See forest management in action

Running from April 29 to May 9. Teagasc, in association with the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), is organising a nationwide series of forest walks from April 29 to May 9, focusing on the management of young forests. For many owners, the forestry conversation begins around opportunities for diversifying farm enterprises, grant and premia supports and the implications on the whole farm. It is essential to realise that the established forest is another crop and will reap rewards if managed as such.

This year’s series of forestry management walks presents an opportunity to see forest management in action. Each walk will also allow informal discussion of management issues on site and on attendees’ own sites. At these events, forestry experts from Teagasc and the Forest Service will explain why it is essential to care for young forests. It is very important to ensure that a young forest will perform well and that forest owners know what needs to be done each year. This is also true if the management of the forest has been subcontracted out for the first four years.

After all, it is the owner that will benefit financially from well looked after trees. Payment of the second instalment of the Afforestation Grant at year 4, as well as the continued payment of the forestry premium is subject to the forest successfully achieving certain standards. Emphasis in the first few years is on controlling the surrounding vegetation, ensuring that browsing animals don’t damage the young trees, replanting of failed trees, assessing nutrient needs, shaping of broadleaf trees and reducing the risk of fires.

The focus of these forest walks is on early management. However, medium- to long-term management will also be outlined, along with the many supplementary grant measures now in place to support forest owners in optimising their farm
forest resource. This nationwide series of forest walks is aimed at landowners who have established a new forest in the last ten years. Landowners who are considering planting some land will also find these events very useful.

No need to register, just turn up at 7.00pm at the meeting point with appropriate clothing/boots for weather and drive to nearby forest. For details of walk venues, dates, meeting points and site description see Table 1.

Table 1: Management walk dates (all walks begin at 7.00pm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Meeting point</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Short description</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlow</td>
<td>Nolan’s Garage, Ballon, R93 N2P7</td>
<td>Thursday, May 2</td>
<td>Early forest management – conifer and broadleaf</td>
<td>Frances McHugh 087-622 2111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>Spar Drumacon Service Station, Drumacon, Belturbet, H14 YX95</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 8</td>
<td>Pre-thinning conifers and broadleaves</td>
<td>Kevin O’Connell 087-121 6159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>Bodyke Church, Broadford, V94 YW93</td>
<td>Thursday, May 9</td>
<td>Continuous cover forestry</td>
<td>Michael Somers 087-121 6163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>Ballydesmond GAA, Ballydesmond, PS1 EE9W</td>
<td>Monday, April 29</td>
<td>Early forest management – four year old site</td>
<td>John Casey 087-224 2283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donegal</td>
<td>Jackson’s Hotel, Ballybofey, F93 ND40 (riverside car park)</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 30</td>
<td>Early forest management – broadleaf woodland</td>
<td>Steven Meyen 087-677 5158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>Heather Restaurant car park, Tomies West, Gap of Dunloe, Killarney, V93 WP94</td>
<td>Thursday, May 9</td>
<td>Early forest management – native woodland establishment</td>
<td>Jonathan Spazzi 087-710 2739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>Longman Kilfane car park, Thomastown, R95 Y239</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 30</td>
<td>Early forest management</td>
<td>Michael Somers 087-121 6163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>Golden Vale Mart car park, Railway Road, Abbeyfeale, V94 R120</td>
<td>Thursday, May 2</td>
<td>Early forest management – sitka spruce and oak</td>
<td>Jonathan Spazzi 087-710 2739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longford</td>
<td>Saint Patrick’s GAA Club, Michael Keenan Park (car park), Moore, Ardagh, N39 FWS2</td>
<td>Monday, April 29</td>
<td>Early forest management – conifer and broadleaf</td>
<td>Liam Kelly 087-909 0495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>Texaco Garage, Ballindine (N17 Tuam–Claremorriss), F12 PBH1</td>
<td>Thursday, May 2</td>
<td>Early forest management</td>
<td>Noel Kennedy 087-909 0504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>McCaughey’s Daybreak, Drungâamus, Broomfield, A75 YR90</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 30</td>
<td>Early forest management</td>
<td>Kevin O’Connell 087-121 6159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offaly</td>
<td>Blue Ball Inn, Blue Ball, Tullamore, R35 KK08</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 1</td>
<td>Early forest management – conifer and broadleaf</td>
<td>Liam Kelly 087-909 0495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>Kilglass Gaels GAA, Rooskey (R371 Rooskey –Strokestown), N41 YC44</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 7</td>
<td>Early forest management</td>
<td>Noel Kennedy 087-909 0504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>St Mary’s Church, Grangemockler, Carrick-on-Suir, E32 TC03</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 1</td>
<td>Early forest management</td>
<td>Michael Somers 087-121 6163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>Holy Cross Church, Carrigahilla, Stradbally, X42 RH93</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 1</td>
<td>10 year old ash, Chalara reforestation</td>
<td>John Casey 087-224 2283</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Legal requirements for tree felling

