

ACS530 Planting

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ACS530.1 Scope

This section provides for planting works outside of highway corridors and includes the preparation for planting, supply of plants, planting, staking (of trees), fertilising, mulching, watering and care for plants during the plant establishment period.

This specification does **not** cover planting in the highway corridor which shall be in accordance with the Chapter 14 of the *Auckland Transport Code of Practice (ATCOP)*.

ACS530.2 Definitions

For the purpose of this specification, the following definitions shall apply:

- **PB:** (Pint Bag) PB size shall be converted to litres by applying the conversion factor of 1 pint equalling 0.568 litres
- **Plant establishment period:** Period of time after Practical Completion (defects liability period) during which the Contractor is responsible for looking after the plants to ensure that they become properly established.

ACS530.3 Materials

The Contractor shall supply all plants, planting materials and equipment required.

ACS530.3.1 Plants

Plants shall be first-class specimens of nursery stock, true to name and type with well-developed and well-shaped trunk or stem and head (foliage). They shall be well hardened off to cope with the climatic conditions of the site, and free from pests and disease.

Legible labels shall be attached to each plant delivered to site as a separate unit, or to each box, bundle or bale containing plants. The labels shall give the approved botanical name, size, age and quantity and other information required to identify the plant or plants.

Plants shall be free from disfiguring knots, bark abrasions, wind, or freezing injury or other disfigurements and shall bear evidence of proper pruning.

The roots shall have a high percentage of fibrous roots that are just touching the edge of their containers. Plants with roots that are wound round their containers in circular fashion shall be rejected. Where several specimens of the same species are to be selected, evenness of shape and size is required within the size range specified.

Plant sizes are specified by litre size. Where the Contractor proposes to supply plants in PB bag size (pint bag), the PB size shall be converted to litres by applying the conversion factor of 1 pint equalling 0.568 litres.

All plants that are unable to be sourced in the appropriate size, grade or species shall be brought to the attention of the Engineer in writing a minimum of seven (7) days prior to planting. In exceptional supply shortages, plant substitution may be considered by the Engineer. No substitution shall be made without the written approval of the Engineer. Approved substitutions shall be of similar height and habit to those specified.

All plants and material shall be available for inspection by the Engineer, prior to planting and all trees shall be inspected and approved at source by the Engineer prior to delivery.

For plants supplied by the Principal, the Contractor shall inspect the plants prior to planting to ensure that the Contractor is satisfied with the condition of the plants. If in the opinion of the Contractor, plants are not in satisfactory condition, the Contractor shall notify the Engineer in writing.

ACS530.3.2 Delivery and temporary storage

The Contractor shall adequately protect, pack and secure all plants for transportation, including all necessary precautions to ensure that plants do not dry out in transit. All plants damaged in transit shall be replaced.

Delivered plants shall be placed in a secure, temporary storage area on site. Plant delivery shall be limited to that able to be planted over the following 3 days.

Plant roots shall be protected at all times from sun or drying winds. Roots shall not be left uncovered at any time. Plants that cannot be planted immediately on delivery shall be kept in the shade, well protected, with soil kept well-watered.

If shoots or roots suffer slight damage, they shall be carefully pruned and treated with an approved fungicidal sealant. If major damage occurs, the plants shall be replaced.

Pots and other protective materials shall not be removed until immediately prior to planting and shall be properly disposed of off the site after planting.

ACS530.3.3 Genetic origin

The genetic source of all plants shall be from within the ecological district of the project's location. Ecological districts and ecosourcing are defined in the biodiversity section of Auckland Council's website. No plants may be sourced outside this area without the prior approval of the Engineer.

ACS530.4 Site preparation

The Contractor shall ensure that the areas to be planted are clean, ready to be worked and clear of any continuing work by other trades. The Contractor shall ascertain if ground conditions are suitable before commencing the work. Any damage to the turf or surrounding areas resulting from work carried out in unsuitable conditions shall be rectified by the Contractor.

The Contractor shall liaise with the Engineer to arrange inspection of the beds prior to planting.

Planting works shall be programmed to avoid unduly compacting planting bed areas. Heavily compacted areas shall be re-cultivated to provide a loose friable medium suitable for plants.

