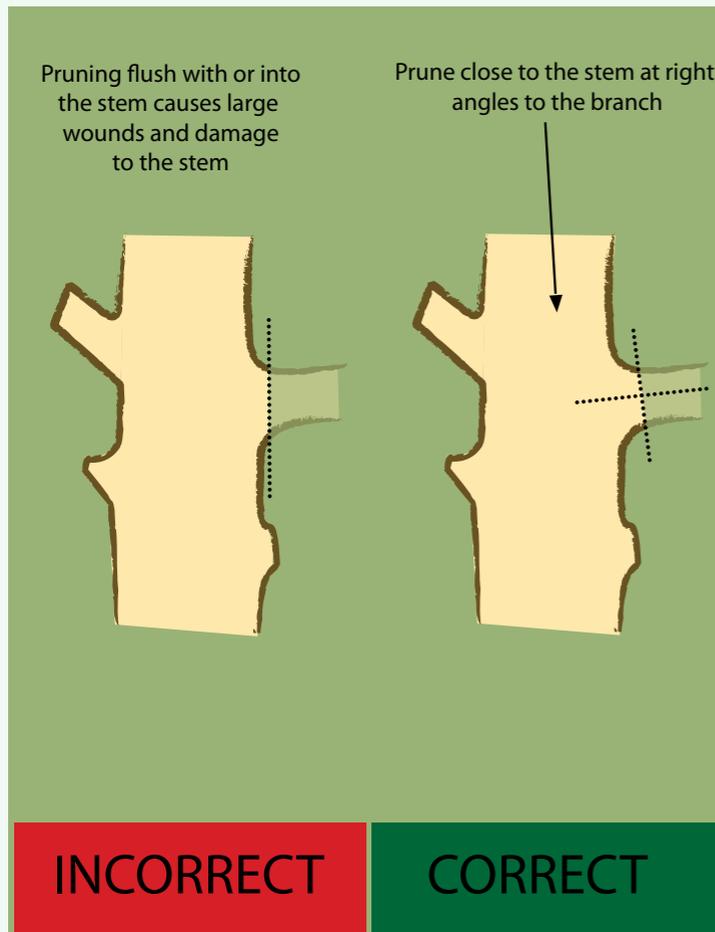


How to prune

High pruning is normally carried out in two phases called "lifts". The first lift involves pruning to a height of 3.5 metres. These trees are pruned to 6 metres at the second lift.

Cuts should be clean and at a right angle to the branch. Cutting flush with or into the stem should be avoided.



A period of between two to four years must be left between the first and the second lift.

Equipment



Pruning saws can be manual or power driven. The use of appropriate safety clothing and equipment is essential when carrying out high pruning. Training is necessary when using a power saw.

Good maintenance of equipment is important.

Teagasc provides advice and short courses on correct pruning techniques.

High Pruning Grants

Grant assistance for high pruning may be available from the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. This grant is cost-based and is paid in 2 instalments. The first lift (to 3.5 metres) is paid at €698.36 per hectare and the second lift (to 6 metres) is paid at €825.33 per hectare.

For further information on high pruning of conifers contact your local Teagasc Forestry Development Officer, local Teagasc office or log onto - www.teagasc.ie/forestry

This leaflet can be read in conjunction with Farm Forestry Series No. 10 "First Thinning in Conifers".



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High Pruning of Conifers

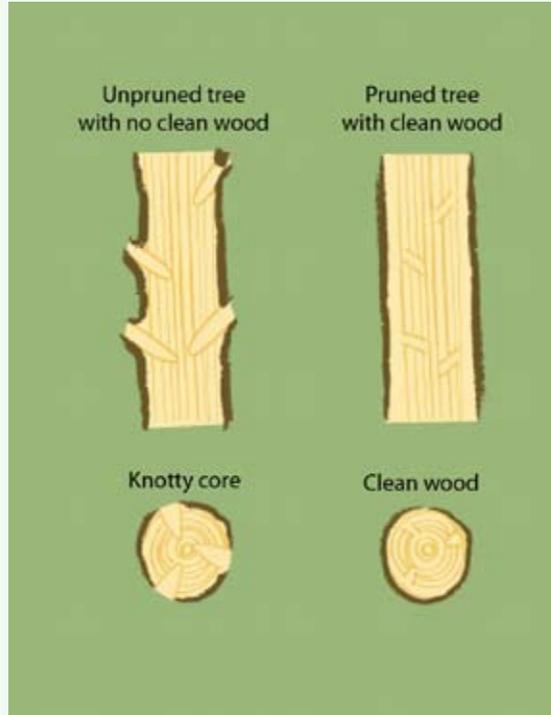


What is high pruning?

