

# THE FOREST OWNERS CO-OP NEWSLETTER



## Reading Recommendations for our members to enjoy this Autumn/Winter

- 'A Tale of Thirty Three Trees' by Sylva
- 'To Speak For The Trees' by Diana Beresford-Kroeger
- 'The Global Forest' by Diana Beresford-Kroeger
- 'Finding the Mother Tree: Uncovering the Wisdom and Intelligence of the Forest' by Suzanne Simard
- 'The Ecology Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained' by Dorling Kindersley, Tony Juniper
- 'Blooming Marvellous: A Wildflower Hunter's Year' by Zoe Devlin
- 'The Wildflowers of Ireland' & 'Wildflowers of Ireland' by Zoe Devlin

Please visit the book depositary website for details and information on how to buy/download these books.

## IFAC Zoom Discussion on Taxation



An open questions and answers zoom session with IFAC's Declan McEvoy and Gearoid Condon will take place on Wednesday evening, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September at 8:30-9:30pm.

## Knowledge Transfer Course

If interested, there are still a few places available.



Requirements for the course:

- You must have a growing forest
- You must have not completed a Knowledge Transfer Group course before

The Knowledge Transfer Course provides knowledge on forest activities and expertise regarding forest rotation to achieve economic return sustainably.

Participants get an allowance of €70 per evening for attending.

Duration: 7 consecutive weeks- one evening a week starting mid-late September.

## Chainsaw Course

- Cross cut course taking place in October/ November
- Five participants per course/per location to allow for individual attention.
- 3-day course- from 9am to 3:30pm approximately with a break for lunch.
- Cost: €600 per course
- Certificate approved
- Cost includes all exams and certification - city and guilds certification which allows you to work on behalf of the council/local authorities in the event of any fallen trees during stormy weather, gale force winds etc.



## ITGA's Zoom Presentation on Timber Certification

The Irish Forest Growers Association's Donal Whelan will present 1 hour zoom talk on Forest/Timber Certification on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October at 8-9pm. It will include information on what's involved with certification, the process and where to access important information. All members are welcome to attend.

## Afforestation and Nurseries

By Teige Ryan-  
Director at None So  
Hardy (Forestry) Ltd.



The programme for Government in 2014 put in place planting targets to increase Ireland's forestry cover (currently below 11%) over a five-year plan. Afforestation targets set out to build from 6,600 hectares to over 8,300 hectares annually.

As nursery saplings are produced over a three-year cycle, seed sowing is pitched accordingly three years in advance of actual planting. Every year the nurseries look at the afforestation targets three years into the future and forecast the species mix required to underpin supply.

The current licencing debacle within the department of agriculture has completely compromised the Governments planting ambitions and instead of increasing, afforestation has been in alarming decline. Going from 6,500ha in 2016 to just 2,434ha in 2020. *{table below}.*

Year	PfG Afforestation Target (ha)	Actual Area of Afforestation (ha)	% of Target
2016	6,660	6,500	98%
2017	7,140	5,536	77%
2018	7,205	4,025	56%
2019	8,115	3,550	44%
2020	8,290	2,434	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,410</b>	<b>22,045</b>	

This collapse in tree planting would have seen the closure of our nurseries if it wasn't for increased planting in Scotland, where afforestation has gone from 4,700ha to over 11,000ha during the same period. Without this, millions of surplus nursery stock would have been destroyed.

Planting for 2021 here is likely to finish around the same as last year, and 2022 will be another challenging year as the



department are still unable to issue sufficient volume of licences. Export demand will again be vital for our survival, which is crucial as were nurseries to be forced out of business all afforestation targets for the future would be impossible.

Despite the current difficulties, the nursery remains positive for the future. After all we are continually putting seed in the ground for three years down the line.

The Mackinnon report, currently at implementation stage will develop a fit for purpose licencing system, as it did in Scotland. This along with the growing awareness that all types of forestry are key in mitigating climate change will help see our industry recover and continue to deliver Social, Economic & Environmental benefits for rural Ireland.

## The Importance of Forestry Biodiversity and Agri-environments in Ireland

By Sarah Walsh, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Environmental Science Student at UCC

*Forest biodiversity refers to all life forms found within forested areas and the ecological roles they perform. It not only includes the trees, but the plants, animals and micro-organisms that live within the plantation.*



**What can you do to improve your land and support our ecosystem?**

Plant more trees! Plantations provide an environment for life to exist. It nurtures and protects species of animals and plants. These plantations not only increase and safeguard native Irish species but provide the potential for new products



which can be highly profitable for use in pharmaceutical and food industries e.g., eucalyptus essential oils. The forestry sector is largely important to the Irish economy and rural development. Forests are not only established for wood production, soil, and water conservation, but they sequester carbon which is vital for the fight against climate change due to their capability to retain atmospheric carbon dioxide and lower greenhouse gases. Forests are being destroyed around the world and it is already having a detrimental impact on public health. Forests are natural air purifiers and help combat pollutants that we otherwise would be exposed to. Trees can provide relief for acute respiratory symptoms and asthma. Providing a cleaner atmosphere can lower the risk of airborne illnesses which is especially relevant in present times as we deal with COVID-19.

The Irish ecosystem is highly dependent on its environment, a forest can provide shelter and a habitat for a variety of species. Unfortunately, expanding grasslands has caused a decline in woodlands and shrubs, to target this problem, hedge cutting, and the clearance of vegetation has been restricted to the six-month period September to February as set out in Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Heritage Act 2018. Educating our citizens on the importance of hedgerows and their significant contribution to Ireland's ecological richness has resulted in an increased abundance of hedgerows inhabiting a diverse range of life.

There is more work to be done.

