

# FORESTRY

June 2020

## RDS Forest and Woodland Awards

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### Now open for entries!

The RDS Forest and Woodland Awards are Ireland's national forestry awards. They recognise and reward farmers and woodland owners who are employing the principles of climate-smart agriculture on their properties, including sound commercial management, environmental protection and encouragement of biodiversity.

### Teagasc Farm Forestry Award

The Teagasc Farm Forestry Award recognises working farmers who are integrating forestry and farming for environmental, social and economic benefits.

The category aims to promote the positive sustainable contribution of forestry as an integral enterprise within the wider farming profile. It acknowledges the farmer's role in actively integrating and managing the forest to support



*Gerard Deegan of Westmeath, 2018 winner of the Teagasc Farm Forestry Award.*

farm viability and to strengthen wider farming sustainability.

Working farmers who believe they are doing a good job in managing their forest as an integral part of the farm are strongly encouraged to enter.

### Other award categories:

- Production Forestry; and,
- Community Woodlands.

### Prizes:

- The winner in each of the above categories will receive €2,000, an RDS Silver Medal and a perpetual trophy; and,
- the runner-up in each category will receive €1,000 and a special Certificate of Merit.

All woodland owners and managers are encouraged to enter the awards as all woodlands, large or small, are of merit.

### To apply

Application forms are available on the RDS website: [www.rds.ie/forestry](http://www.rds.ie/forestry), or via email from [forestry@rds.ie](mailto:forestry@rds.ie). Closing date for entries is Friday July 10, 2020. For further information please contact the RDS on 01-240 7215, email [forestry@rds.ie](mailto:forestry@rds.ie), or your local Teagasc forestry advisor.

## Seasonal management tips

### Shaping young broadleaves

Shaping is the process of removing forks and large competing side branches in order to improve the quality of broadleaf trees, resulting in long straight lengths of timber for sale to high-value markets. Keep in mind that shaping is not the removal of many side branches.

Shaping is a simple job that, when carried out correctly, can dramatically improve the quality and value of a forest crop.

If a tree forks, the fork always remains at that height on the tree and so if it is not removed, it will dramatically affect its value.

### What to shape

It is not necessary to shape every tree. Many trees will not require any shaping, i.e., those that already have one single stem, with no excessively large side branches (**Figure 1**: Grade 1).

However, there may be some trees that are of very poor quality, with many heavy branches and multiple forks (Grade 4).

These trees are very difficult to improve and may be removed in the first thinning for firewood. Grades 2 and 3 are trees that can be dramatically improved with well-timed shaping.

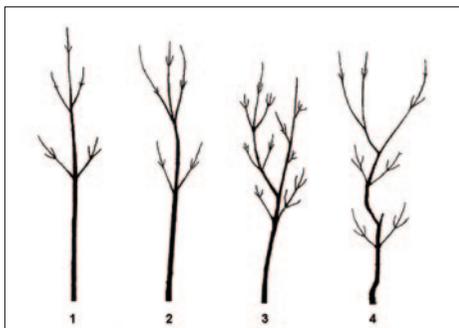


FIGURE 1: Illustration of stem form categories.

### How to shape

Shaping should be carried out using good-quality secateurs, loppers and in some cases (if shaping is left very late), a pruning saw. Equipment should be cleaned regularly to avoid the possibility of spreading disease. Choose a single straight dominant shoot as leader. If forked, remove the weaker, poorer-quality side of the fork. Remove excessively large side branches only if they are competing with the main leading stem.

The cut should be made where the branch meets the main stem outside the branch collar, but without leaving a 'peg'. Remember: do not remove more than one-third of the foliage.

### When to shape

Summer is the recommended period for most species, but for practical reasons, many prefer working during the winter when tree form is easier to see, and ground vegetation is easier to walk through. Shaping should not be carried out in spring or autumn.

### High pruning older broadleaves

High pruning differs from shaping. It is the removal of all branches from the bottom 6m of a tree stem to encourage the formation of knot-free high-quality timber. High pruning normally occurs around the time of, or after first thinning of both



*Shaping should be carried out using good-quality secateurs.*

conifers and broadleaves. Proper care must be taken when cutting large branches to avoid causing damage to the main stem. All potential crop trees can be pruned (at least 300 per ha depending on the species).

