

East Herts Council is unable to provide an arboricultural advisory service to residents or parish councils. I am the only tree officer employed by East Herts Council and advice of this sort falls well outside of my duties.

I will provide some general advice on this occasion, but I cannot be involved further than this email.

Given the rural location of the play area, I would favour native tree species. Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) would be good choices. Fruit from the Rowan and Crab Apple would provide winter food for birds. There are other cultivars of Crab Apple if you wanted to introduce a variety of colours to the flowers and autumn leaf colour. It is usually a good idea to keep fruit bearing trees at a distance from play equipment designed for very small children.

You may wish to check with Hertfordshire Highways regarding species choice for the road verge. It is important that you choose a tree with a reliable growth habit so that branches do not interfere with the pavement or road in the future. There is natural variation in how individual examples of a particular species develop their branch structure. Different growth habits have been selected at nurseries and cultivated to produce trees which develop a particular branch structure. Trees which produce a compact, upright branch structure are described as 'columnar' or 'fastigate'. These are often used as street trees or in car parks. I would recommend a 'fastigate' cultivar of Field Maple for this verge. I have included a link below to an example which is available from Barcham Trees in Ely.

[Acer campestre Elsrijk \(Field Maple\) Tree for Sale - Barcham Trees](#)

East Herts Council and most of the other local authorities in the area source our trees from Barchams. You can also order from them the additional items needed when planting new trees such as stakes, ties and irrigation bags. There is information on their website about how they produce their trees and this is one of the reasons why they are chosen by so many local authorities. There are of course other tree nurseries that can supply trees of similar size.

Barchams trees are container grown and quite heavy so I would recommend that you get quotes from local contractors to source and plant the trees. Ask for irrigation bags to be included as part of the planting specification when asking for quotes as new trees will need watering during the first couple of summers.

There are other smaller tree nurseries which provide smaller, 'bare root' trees which are lifted from the ground and dispatched for immediate planting while they are dormant in late autumn.

East Herts tree planting is carried out by our term contractor Glendale, there are other local contractors, but it would not be right for me to recommend any individual company.

Yours sincerely

Terence Flynn