ACS530.4.1 Herbicides and weed control

If herbicide use is required for site preparation and control of herbaceous weeds, the Contractor shall only use herbicides approved by Auckland Council (as outlined in the Auckland Council on-line plant pest database) for use adjoining waterways and use herbicides in such a way that their use is consistent with best practice around waterways as specified in the *Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water*.

ACS530.4.2 Planting set out

The Contractor shall set out the works from the information shown on the Drawings. The Contractor shall set survey control points and shall protect all existing survey marks on the site. Any disturbance, displacement or destruction of existing survey marks shall be reinstated. Where exact dimensions are not shown on the Drawings, the Contractor shall receive instruction from the Engineer prior to commencing works.

Planting positions shall be pegged/laid out to the quantities, spacings and percentages shown on the Planting Plan and/or indicated on the Planting Schedule. The Contractor shall avoid positioning the plants in a straight line to ensure a natural appearance.

Tree positions, especially the location of specimen trees, shall be pegged and the final positions approved prior to the holes being dug.

The Contractor shall be sufficiently qualified to identify suitable environmental conditions for the positioning of plants and may be required to adjust the locations of some plant species to account for site specific conditions. Any queries regarding the layout, spacing or suitability of plants in the locations and quantities as shown in the planting plans shall be directed to the Engineer prior to planting.

The Contractor shall arrange for the Engineer to inspect the setting out. The Engineer may require minor refinement to the design with adjustments to lines, levels and grouping of trees/shrubs locally as the planting proceeds requiring the Contractor's co-operation and agreement.

The Contractor shall not commence planting until the setting out has been inspected and approved. If work is carried out without the prior approval, realignment and re-siting may be required.

ACS530.5 General planting

This section shall cover all planting with the exception of grassed areas, wetland plants and specimen trees. All planting shall be performed by experienced workmen in accordance with the recognised best horticultural practice and under the supervision of the Contractor's skilled foreman.

Planting shall be carried out in the recognised planting season, from 20 May to 31 August, unless otherwise approved by the Engineer.

Planting shall only be undertaken when the weather is suitable, i.e. mild, dull, and moist, and when the ground is moist and workable. All planting operations shall be suspended during periods of severe frosts, waterlogging, drought, or persistent drying winds.

Container grown shrubs shall be strong well-rooted sturdy plants without stakes or canes. Shrubs shall have two or three main stems and a good bushy form. They must have been grown in the containers for at least 6 months over a summer period prior to planting out and the container shall be full of root but not root bound. Plants shall not have been grown in the container for longer than 12 months without having been potted on.

The bottom of each hole shall be pierced to a depth of 200 mm with the tines of a fork or similar implement to ensure root penetration and free drainage. The sides of the pits dug by rotary augers, shall be roughened to remove any glazing of the surface.

Container-grown plants shall have the container removed immediately prior to planting. Care shall be taken to ensure that the root ball is not disturbed during container removal or planting.

All plants shall be planted into holes and set in their final positions with the main stem vertical and at such a depth so that the soil level is at the same height as the nursery earth marks on the stem or the container soil level. Loose roots shall be spread out in a natural fashion with soil carefully placed under and amongst them to fill all voids and firmed in. The final soil level when firmed down and after settlement, shall match the original soil mark on the stem of the plant.

ACS530.5.1 Fertiliser

All plants shall be given 10 grams of well-balanced, 6 month slow-release fertiliser including available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium plus magnesium and trace elements as approved by the Engineer. Fertiliser shall be in granular form to allow distribution through the backfill mix.

ACS530.5.2 Compost

Compost shall be proprietary top-quality compost produced in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines contained in the *New Zealand Standard for Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches* (NZS 4454).

The base of each hole for plants shall be provided with a 25 mm layer of proprietary compost.

ACS530.5.3 Mulch

Mulch shall be well-composted wood chip, free of weeds and weed seeds and must have no inorganic content.

For large planting areas, mulch shall be applied prior to planting to a depth of 100 mm (after settlement). Planting shall be completed through the mulch layer, which shall be scraped back and then carefully replaced after planting.

Where planting areas are smaller, mulch shall be applied to the planting area upon completion of planting to a depth of 100 mm (after settlement).

In all instances, mulch shall be kept clear of plant stems to avoid rot.

