

Christmas Tree for the Village Green

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide information to help decide how to provide a Christmas Tree for the village green. The initial brief was to look for a tree that could be planted which had a height of around 10 feet at time of purchase. However, to provide a full set of options I have also included information about cut trees.

2. Decisions to be Made

The following decisions need to be made:

- Whether to plant a permanent tree or get a cut one each year.
- What species to purchase if we are going to plant one.
- Whether to source and store our own lights or have a contractor do it.

3. Things to be aware of

Selecting trees is not an exact science so please be aware of the following:

- All planted trees are individually priced so costs in this document are approximate.
- Exact sizes described in this document may not be available when we decide to purchase.
- Even trees of the same species can vary a lot in appearance.
- Growing rates and ultimate heights were not consistent across all sources I consulted. They will be affected by soil type and position.

4. Planted or Cut Tree

Pros and Cons

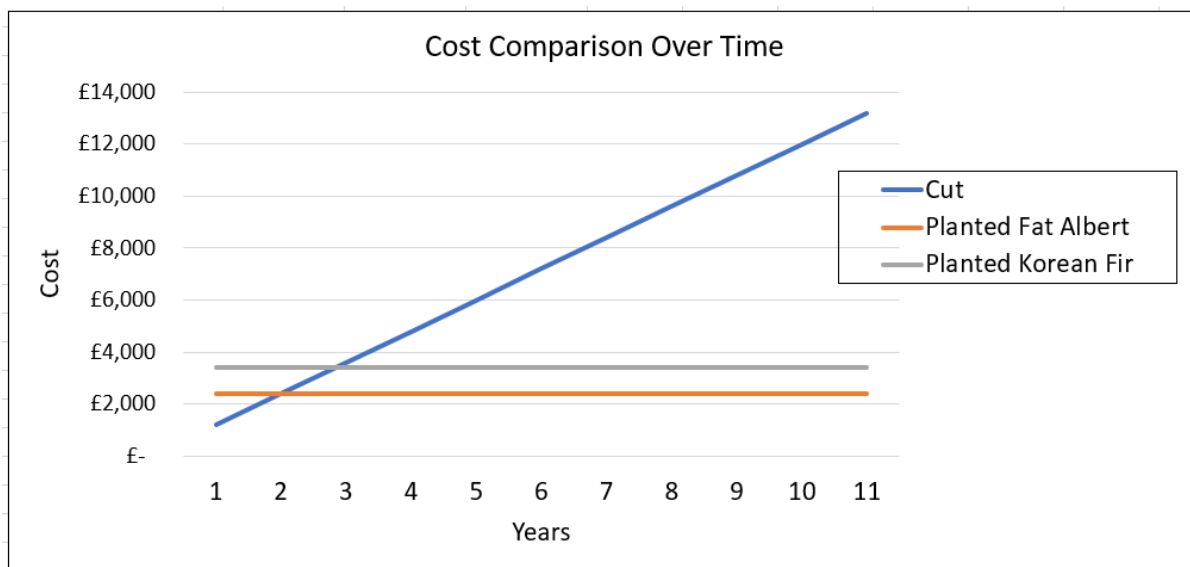
	Pros	Cons
Planted Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheaper in the long run. The break-even point is only 2-3 years.• More eco-friendly as we will not cut down and then dispose of a new tree each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is more difficult to source a planted tree than a cut tree.• It will get taller each year so we need to decide what size to buy and consider growth rate and ultimate height which are only estimates.• There is a risk it will not become established and will die.• It might not be possible to see the tree before we buy and we will be stuck with how it looks.
Cut Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We can change our mind each year on size/species until we settle on what we like.• The size will be whatever we specify each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More expensive in the long run.• Less eco-friendly as a new tree is cut down and disposed of each year

Cost comparison

The costs for the Fat Albert are from Sparkx who provide the Aylesbury Market Square tree. They did not break down the cost of supply, delivery and planting. The costs for the cut tree are also from Sparkx so are a good comparison. The costs for the Abies Koreana are from Practicality Brown in Iver and the cost breakdown is £2060 tree, £240 delivery and £1100 planting.