All those involved in tree felling must ensure that a felling licence has been issued before any felling is carried out, unless they are satisfied that the felling is exempted (see categories below).

A felling licence granted by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine provides authority under the Forestry Act 2014 to fell or otherwise remove a tree or trees and to thin a forest for management reasons.

The Forestry Act 2014 provides for a single licence process for tree felling.

The Forestry Act can cater for felling licences up to ten years in duration, which may be extended for one or more further periods, up to a total of five years.

Making a tree felling licence application

Application forms and guidance notes are available to download from the DAFM website: https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/forestservice/treefelling. You can also contact the Felling Section, Forest Service, DAFM, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co Wexford or phone 053-916 3400.

It is very important that an applicant reads the guidance notes very carefully before filling out the application form. For instance, if an applicant requires a 10-year licence, details of all proposed felling operations for the ten-year period must be supplied in the felling information table. Otherwise a licence will only be issued to cover the fell operations and years specified in the felling information table.

All relevant detail must be included in a licence application. Registered foresters may be consulted in relation to application completion, particularly in relation to environmental requirements and forest growth data.

Public consultation

Where a tree felling licence application is received, the Forest Service will publish a notice on their website of the application before making a decision. This allows for public consultation within 30 days from the date of the notice. A site notice is required to inform members of the public about the nature of the felling and that a felling licence has been issued for the harvesting operations. It does not form part of a consultation process.

Where a felling licence has been issued, a 28-day time limit for the receipt of any appeals, from the date of decision, will apply in all cases. Third parties may appeal the decision to grant a licence or the conditions associated with a licence. The applicant may also lodge an appeal against a licence refusal or a condition specified on a licence.

Exempted trees

Here are some common scenarios where trees can be felled without the need to submit a tree felling licence application under Section 19 of the Forestry Act, 2014:

- a tree in an urban area – an urban area is an area that comprises a city, town or borough specified in part 2 of schedule 5 and in schedule 6 of the Local Government Act 2001 before the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014;
a tree within 30 metres of a building (other than a wall or temporary structure), but excluding any building built after the trees were planted;
a tree less than five years of age that came about through natural regeneration and is being removed from a field as part of the normal maintenance of agricultural land (but not where the tree is standing in a hedgerow);
a tree uprooted in a nursery for the purpose of transplantation;
a tree of the willow or poplar species planted and maintained solely for fuel under a short rotation coppice;
trees outside a forest – within 10 metres of a public road and which, in the opinion of the owner (being an opinion formed on reasonable grounds), are dangerous to persons using the public road on account of the trees’ age or condition;
trees outside a forest – the removal of which is specified in a grant of planning permission;
trees outside a forest – of the hawthorn or blackthorn species;
a tree outside a forest – in a hedgerow and felled for the purposes of trimming, provided that the tree does not exceed 20 centimetres in diameter when measured 1.3 metres from the ground; and,
a tree outside a forest – on an agricultural holding and removed by the owner for use on that holding, provided:
- it does not form part of a decorative avenue or ring of trees;
- its volume does not exceed 3 cubic metres; and,
- that the removal of it, by the owner for the foregoing purpose, when taken together with the removal of other such trees by the owner for that purpose, would not result in the total volume of trees on that holding removed by the owner for that purpose exceeding 15 cubic metres in any period of 12 months.

This exemption does not apply in the case of a tree:
- within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure under chapter 1 of part IV of the Planning and Development Act of 2000 (Act of 2000);
- within an area subject to a special amenity area order;
- within a landscape conservation area under section 204 of the Act of 2000;
- that is more than 150 years old; and,
- within:
  - a monument or place recorded under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994;
  - a historic monument or archaeological area entered in the Register of Historic Monuments under section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987;
  - a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 1994; and,
  - a European site or a natural heritage area within the meaning of Regulation 2(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011).