ACS530.5.4 Pruning

Before planting, all shrubs shall be pruned by skilled staff, as necessary, to conform with the best horticultural practice appropriate to the type of plant.

Pruning shall remove all injured twigs and branches and shall be such as to compensate for any loss of roots during planting operations and shall be carried out without any bruising or tearing of the bark. Pruning shall be carried out using sharp, clean implements to give a clean sloping cut with one flat face. Ragged edges of bark or wood are to be trimmed with a sharp knife.

After planting, all plants with damaged branches, unless rejected, shall be carefully pruned back to healthy wood.

All pruning waste shall be removed from site and disposed appropriately by the Contractor.

ACS530.5.5 Watering

The Contractor shall water all plants as necessary before, during and after planting to enable successful establishment and ensure their survival.

The Contractor shall provide a water source (or water carts if necessary) and shall bring to the site sufficient hoses, sprinklers, and other equipment to water the installed plants to the level required. Additional watering will be required during drier seasons. Planting completed after 25th September will require additional watering visits during the establishment period.

All plants shall be thoroughly watered a few hours prior to planting. At the time of planting all trees and shrubs shall be copiously watered in such a way that the entire tree pit or shrub station is moistened to field capacity to encourage settlement.

Watering shall be sufficient to give 300 mm minimum depth penetration and not just surface dampening.

If water supply is likely to be restricted, the Contractor shall inform the Engineer without delay and ascertain availability and cost of second-class water from a sewage works or other approved source.

In the event of water restrictions, the Contractor shall make any special arrangements to ensure regular and adequate watering of trees and shrubs to ensure their successful establishment.

Lack of availability of water shall not release the Contractor from their obligation to replace all dead or dying plants at the end of the first season of growth after planting.

If, during a drought, some planting has not been carried out, planting may be delayed on the instruction of the Engineer.

ACS530.6 Specimen trees

This section shall cover the planting of specimen trees. Specimen trees shall be planted by experienced workers in accordance with the recognised best horticultural practice and under the supervision of the Contractor's skilled foreman.

Specimen trees shall be advanced nursery stock and shall be to the bag size, girth or height or a combination of these specified on the plans and schedules.

Trees shall have sturdy straight and vertical stems with a well-balanced canopy of branches. Only specimens which have a well-defined, single central leader which is reasonably straight and upright will be accepted, unless a single straight leader is uncharacteristic of the habit of a

particular species. When several specimens of the same species are to be selected, evenness of shape and size will be required within the size range specified.

All specimen trees shall be planted into pits with a diameter of at least 500 mm greater than that of the root system when fully spread and a depth of 200 mm greater than the depth of the root system. The bottom of each pit shall be pierced to a depth of 200 mm with the tines of a fork or similar implement to ensure root penetration and free drainage. The sides of the pits dug by rotary augers shall be roughened to remove glazing of the surface.

Specimen trees shall be set in their final positions with the main stem vertical and at such a depth that the soil, when firmed down is at the same height as the nursery earth-marks on the stem or the container soil level. Loose roots shall be spread out in a natural fashion, the soil being carefully placed under and amongst them to fill all voids and firmed in.

Specimen trees shall be orientated when planted, so that the weathered face of the trunk faces north.

Any major roots that become accidentally broken off or frayed shall be cleanly cut off from the plant. Damaged roots over 25 mm diameter shall be cut back to sound growth and treated with fungicidal sealant.

ACS530.6.1 Stakes and ties

Each specimen tree shall be supported with wooden stakes during establishment. Stakes shall be straight pointed H4 treated *Pinus radiata* stakes according to Table 1: Tree staking requirements.

Table 1: Tree staking requirements

Tree size	35L (PB 60)	45L (PB 95)	80L (PB 150)	160L
Minimum stakes	2 opposing	2 opposing	3 triangle	3 triangle
Stake size	50 x 50 x 1.5 m	50 x 50 x 1.5 m	50 x 50 x 1.8 m	90 x 90 x 2.5 m
Embedment depth	0.5 m	0.5 m	0.6 m	0.75 m

Ties shall be 50 mm wide hessian webbing attached to stakes with approved galvanised fastenings. Ties and fixings to the stakes shall be sufficiently durable to provide required support to the plants for a minimum of 3 years.