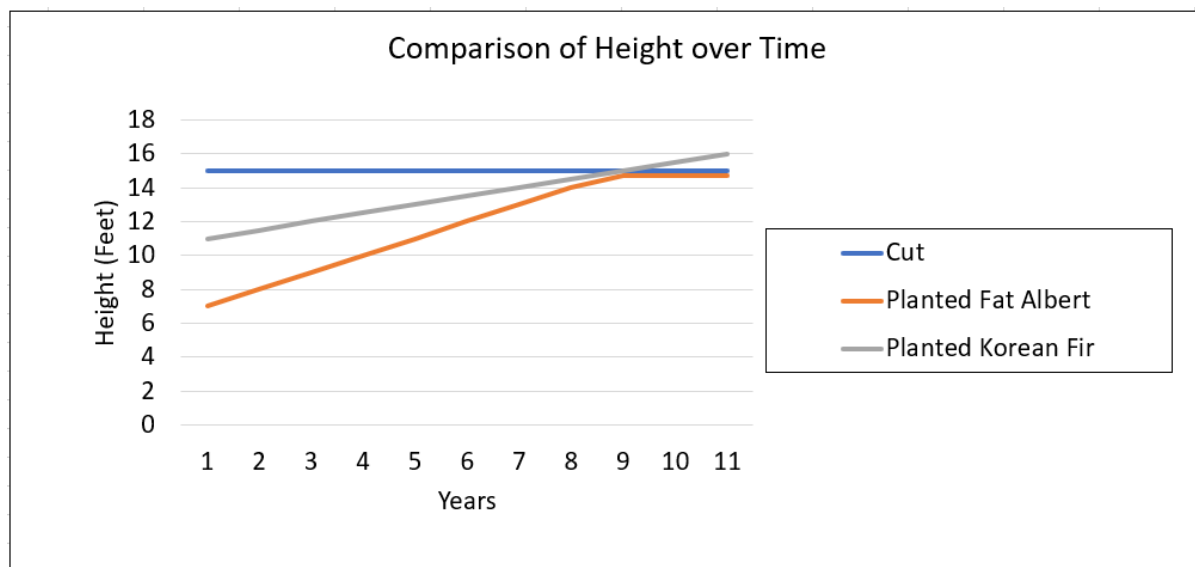
	Total cost year 1	Total cost year 2	Total cost year 3	Total cost year 4
7ft Fat Albert delivered and planted £2400	£2400	£2400	£2400	£2400
11ft Abies Koreana delivered and planted	£3400	£3400	£3400	£3400
15ft cut tree installed and removed £1200	£1200	£2400	£3600	£4800

Note that all costs throughout this document are excluding VAT



Height

It is worth noting that due to the growth of the planted tree, what you would have each year is not a complete like for like comparison. The cut tree will always be 15ft but the planted Fat Albert tree starts at 7ft and this species will not reach its maximum height of 15ft until 8 years later. The Korean Fir example starts at 11ft but is slower growing so also does not reach 15ft until after around 8 years.



5. Species

The Species considered were:

Picea Pungens

Picea Pungens (Fat Albert) was the species suggested to Tony and Ann-Marie when they visited the nursery at Denham. They are generally a good bushy shape and a bluish colour and grow to 10-15 ft.

They did not have a good example at Denham and I have not been able to find a nursery that can supply a large specimen. Sparkx , who provide the Aylesbury Market Square tree, did however tell me they managed to find one they could supply but it is currently under 7ft so is probably too small. Even at that size it would cost £2400 delivered and planted

Acorn Trees and Shrubs in Devon did not have a Fat Albert in stock either but suggested Picea Pungens (Edith) as an alternative. These are available to order 5ft 6in – 6ft 6in tall at £1350 plus delivery and planting.

Another variety is Picea Pungens – Glauca. Practicality Brown in Iver have these available at 8-9 ft for £913.50 plus delivery and planting. This is cheaper because it is faster growing at 1-2 ft per year and can reach an ultimate height of 60ft.



