

# ENVIRONMENT

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## ACRES tree planting actions

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With the deadline of March 31, 2024 for all tree planting in the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) 1, now is the time to plant. These include the traditional orchard, tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyards, and

planting trees in riparian buffer zone categories. As well as sequestering and storing carbon, planting trees will help biodiversity if located in an appropriate place and not replacing valuable grassland habitats.

### Woodland flora



*Hazelnuts.*



*Alder.*



*Primrose.*

### Woodland fauna



*Kestrel. Photo by Mario Macrory.*



*Red squirrel. Photo by Mario Macrory.*



*Six spot Burnet moth caterpillar.  
Photo by Ruth Wilson.*

## Planting trees

Trees planted under the general tree planting option receive €6.21 per tree per year. One dot in each Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) parcel can mean between 10 and 300 trees, depending on what was chosen. Where tree actions were the reason you were accepted into ACRES as a tier 2 applicant, failure to plant trees may result in the loss of the full ACRES payment for one year. Examples are 100 trees on more intensive livestock farms or larger tillage farms and ten trees in a riparian zone for all farms. Do not plant in the vicinity of overhead wires, within 20m of railway lines, and within 60m of a neighbouring dwelling house. Trees can be planted in either rows, groups or parkland, as the following explains.

### Row(s):

- plant trees in a row along field boundaries/farm passageways, or along electric fence boundaries, or plant a number of rows of trees within a pasture or arable field; and,
- if planting multiple rows maintain at least 12m between the rows to allow for continued grazing or crop production.

### Group(s):

- plant trees in groups at desired locations on the farm, maintaining at least 4m spacing. The maximum individual area where a group of trees can be planted is 1ha.

### Parkland:

- plant individual trees dispersed throughout a pasture maintaining a distance of 12m between individual trees.

## Plants

Plants must be of Irish origin or Irish provenance and purchased from Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)-registered professional

operators. All trees purchased for this action must have an accompanying plant passport and participants must ensure that they retain the passport(s) for the duration of the contract. Plant at least three native tree species from the following list, of which not more than 25% should be Scots pine: alder; strawberry tree; silver and downy birch; hazel; holly; crab apple; Scots pine; black poplar; aspen; wild and bird cherry; sessile and pedunculate oak; goat, grey and bay willow; English, Irish and rock whitebeam; rowan; and, wych elm.

### Protection:

- fence trees off appropriately at least 1m out from the plant to prevent damage by livestock;
- fit each tree (except Scots pine) with a staked tree shelter, a minimum of 75cm in height – if using individual barbed protectors for parkland or rows, the staked tree shelter and fencing is not required;
- control grass and competing vegetation around the trees annually – it will be necessary, from time to time, to lift the tree shelter and remove any weeds/grass that may be growing within the shelter; and,
- replace failed or dead trees during the next dormant season.

### Planting trees in riparian buffer zones

These trees receive €3.18/tree/year. Plant at least two species from: alder; silver and downy birch; pedunculate oak; and, goat, grey and bay willow. Plant as single trees or small groups of five to ten trees with 2.5m spacing between the trees, and 10m between the groups. These should be strategically placed and maintained for bank stabilisation, dappled shading and as a food source for aquatic life.

### Larger trees



*Oak.*



*Scots pine.*



*Willow.*

### Smaller trees



*Birch.*



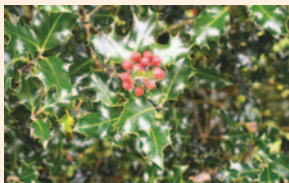
*Cherry.*



*Crab apple.*



*Hazel catkins.*



*Holly.*



*Mountain ash or rowan.*

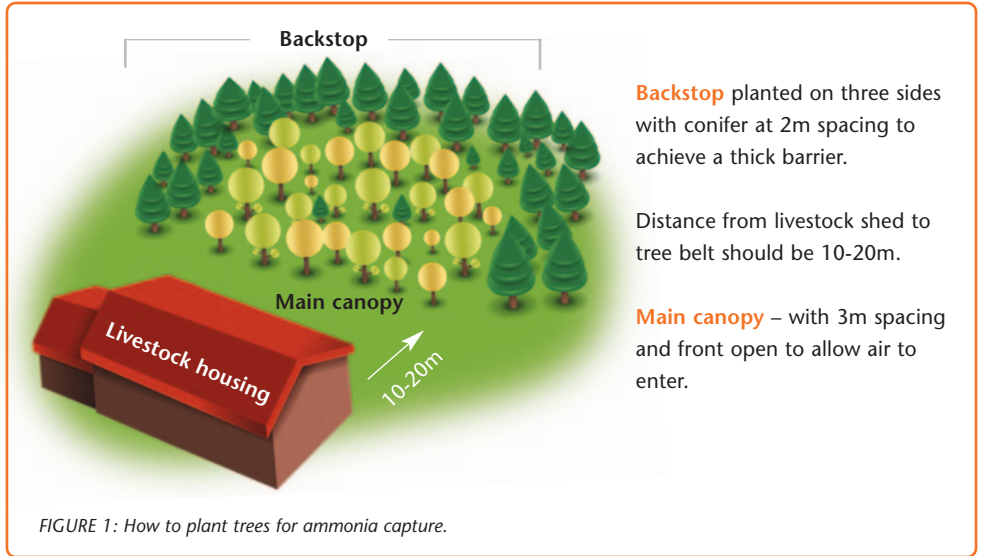
## Tree belts for ammonia capture

These trees should be sited adjacent to livestock housing or slurry storage facilities. The distance from the livestock shed to the tree belt should be 10-20m, and a maximum of 50m. The area planted can vary from 0.18-0.5ha with the maximum area selected receiving €2,524 per year. Plant trees at a minimum of 3m spacing, with at least one per 10m<sup>2</sup> of tree belt area. The minimum depth of shelterbelt is 30m. Plant the tree belt according to

the prevailing wind direction – if the prevailing wind is south west, the shelterbelt is to be planted to the north east of the building/slurry store. Plant at least three species from the list for general tree planting, with the exception being the strawberry tree and wych elm, of which not more than 25% of the total trees planted are to be Scots pine. The main canopy with trees at 3m spacing must have at least one evergreen/conifer and no

one species making up more than 60% of the mix. The main canopy should be open at the front (along the front facing the building) to allow air to enter. Plant a dense backstop surrounding the

main canopy on three sides, with at least three rows of Scots pine and holly at 2m spacing. Plant trees diagonally to create a good barrier (Figure 1).



## Traditional orchard

- >0.05ha;
- 10 trees;
- traditional varieties;
- 5m apart.

€27.49/tree/year



Traditional apple orchard.