes in the quality and structure of our vital hedgerow network over time. This survey is aimed at hedgerows comprising mainly native species, regardless of whether they are rural or urban.

## Access to survey

Please do not enter private property to survey a hedge without the landowner's permission. This can be obtained by enquiring about ownership from nearby houses and asking permission to undertake a survey.

## Photos

Please take up to four photos to go with your survey data. These can be interesting features, or of species you need help with ID. Please ensure that one of these photos captures the general overall condition of the hedgerow.

## Q1. Start location

Please enter a 10 figure grid reference of the start of your hedgerow.

## Q2 & Q17. Hedgerow connections

Hedgerows in the countryside link up to form a network. It is important to define a start and end point of the hedge - also known as 'nodes'. The diagram shows examples of how many connections there are at each node.



## Q3. Gaps

Please record any gaps in your hedgerow. Do not include access points like gates; we are interested in gaps of 5 m or more between the woody plants of the hedgerow. Small whips (singular stems of plant) surrounded by plastic tree guards can often indicate recent replanting.

## Q4. Hedgerow Trees

Along with the hedgerow itself, hedgerow trees are important resources. Many of our current hedgerow trees are aging and provide veteran features (like cracks and crevices) for specialist wildlife. There is currently a problem with the loss of hedgerow trees and a lack of recruitment of younger trees. A hedgerow tree is a specimen that is obviously clear of the hedgerow line.

## 30 m survey section

Take 30 strides alongside your hedgerow to get your approximate 30m survey section. The following questions relate to this 30m.

## Q5. Land use

Record the land use around your side, and (Q6.) the other side (if visible) of the hedge.

## Q7. Margin of undisturbed ground

This is measured from the trunks of the hedgerow plants to where there is any management that may damage the root system of the hedgerow, such as ploughing or a road.

## Q8. Condition

What number is your hedge on the management cycle? Many hedgerows around the country are either over managed or neglected. Typically over-managed hedgerows have been cut at the same height for so long that gaps have appeared and the stems become gnarled and twisted. Neglected hedgerows on the other hand have become so tall they have lost their shrub layer and are in danger of collapse. To use the scale look at the physical structure of your hedgerow, and choose which number on the scale it most closely resembles. When the hedge is in leaf, you may have to look a little closer to get an idea what is going on but it should still be possible.

## Q9 & Q10. Measuring average height and width of the hedgerow

Be aware of hedgerows on banks. Only measure the woody component of the hedgerow. Herbaceous vegetation and brambles should not be counted in this measurement. Taking a tape measure or a stick of known length marked at known intervals will help you with this.

## Q11: Average height of base canopy

The base canopy is the lowest leafy growth coming from the structural woody plants of the hedge. Ideally this would extend all the way to the floor. Please estimate the average height of this canopy from the floor, excluding herbaceous vegetation.



## Q12 & 13. Vegetation

Which species are present in your hedge? If you can identify others, please add these species to the comment box. These additional species can be found in your survey pack. Please also record which species is the most dominant out of all the species present (Q13.).

## Q14. Features

Please record any additional features present. Features like ditches and banks can add to the ecological value of the hedgerow, whereas fences and walls can provide information about the level of protection from grazing animals.

## Q15. Nettles, docks or cleavers

A high percentage cover of nettles (*Urtica* spp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) or docks (*Rumex* spp.) in the hedge-bottom is a broad indication that there is likely to be a species-poor ground flora, probably resulting from nutrient enrichment, for example, from agricultural fertilisers being spread beyond the edge of the crop into the hedgerow base. In a random 2m section, estimate the percentage cover of each of these species. This can be a bit tricky sometimes depending on the time of the year but just do your best.