Picea Pungens – Fat Albert



Picea Pungens - Edith



Picea Pungens - Glauca

Abies Veitchii

Acorn Trees and Shrubs said if we want something from stock now they have one of these which is 12-14 ft tall and with a 3" thick trunk for £1360. That is a lot taller than the various Picea Pungens but the reason is that it is fast growing and can get to 90ft in 25 years.

Acorn Trees say that Abies are more hardy than Picea and seem to perform better in the ground without watering in the summer.

The shape of this species is also not as bushy as the Picea Pungens. Below are various photos which show how variable they can be.



From internet search



From Internet Search



Acorn Trees example

Abies Koreana (Korean Fir)

Since I was told that Abies were more hardy than Picea Pungens I looked at other Abies varieties and I found the Korean Fir. Practicality Brown in Iver can get these in various sizes. They have a 9-10 ft one for £1,609 or a larger 10 - 11ft 6in) for £2060. They grow to around 30 ft.



Abies Nordmanniana (Caucasian Fir)

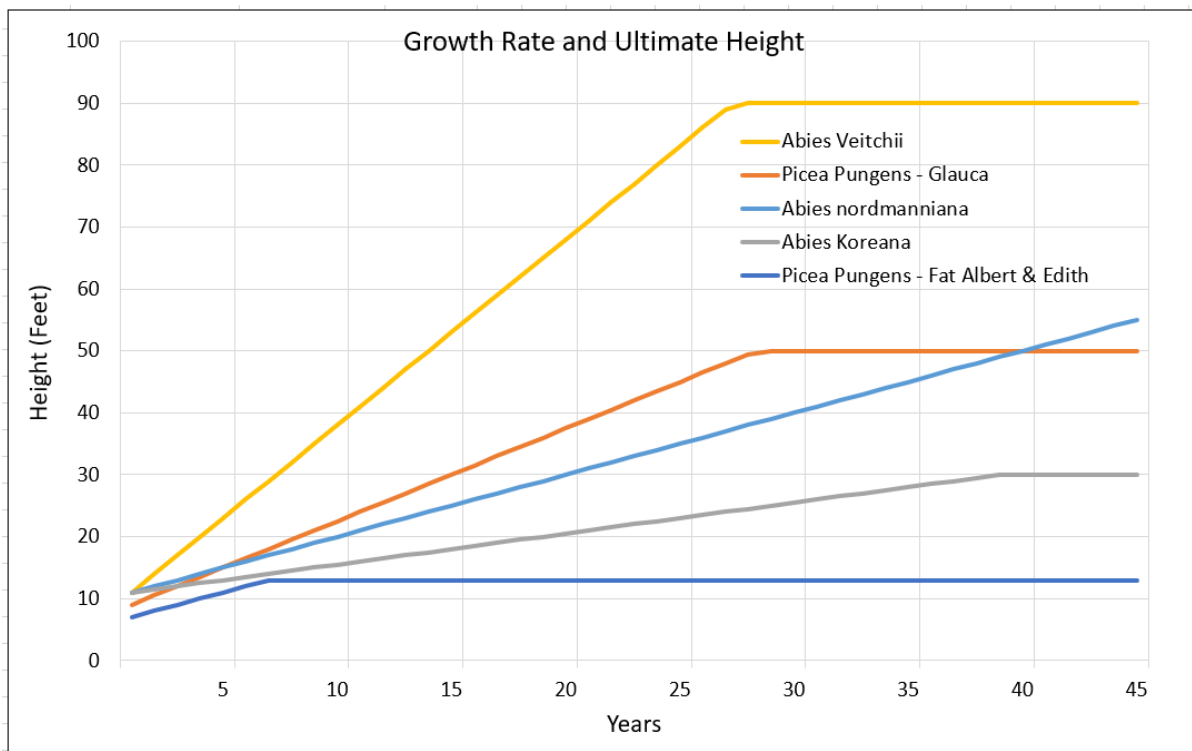
Practicability Brown have these in a similar size to the Korean Fir and they do look more Christmas tree like. It appears their ultimate height is taller though and one source said they could grow to 80-100 feet.



