



Living Willow



GENERAL INFORMATION

Creating Your Own Living Willow Sculptures

Congratulations on purchasing a kit from Musgrove Willows – whether this is your first attempt or you are a seasoned professional, these few simple guidelines should really help to get your project started. We supply enough willow to make a basic structure, following our simple guide. If you require heavier cover, or a more ornate design then please go to www.musgrovewillows.co.uk to see our range of additional willows.

Willow has a reputation for growing almost anywhere, however, we cannot guarantee how vigorous the growth rate will be as different soil conditions, positioning and maintenance, will all have an effect on the success of your living willow feature. The varieties supplied are slower growing, with a non invasive root system. However, we advise against planting near drainage systems and buildings.

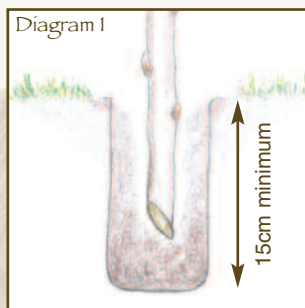
It is recommended you read the whole of this leaflet, before starting.

To start ...

✿ You will need basic tools such as a spade, string, marker pegs, garden gloves, pruners, and bio-degradable garden ties (or fine willow to tie-off – some included) and mulch (optional).

✿ To simplify matters we have two basic starting points – circular (tepees, domes and chair shelters - arbours) and straight (tunnels, archways, a living fence/hedge - fedges)

✿ After finding a suitable position for your structure, snip each rod's base diagonally to ease planting. (Diagram 1)



THE BASICS...

Circular structures - Tepees, Domes, Arbours

✿ Mark out the base, use a peg attached to some string to 'scratch' a circle into your turf. Don't forget to leave a door space (about 1 metre)! (Diagram 2) (For an **arbour** simply mark out a semi-circle.) Use a spade to clear a 30cm wide strip of excess turf from your base – leave the doorway space intact. Add some compost to the cleared base, if desired.

Diagram 2



✿ Starting at the 'doorpost' push two long rods into the ground close together, to a minimum depth of 15cm.

Continue pushing single large rods into the prepared ground every 20cm. Finish at the other 'doorpost' with another two long rods close together.

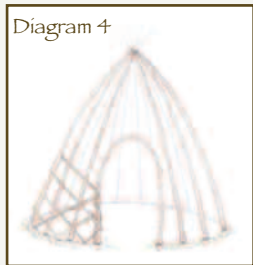


Diagram 3

✿ Twist two 'doorpost' sets of rods around each other and gently towards each other to make a doorway, twist again and secure, at the required height, to complete the entrance arch. (Diagram 3)

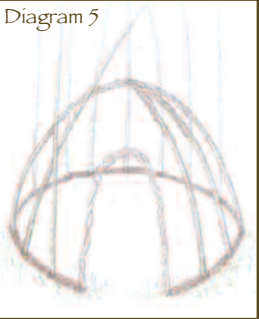
✿ For a **tepee** gather together the remaining willow at the top and tie off at the required height, using thin willow strips or bio-degradable ties. (Diagram 4)

Diagram 4



THE BASICS...

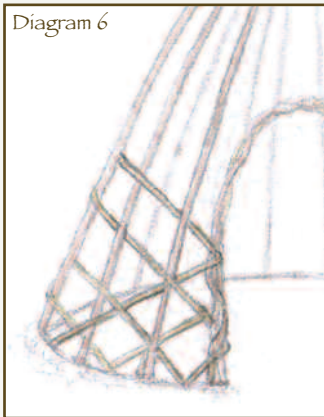
Diagram 5



For a **dome** start by bending opposite willow rods to meet in the centre, and tie off at the required height (Diagram 5). Excess length can be twisted around itself to keep it neat, or trimmed off later.

✿ Next add the medium length willow to weave into the frame. Push two rods into the ground at 45 degree angles, halfway between the larger rods. Then simply weave them upwards into your structure in a lattice or diamond pattern. If you are creating a doorway, simply 'go back on your self' to avoid blocking the entrance. (Diagram 6).

Diagram 6



Tie off the ends, as before, trim where necessary, then water well and leave to grow and thrive.



Diagram 7

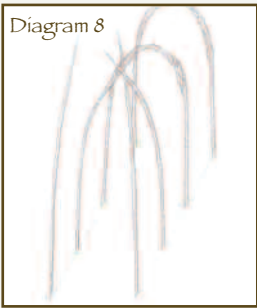
For an **Arbour** follow the dome instructions, but remember to pull the rear rods to the front centre and tie off to create the semi-circular structure. It is suggested to put an additional two rods for support at the back of the semi circle, to increase the structures strength and give you the initial shape. (Diagram 7).

THE BASICS...

Straights - Tunnels, Archways, Fedges

- ✿ Mark out your desired base length by scratching a line/s through your soil with a tent peg or similar, then use a spade to remove any excess turf. Add some compost to the cleared base, if desired.
- ✿ Push the large rods a minimum of 15cm into the ground at 30cm intervals, make two long rows for a **tunnel** or **archway** – or a single line for a **fedge**.

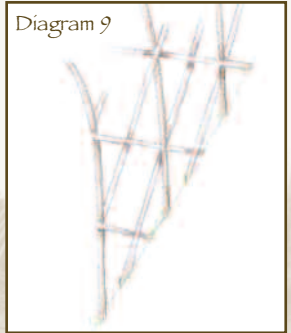
Diagram 8



- ✿ For **tunnels**, bend the opposite pair of large willow rods towards each other to create an arch. Twist around each other, secure at the required height, if necessary trim as required. (Diagram 8)

- ✿ Next weave the medium length willow into the tunnel. Push two rods into the ground at 45 degree angles, halfway between the larger rods. Then simply weave them upwards into your structure in a large lattice, or diamond pattern. (Diagram 9)

Diagram 9



- ✿ Tie off the ends, as before, trim where necessary, then water well and leave to grow and thrive.

Musgrove Willows

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THE BASICS...

Windows



✿ Circles of willow can be added to your structure to add an extra feature and strength. Simply take a piece of weaving willow and create a circle. Add another piece to build it up to form a

circular wreath, position your circle and secure with the weaving willow.

Maintenance

Ensure all planted willow is watered well in its first year. During the growing season (April to September) the new growth should be woven in to allow the structure to thicken up. When the willow has lost its leaves and is dormant, cut back the unwanted growth and reshape.

Mulch or bark chips can be placed around the bottom of the planted structure to suppress weeds and hold moisture.

Remember, every structure is unique, so if you want to be a bit more creative then go ahead – after all, a living structure will change to reflect the seasons in any case. Enjoy Yourself!

If you require any more information we are happy to recommend some excellent books, all of which are available to buy from Musgrove Willows at very competitive prices. Or, even better, why not come and join us in the beautiful Somerset countryside for one of our popular willow craft courses? Please visit our website to find out more about what Musgrove Willows has to offer you.

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