The positive impact that a plantation can bring to rural Ireland is significant. Now more than ever we need to increase the number of natural environments in Ireland.

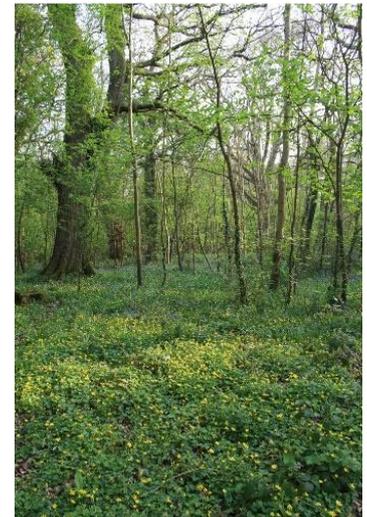


Increasing forested areas holds the potential to improve air and water quality and aid in the revival of Ireland's native species populations. The ecological development in Ireland is a neglected matter which needs urgent attention. Increasing Ireland's fauna and flora will not only improve the bionetwork but provide new and potentially money-making produce.

Agricultural land is the most abundant land type in Ireland and was disregarded as a safeguarding

environment prior to now. Turning pastures into forested land will provide a new future for many species. These species have a role to play in our ecosystems, which we depend so heavily on. Forests are safe havens for wild mushrooms, dandelions, and animals such as the hedgehog, red fox, stoat, squirrels, and badgers. Biodiversity conservation and maintaining and improving Ireland's ecological richness has been overlooked for many years leading to the decline in native flora and fauna. As a young person living in Ireland, I have experienced the depletion of many Irish species in my short lifetime, eagles, sparrowhawks, badgers, otters, bees and the list goes on. The planting of native trees will ensure a future for native Irish species and will generate income for future generations. Forestry can also provide millions of jobs worldwide.

Forest biodiversity can be better understood and utilised to our advantage. More research needs to be undertaken to understand the products that can be sustainably extracted from these forests. Irish forestry is underutilised and requires a more futuristic approach to ensure the livelihood of future generations and existence of native Irish species. Did you know that one large tree can supply a day's supply of oxygen for four people? Imagine what a whole plantation could do!



## **Culture Night in Brookpark Enterprise Centre, Dunmanway**

Wooden spoon making expert and founder of Hewn, Éamonn O'Sullivan has been invited by us to do a 2 hour workshop on 'Knife carving' on 'Culture Night' on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September in

Brookpark Enterprise Centre, Dunmanway, Co.Cork.



Please contact Kathryn at: 0863435164 if you are interested in participating in the workshop.

# The Forestry Co-op- A Member Overview

**By: Member of the Co-op who wants to remain anonymous**

FOCS get the job done. Early investment in the co-op has reaped rewards for this co-op member.

Recently I took a bet on the co-op, and I am very glad I did. It was a simple decision really following a phone call with Kathryn. I needed a felling licence for clear felling. I could see the game that the middlemen were playing. It was an unfair playing field where everything was stacked against the grower. There was a multitude of organisations I could have joined but I didn't trust any of them as I could not align my interest with theirs.

I decided that investing in our co-op is investing in ourselves. I paid my fees because I wanted results, trust, openness, and accountability.

I am extremely encouraged and happy with the work ethic of Kathryn and her team. I know the co-op works hard on behalf of us, the members. I have chosen to reward that effort sooner rather than later.

Kathryn has pursued my felling licence to the bitter end. I trust the co-op to fight my corner. I can see it has a strong code of ethics i.e., the grower must come first all the time.

Now that I have my felling licence, I am confident the co-op will secure a good deal for me. I had great difficulty with my felling licence and the co-op secured it at all stages.

If the co-op wasn't there in the morning, I am the one with most to lose financially. No task is beyond Kathryn and her team in my honest opinion. I have committed to early payment on my co-op fees. I am impressed by the work ethic, dedication, and power to take me as a member from grower to the house of decision making in Dublin and Wexford.

The need for co-op services was never as important as it is today. It is in my best interest- your best interest to ensure we keep our work team to continue our success story.

## Note from our Chief Executive Kathryn O'Donoghue

Forestry and Woodland Objectives are changing as we go into a stage of planning from 2021 to 2050.

At this point- we are talking:

Woodlands and Forests for climate, nature, for wood, people and the economy of rural Ireland.

As your Chief Executive, I encourage you to participate in our online education programme for Autumn. If you are unable to operate zoom do make a request for any notes available from such training initiatives. It is vital you are aware of the value of your forest and how it should be managed. We are here to help. Written requests are preferred as sometimes a phone message can get lost.

Wishing all our members and associates a lovely Autumn.

## Events

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT:

- **IFAC Q&A Webinar:**  
There will be an open questions and answers session with IFAC's Declan McEvoy and Gearoid Condon on Wednesday the 22nd of September through a Zoom call from 8:30 to 9:30pm.  
  
If you would prefer to confidentially send in questions prior to the zoom event, this can be done so anonymously. If you want a private clinic consultation, that can be arranged with us in following with the current covid restrictions.
- **Culture Night at Brookpark Enterprise Centre Dunmanway**  
Wooden spoon/knife making workshop with Éamonn O'Sullivan and FOCS 'Literature of Trees and Forestry' on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September at Brookpark Enterprise Centre, Dunmanway, Cork.
- **ITGA's Zoom Presentation on Timber Certification**  
With Donal Whelan on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October from 8-9pm
- **Knowledge Transfer Course:**  
Commencing mid-September for 7 weeks
- **Chainsaw Course:**  
Commencing in October/November  
**Please get bookings in immediately!**

### Contact:

Email: [info@focs.ie](mailto:info@focs.ie)  
Phone: 0863435164