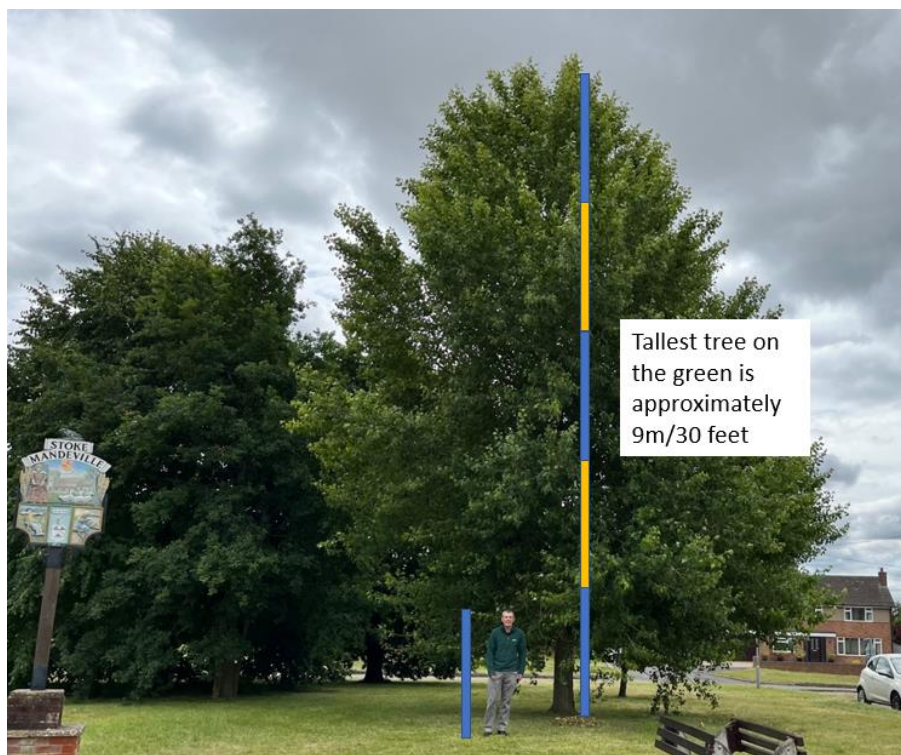
6. Start size, growth per year and ultimate size

We want something that is a good size to start with (around 10 feet) that will not get too large. We also need to consider how wide it will get. The site where we plan to put the tree can accommodate a tree which would grow to a maximum of 8m/25 feet wide.

The following graph shows the size of each type of tree over years, with the height at year 1 based on the maximum height I have been able to find available to purchase.



To get an idea of how high we would want the tree to grow the illustration below shows that the tallest tree currently on the green is around 9m/30 feet tall.



7. Lights

We will need to dress the tree with lights each year. Cost are not included in this document as they will be the same for a cut tree or planted tree of the same size. The only difference is that as a planted tree grows we may need extra lights in future years.

Sparkx say they have some clients that source and store their own lighting and they just do the installation but for other clients Sparkx supply lights and store them.

There will also be a one-off cost of installing a power supply.

8. When to Plant

Planted trees are field grown as opposed to grown in pots and are available to be dug up and replanted from November to April.

9. Site Survey

Practicability Brown are happy to carry out a site inspection where they can evaluate the access for delivery and installation equipment and also to establish the services present. Further to this they would offer you a more precise quotation. The fee for a site visit is £150 which would be refunded when an order is placed to supply, deliver and plant.

10. Conclusions

- The break even point for a planted tree compared to a cut tree is 2-3 years.
- Ultimate height would be a key factor in deciding what species of planted tree to purchase.
- We don't have to make a decision until around September.
- If we want a planted tree we should go to Practicality Brown in Iver as they are local and the only other place I found which seemed to have what we wanted was in Devon.