ACS530.6.2 Fertiliser

All specimen trees shall be given 100 grams of well-balanced 6 month, slow-release fertiliser including available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium plus magnesium and trace elements,

as approved by the Engineer. Fertiliser shall be in granular form to allow distribution through the backfill mix.

ACS530.6.3 Compost

The base of specimen tree pits shall be provided with 200 mm depth of proprietary compost and sides backfilled with site won topsoil.

Compost shall be proprietary, top-quality compost produced in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines contained in the *New Zealand Standard for Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches* (NZS 4454:2005).

ACS530.6.4 Mulch

All specimen trees shall have 100 mm to 150 mm mulch placed around them as detailed in Table 2: Mulch requirements, ensuring that the mulch is not in contact with the tree trunk. The mulch shall be well-composted wood chip, free of weeds and weed seeds and must have no inorganic content.

Table 2: Mulch requirements

Tree size	35L (PB 60)	45L (PB 95)	80L (PB 150)	160L
Mulch circle	1 m diameter	1.5 m diameter	2 m diameter	3 m diameter

ACS530.7 Wetland plants

This section shall cover the planting of wetland plants. All planting shall be performed by experienced workmen in accordance with the recognised best horticultural practice and under the supervision of the Contractor's skilled foreman.

Wetland planting will be firmly planted to a depth of 40 to 70 mm to anchor the plants so that they are less prone to uprooting and do not float when water levels are raised.

Plants will be placed with a minimum of 150 mm of plant foliage extending above the water level. Wetland plantings will be carried out in spring (August through to late October) when plants are emerging from dormancy and the water temperature is starting to rise.

If Pukekos are present, aquatic plants and grasses shall be pinned with 300 mm biodegradable stakes inserted at a 45° angle through the root ball.

ACS530.7.1 Fertiliser

No fertiliser is to be applied to wetland planting.

ACS530.7.2 Compost

No compost is to be applied to wetland planting

ACS530.7.3 Mulch

Only biodegradable weed-mat shall be used for wetland planting where specified.

ACS530.8 Grassed areas

This specification shall apply to small discrete areas associated with stormwater-related works. For large, grassed areas generally > 250 m², the Auckland Council Park's specification shall apply.

Different seed mixes will be required for different types of sites and should be specified in the project particular specification. Where the seed mix is not specified, an approved dwarf cultivar rye grass or an approved turf species blend shall be used.

All grass seed shall be certified seed of the most recent crop available. All seed label analysis data shall comply with trade standards. Germination tests must have occurred within the past six months. The germination capacity of each constituent of the mixture should not be less than 80%, and the purity of the mixture not less than 90%.

ACS530.8.1 Preparation

All filled and excavated areas that are shown on the drawings or directed by the Engineer to be grassed shall be neatly graded to provide a finished level flush with kerbs and mowing strips, manhole covers, concrete aprons, paths, etc. or to levels shown on the drawings.

Compaction of areas to receive grass shall be uniformly relieved by cultivation and ripping. Areas that do not have at least 100 mm of topsoil shall first be uniformly and lightly compacted and evenly graded to 100 mm below finished grade before spreading 100 mm of weed free topsoil from the stockpile on site. If additional topsoil is required, this shall be approved by the Engineer and supplied by the Contractor.

All weeds shall be sprayed with an approved herbicide, strictly according to the manufacturer's instructions, at least 14 days before cultivation.

The topsoil cultivated to a minimum depth of 75 mm, all sticks, stones, and other debris shall be removed, and the area shall be rolled lightly to an even compact grade. The top 25 mm of topsoil shall be reduced to a fine even tilth.

The prepared topsoil shall be fertilised in accordance with *ACS530.8.3 (Fertilising)* and the fertiliser shall be raked into the topsoil evenly.

ACS530.8.2 Sowing

The seed mix shall be sown by broadcasting in two directions, in suitable calm weather, at a rate of 35 g/m², unless specified otherwise in the Particular Specification. The seed shall be hand-raked into the top 20 mm of topsoil to cover seeds and ensure even distribution, and then lightly rolled to ensure good moisture content.

The seed shall be watered by the Contractor immediately after sowing and then as often as necessary to keep it moist until germination and grass is well established.

