



According to Barrell ... Reversing council tree planting failures

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"A new British Standard is about to be published and it is different from anything seen in the past."

For those involved in the production, supply, planting and maintenance of new trees in the urban realm, BS 8545 "Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape - Recommendations" will be a must-have reference, with the potential to change the face of urban Britain.

Driven by the revelation that nearly 25 per cent of all council tree planting fails, this standard is an industry response to identify why so many new trees die and what can be done about it. Chaired by a nursery specialist, a selection of leading experts were invited to participate in this unique initiative. Their analysis identified an obvious disconnect between the producers (nurseries) and end-users (mostly councils) that needs to be restored if new trees are to survive and thrive.

It is a significant departure from the usual BS format, with a focus on ease of use for practitioners. A series of eight flowcharts creates a visual framework, which is easy to grasp at a glance. This diagrammatic approach links all the constituent parts into one continuous process, but still allows users to dip in and easily find the guidance they need. This minimalist theme extends into the text, where each recommendation is isolated as a single clause and focused into one or two sentences. More detailed commentary is provided in a series of annexes, which in turn are referenced to the supporting literature.

Of course, aspirations are one thing, but whether those translate into changes in practice will be the real test. To be a success, this document must drive increasing survivability of trees leaving the nursery and significantly improve planting and maintenance standards.

Ultimately, the obvious solution is to select trees genetically suited to urban conditions from naturally occurring populations. We know they exist, but getting them to market is proving a slow process. So in the meantime, this new BS is the best that we have.