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## Keep in touch

We are still very much available to assist you with any forestry-related query you may have. Here's how:

### Advice

We can be contacted by phone, text, email or post. We will continue to support you if you are considering establishing a forest or you have a question on how to better manage your forest. Full contact details can be found at: [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry).

### Printed newsletters

A total of 40,000 Teagasc clients receive this quarterly newsletter: a valuable source of information providing technical advice, relevant forestry news, and research project updates.

### Website

The forestry section of the Teagasc website ([www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry)) is packed with useful information, such as technical advice, detailed information on forestry grants, research project

updates, staff contact details and much, much more.

### Teagasc Forestry eNews

Thousands of people receive Teagasc's forestry e-newsletter free of charge directly into their email inbox, keeping you informed of the latest Irish forestry news, forestry grants, valuable forest management tips and much more. Subscribing is very easy: visit [www.teagasc.ie/forestry](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry).

### YouTube

The Teagasc Forestry YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/teagascforestryvideos](http://www.youtube.com/teagascforestryvideos)) has dozens of useful videos, ranging from technical how-to videos to taxation topics.

### Social media

Our various social media platforms are a great way to keep in touch. You can follow us on:

Twitter: @teagascforestry

Facebook: forestry.teagasc

Instagram: teagasc\_forestry

# RESEARCH UPDATE



## Continuous cover forestry research

DR IAN SHORT and TED WILSON report on Teagasc's TranSSFor project.

### Main points:

- unique study with international significance;
- transformation of Sitka spruce stands to continuous cover forestry (CCF);
- long-term study of three thinning types on transformation to CCF; and,
- builds on UCD-led COFORD-funded LISS project, 2010-2014.

There is increasing interest in CCF in Ireland but little is known about the transformation of uniform plantations to CCF management. The Teagasc-funded TranSSFor project is a unique study with international significance, led by Teagasc with UCD partnership.

It builds on an earlier COFORD-funded Low-Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS) project (2010-2014). It is the first long-term study of its type to compare three different types of thinning in the context of transformation of uniform Sitka spruce plantations to CCF. Thinning types being assessed are: 1) low thinning (industry standard);

2) crown thinning; and, 3) graduated density (GD) thinning. The impact of these thinning types on stand structural diversity, tree growth, ground vegetation, understory light regime, and timber quality is being assessed. The crown and GD thinning types involve the selection of superior quality trees (Q-trees) after the first and second thinning interventions. The Q-trees are favoured during thinning operations by the marking and removing of their competitors, providing additional space for crown expansion, and developing an irregular structure and spacing between trees (**Figure 2**). The TranSSFor project and its predecessor are the first studies on stand transformation in Sitka spruce plantations in Ireland. Results are expected to inform the management of forest stands on sites suitable for CCF. The project will conclude in 2022, following the fourth stand intervention. CCF is becoming more widely adopted in Ireland and the TranSSFor project will continue to generate important information in future years.

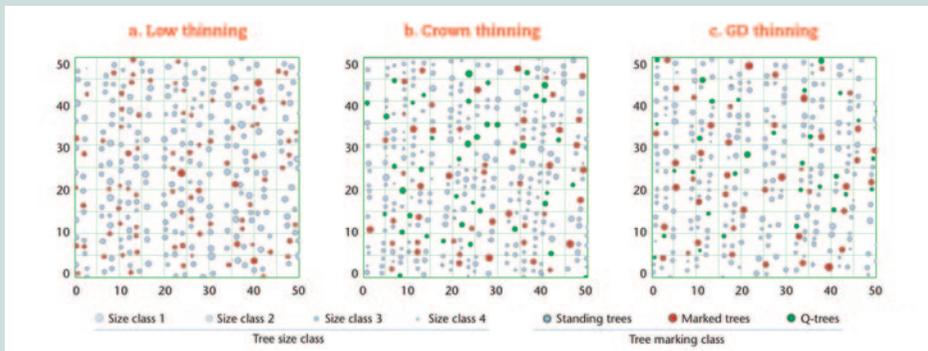


FIGURE 2: Maps of three plots illustrating changes in stand structure following three thinning interventions in stands managed under (a) low, (b) crown and (c) Graduated density thinning regimes. Each plot is 50m × 50m. Trees are mapped according to four size classes, based on stem diameter at 1.3m height. Class 4 are the smallest trees; class 1 the largest trees.