ACS530.8.3 Fertilising

A soil test must be undertaken to determine the composition and type of fertiliser and/or lime that is to be applied, and any additional amelioration. Areas to be newly sown for grass must have a pH range between 6.0 and 6.5.

Two applications of fertiliser are to be carried out. The first application must be undertaken at one week prior to sowing of grass seed using a suitable starter fertiliser such as di-ammonium phosphate (D.A.P.) at a rate of 25 g/m² and the second application, four weeks after grass growth has commenced with a suitable maintenance fertiliser such as Nitrophoska Blue + TE (trace elements) at a rate of 25 g/m².

ACS530.8.4 Maintenance

Maintenance of the grassed area shall continue for 90 days after sowing during which period the area shall be watered, weeded, resown, rolled, and mown as often as necessary, to the approval of the Engineer, The Contractor shall resow and maintain any areas that have not taken satisfactorily. The surfaces shall be inspected at intervals and any dangerous or undue settlement shall be made good.

ACS530.9 Plant establishment

Care of plants during the plant establishment period shall include watering, weed removal, plant trimming, cultivation, insect, and disease control, checking stakes and ties, pruning and other accepted horticultural operations to ensure normal and healthy plant establishment and growth and generally keeping the area neat and tidy.

Plant establishment activities shall be undertaken in accordance with the following Table 3: Plant establishment activity schedule.

Table 3: Plant establishment activity schedule

	Growing Season												
	Spring			Summer			Autumn			Winter			
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Planting													
Staking	Monthly - As required												
Trimming	Monthly - As required												
Fertiliser													
Weed control	Monthly												
Watering		2 Times per week During dry periods											
Replacement	Monthly - As required												
Wetland planting													
Weed control	Monthly												
Replacement	Monthly - As required												
Litter removal													
Removal	Monthly												
Mulch													
Top Up													

ACS530.9.1 Responsive activities

In addition to the routine activities above, responsive monitoring and repairs as necessary should be carried out as follows:

- a) Following a storm event
- b) Following prolonged dry or wet periods.

ACS530.9.2 Watering

The Contractor shall water all plants over periods of dry weather as part of the Contractor's obligations relating to Defects Liability. In addition to the defects liability requirement to ensure the plants survive and grow, the Contractor shall undertake additional watering by hand or automatic systems installed, at the frequency stated in the plant establishment activity schedule to create lush vegetation.

Water shall be applied until the top 200 mm of topsoil around each plant is saturated.

Watering should not be undertaken during the hot part of the day. Watering nozzles shall be fine rose or sprinkler heads to prevent damage growth areas of the plants.

ACS530.9.3 Weed control

The Contractor shall remove and control weeds regularly throughout the period of maintenance. Removal of weeds at the end of the Defects Liability or Plant Establishment Period is not acceptable.

All cultivated planted areas shall be kept weed free to the extent that perennial weed species are eradicated and annual weed species are well controlled. Care shall be taken to avoid disturbance of the shrub roots and excessive compaction of the bed surface. The Contractor shall remove all litter and other debris and dispose off-site at the end of each day.

Additional weed control may be required in spring when the ground warms and seeds in the soil germinate.

During the Contract Period, the Contractor shall control weeds, which affect the establishment and growth of the plants installed under the Contract or existing in areas to be maintained by the Contractor.

Prior to release of the Certificate of Practical Completion, the Contractor shall remove all weeds within the area of the planting contract. Removal shall be deemed to include the killing of the weed and removal of the root system.

All weed material shall be removed from the landscape areas and dumped off site.

ACS530.9.4 Pest control

If in the opinion of the Contractor, pests are likely to cause damage to the plants, the Contractor shall be responsible for notifying the Engineer of any damage to the plants by pests. Lack of notification by the Contractor may result in the Contractor being responsible for damage caused by pests.

ACS530.9.5 Fertiliser

Slow-release fertiliser is applied to the bedding soil of plants at the time of plant installation except in wetland planting areas.

Further applications of approved, NPK balanced, slow-release fertiliser shall be applied in accordance with the Maintenance Schedule. Application rates shall be as recommended by the fertiliser manufacturer with regard to the size of plant. Fertiliser should be watered-in after application.

