

Large herbivores have an integral role in the cultural history, character, and biodiversity of the New Forest. However, in some instances the pressures exerted by large herbivores can pose challenges to land management objectives. For example, deer are often in conflict with forestry practices through browsing, bark stripping, grazing, trampling and fraying. With current deer numbers on the rise there presents significant risk to tree planting, reforestation, and afforestation projects. Current management of deer is often very costly, time consuming, and varies in social acceptability as well as efficacy. This Ph.D. project will explore alternative nature-based tree protection methods such as nurse planting, dead hedging, slash, brash, and nurse objects.

We will be investigating:

1. What evidence exists on the application of nature-based tree protection methods against large herbivore damage?
2. Can nurse plants protect oak (*Quercus robur*) against deer damage?

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