

THE HIT - AN ACCURATE TEST FOR ALL HEDGES AND WALLS.

The HIT has many advantages over conventional hedgerow surveys in ease, safety and accuracy of application, and in the gathering of compatible and comprehensive nation-wide statistics. It can be applied at any season of the year, anywhere in Britain, to any kind of hedge, hedgerow or wall. It contains all the Hedgerows Regulations criteria except for the rare species list (which typically requires more than one visit-in-season by an expert) though it usefully indicates those hedges most likely to contain interesting species. It requires no special knowledge to apply the HIT. It is non-invasive to the wildlife and safe for the surveyor, being carried out simply by walking the length of the hedge and answering the questions.



Stone hedge. HIT mark 7½



Field hedge. HIT mark 6

THE HIT METHOD.

The survey form containing 24 simple questions produces the HIT mark for the overall importance of the hedge on a scale of 1 to 10. Outstanding hedges score 10*. The test further

clarifies the character of the hedge by automatically providing separate HIT marks for the three principal values of history, landscape and wildlife, and a detailed description of the hedge, its associated features and habitat potential is printed out.



Roadside hedgebank. HIT mark 7½

The scoring system takes into account 15 main factors and over 60 sub-factors, and is equally divided between history, landscape and wildlife.

HOW TO USE THE HIT.

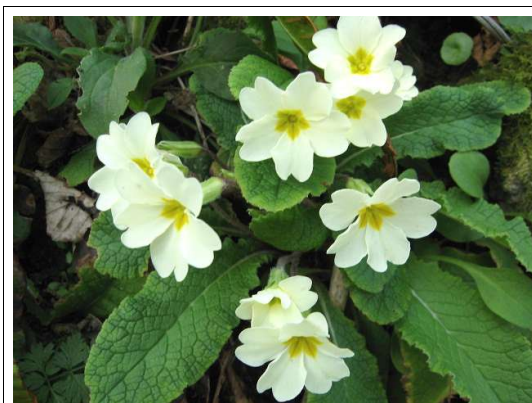
Read the introduction, then print out the survey form, which has a simple help-note with each question to assist in answering it. Walk your hedge and fill in the answers, which consist of a single letter or a number entered in the box provided with each question on the form.

To help with identifying the short list of plant species at any time there is a photo gallery showing each of the HIT plants at the four seasons of the year.

If you have access to the HIT automatic facility online, enter your answers to obtain the HIT marks and printed description of the hedge. Using the help-notes to answer the questions fully and

correctly ensures that the description will be accurate. You can also use the Search and Analyse facility to view other HITs or analyse different aspects of the data stored in the HIT database.

If this online access is unavailable, download the points sheets and scoring instructions to work out the HIT marks for the hedge or wall you have surveyed. This is a simple scoring system that gives the overall HIT mark and individual HIT marks for Landscape, Wildlife and History, using the answers you have entered on the survey form.



Primrose: one of the easily-recognised indicator plants named in the HIT to score the hedge for habitat potential.



Hedge along ancient hollow lane. HIT mark 10



Roadside hedge, single tree species. HIT mark 8½

THE PURPOSE AND USES OF THE HIT.

Hedge surveys are required for various reasons and need to be carried out cost-effectively and without interference to wildlife or danger to the surveyor. The Hedge (& Wall) Importance Test is designed to provide this service for all types of hedge and wall. The HIT can be used for definitive purposes or as an economical initial screening test, the results pin-pointing those hedges worth further survey by the relevant expert. It facilitates schemes such as the Biodiversity Action Plan, and assists in making assessments for environmental schemes of all kinds.



Ancient hedge surviving in town. HIT mark 9½

The HIT is of use in assessing hedges that are involved in site developments, planning applications, enquiries and decisions. It is intended for use also by the general public, for instance in personal interests and research, in school or local environmental group projects, or for the citizen who wishes to object to a hedge's removal. For this purpose the automatic HIT printout or the points sheets and results form provide impartial evidence of the hedge's value and the importance of its retention.

The HIT is of interest to the wildlife or history enthusiast and the landscape architect. Anyone who owns a hedge, perhaps around their garden, can find out how it rates for importance, and, if not highly, how it may be improved.