Fertiliser shall not be applied to wetland plants.

Fertiliser shall be applied to grassed areas in accordance with the maintenance programme. Fertiliser shall be well-balanced, 6-month slow-release fertiliser including available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium plus magnesium and trace elements, as approved by the Engineer.

ACS530.9.6 Specimen trees

Planted trees are to be encouraged to grow to maturity as naturally as possible to achieve their natural characteristic form, through sound management practices including weeding, trimming, checking of stakes and ties, pruning and other accepted horticultural operations.

Staking shall be repaired or replaced as required.

Ties must be checked in accordance with the plant establishment activity schedule for staking, to ensure that ties are not broken and more importantly, that they have not become tight around the trunk as the tree grows. Ties should be firm but not so tight so as to cause damage to the bark. Ties should be adjusted accordingly over the initial three growing seasons for planted trees, after which time the majority of stakes can be removed.

The Contractor shall undertake regular light pruning of specimen trees over a period of time to avoid one severe pruning. Excessive foliage removal should be avoided which may result in wind damage or sun scalding and loss of the tree's aesthetic appearance. Broken or dangerously overhanging branches shall be removed.

Dead and broken branches must be removed as they pose a safety hazard to the site as well as encouraging wood rotting organisms and termites. Care must be taken when removing branches to prevent further damage to the tree.

Prune back to a sound healthy branch with a clean cut, in accordance with good arboricultural practice. Final cuts shall be made as close as possible to the branch collar without damaging the collar. Final cuts and wound treatments are to be carried out in accordance with the principles and practice of good arboriculture.

All pruning waste will be removed and disposed of off-site.

ACS530.9.7 Plants

The Contractor shall maintain planting beds to establish good plantings and achieve a high level of lush vegetation with visual impact. Activities shall include weed control, trimming, watering, and fertilising.

Planting beds shall be trimmed to a neat a tidy appearance in the same condition as when the works were completed at Practical Completion.

The Contractor shall undertake regular trimming of shrubs to maintain the following aspects:

- a) Removal of dead heads after flowering
- b) Removal of dead or old weak growth
- c) Cutting back to encourage growth vigour
- d) Thinning out mass planted areas to allow stronger plants to dominate.

Wetland plants only require weed removal and replacement of dead or damaged plants.

At the end of the establishment period, all plant material shall be checked for any dead wood, broken or damaged branches which shall be pruned and removed from the plant.

ACS530.9.8 Litter and vandalism

Litter shall be removed from hard and soft landscaping areas to the frequency specified by the Activity Schedule.

Litter shall refer to all extraneous waste material which is detrimental to the appearance of the site and shall include stones, bricks, debris, paper, cardboard, confectionery and other wrappings, bottles, cans, plastic containers, plastic, paper, and glass, able to be disposed in Auckland Council street-side rubbish collections.

Litter shall also refer to domestic refuse including items generally dumped from the boot of a car, e.g. bin bags and vegetative matter.

Broken glass shall be swept from hard surfaces and raked from grassed areas. Attention is required to the prompt removal of glass bottles to reduce the likelihood of glass being broken by others.

All litter shall be removed prior to any grass cutting operations.

Litter shall be removed and disposed off-site.

The Contractor shall notify the Engineer of areas, which have in their opinion been vandalised or damaged with graffiti. The Engineer may at their discretion issue instructions for the vandalised works to be reinstated as a variation.

Those plants which fail and are not notified to the Engineer shall be assumed to have died as a result of planting operations and shall be replaced.

The cost of plants or other landscape works deemed to have failed due to theft, wilful damage or vandalism shall be the Principal's responsibility.

Where planting is suffering damage as a result of wear and tear, the Contractor shall advise the Engineer who may issue instructions to provide temporary barriers or substitute damaged species with a more resilient planting solution as a variation.

The Contractor shall notify the Engineer of suspected fly tipping to seek approval to remove it.

Fly tipping shall refer to items such as soil, aggregate, builder's rubble, motor vehicle bodies, beds, mattresses, fridges and televisions or any other larger item requiring removal by machine.

ACS530.9.9 Notification of visits

The Contractor shall notify the Engineer for inspection of the works prior to compensation for maintenance.