

PLANTING AT CHERQUE FARM DEVELOPMENT

After necessary remediation works to make the site suitable for housing the site consists of principally clay soils. The resultant moist ground conditions can inhibit initial plant establishment but with good ground preparation the problem can be alleviated. Subsoil and topsoil have been laid to an approximate depth of 500mm on top of the clay barrier, which must not be disturbed.

Adding sand/grit to the soil and rotivating to a depth of not more than 500mm will help improve the drainage. Preparing the area to falls, away from buildings will also enable water runoff.

Due to the soil having been stored and re-spread over the site it will lack organic material, so incorporating well rotted compost, manure, spent mushroom compost, peat and fine bark will help to recreate a healthy soil. For a more immediate effect an 'all round' fertilizer such as 'Growmore' should be added to the soil at manufacturers recommended quantities.

The use of P4 Polymer from Agricultural Polymers International Ltd. Waverley House Waverley Rd Gloucester GL2 0SZ Tel: 01452 521733, or similar is highly recommended to help plants establish. The granules are the size of granulated sugar when dry, but grow to the size of jelly like sugar lumps when wet, they store the water for plants to tap into when the soil dries out and removes excess water in waterlogged soils.

As the soils on site are clay based they will have an alkaline PH. Plants therefore that require acids soils such as Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Heathers should be avoided.

The site is in an exposed position close to the sea; plants that are in unsheltered positions will suffer scorching from the salt laden winds so plants should be selected accordingly. Robust plants such as Pyracantha spp., Cotoneaster spp., Ribes spp., Hypericum spp., Choisya spp., Cornus spp., Berberis spp., Evergreen Viburnum spp., should be selected here. In more sheltered positions such as in back gardens, plants that prefer clay soils can be selected giving a large choice of plants as clay soils are the most commonly found in Britain and many plants have evolved root structures which are designed to cope with it. With the generous and frequent additions of garden compost and other organic matter, over the years clay soiled gardens can become some of the most productive and rewarding.

Tree planting within gardens should be kept to small ornamental and fruit trees not exceeding 14m ultimate high, so as not to damage the foundations or penetrate the clay barrier. The table below shows how far trees should be planted away from buildings so as not to effect foundations. (Based on Practice note 4.2 N.H.B.C Standard Building near trees, Medium water demand trees, high shrinkability soil).

ULTIMATE TREE HEIGHT	DISTANCE FROM BUILDING
6m	5m
8m	6m
10m	8m
12m	9m
14m	11m

Some suitable trees for the site would be Betula Spp. (Birch), Crataegus Spp. (Hawthorn), Sorbus aria Spp. (Whitebeam) Sorbus aucuparia Spp. (Rowan), Malus Spp. (Crab Apple and Apple), Prunus Spp. (Cherry), Pyrus Spp. (Pear).