High pruning is the removal of all branches from the bottom 6 metres of tree stems to encourage the formation of knot-free high quality timber.

Why

- High pruning produces higher quality timber with more potential high value end uses
- This results in stronger timber which is more easily worked and finished.
- Timber from trees that have been high pruned may attract a price premium.
- Unpruned timber has more knots resulting in weaker structural timber and a potentially lower market value



Pruned tree: clean knot-free timber



Unpruned tree: knotty timber

Which forests?

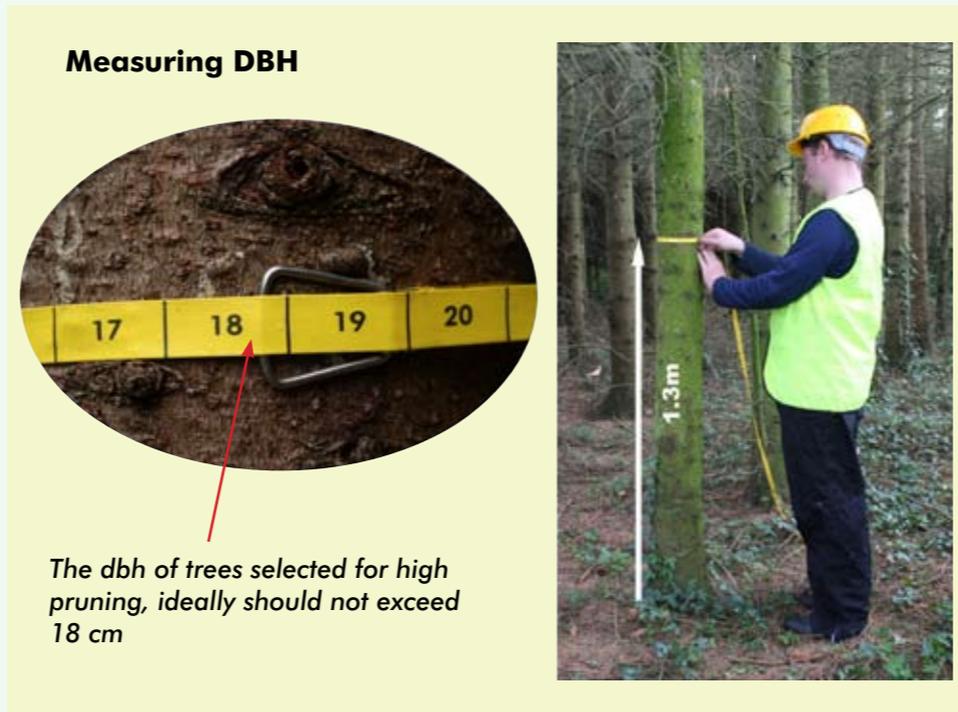
Forests approaching or at first thinning stage may be suitable for high pruning.

Only healthy, productive and stable forests should be considered for pruning.

Species such as Sitka spruce, Norway spruce and Douglas fir with high value end uses are most suitable for pruning.

Ideally, the diameter of selected trees should not exceed 18 centimetres DBH* and should have the potential to increase their diameter 2.5 times before clearfell.

* DBH stands for Diameter at Breast Height and is measured at 1.3 metres above ground level using a special measuring tape.



Which trees?

Select 500-600 trees per hectare as the proposed final crop. These should be the straightest and most vigorous trees. Ensure that selected trees are evenly distributed throughout the forest. Inspection paths should be cut or "brashed" every 80-100 metres in unthinned forests to facilitate high pruning.

