

FORESTRY

December 2024

Forestry clinics and plan for 2025

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There will be over 30 forestry clinics held around the country in the new year.

Teagasc Forestry Development Department will have a busy 2025, packed with events and services to support forest owners and those considering planting. Clinics for those considering forestry will run from January 20 to February 15. These will be held in Teagasc offices nationwide, where a one-to-one support meeting with an experienced forestry advisor can be arranged by appointment. See **Table 1** for a 2025 event outline. Keep an eye on the Teagasc website for registration details of upcoming clinics and information on all events.



OVER
500

landowners
attended the 2024
forestry clinics.

We are ready to
accommodate a
high demand for
the 2025 clinics.

Table 1: Line-up of 2025 Teagasc forestry events, starting with forestry clinics in January.

Dates	Event
January 20-February 14	Local forest clinics – one-to-one engagement
January 24	Agroforestry benefits, Teagasc Signpost webinar
March/April	Talking Timber – timber marketing event in collaboration with the sector
September	Conifer best practice event
October	Agroforestry field event
October/November	Regional events supporting the Forestry Programme

Teagasc Forestry will also work alongside its enterprise colleagues throughout the year, providing comprehensive Teagasc supports at many local and national events, including:

- Teagasc Signpost events;
- Teagasc crops, sheep and dairy open days;
- Teagasc Energy and Farm Diversification Show;
- Teagasc water quality events; and,
- forestry stands at Bloom 2025, the Tullamore Show, and the National Ploughing Championships.

Focus on Forest Type 10

The Afforestation Scheme supports the creation of many forest types (FTs), facilitating grant applications to include a combination of appropriate FTs. The first step in establishing a new forest is to choose an FT that will suit your land and meet your objectives. One of these FTs supports the establishment of a mixed-species forest, which allows for multiple objectives and aims to create a resilient forest into the future.

The aim of Forest Type 10 (FT10 – Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)) is to create production forests, which are suitably structured to be managed as continuous cover forests from establishment.



Forest Type 10 aims to create production forests, which are structured to be managed as continuous cover forests.

CCF can improve biodiversity, soil and water quality, and the landscape of the forest, while also increasing its climate change resilience to biotic and abiotic challenges, and enabling long-term carbon storage. Depending on site type and owner

preference, FT10 applicants must select a species mixture based on the following:

- 55% Sitka spruce/Norway Spruce/Western Red Cedar;
- 25% other conifers (more than two conifer species);
- 10% oak plus 10% other broadleaves; and,
- 20% variance for each species will be accepted with a maximum of 55% for spruce.

Conifers can be planted in intimate line mixtures or group mixtures (25 to 100

trees per group), with broadleaves planted in similar groups. Minor species must be planted along the edge of the emerging canopy and/or alongside hedgerows. There is a mandatory minimum 20% broadleaf requirement with an overall stocking rate of 2,500 stems/ha.

Grant rates

The establishment grant for this forest type is €5,421/ha (with additional fencing supports). An annual premium payment is available at a rate of €912/ha, paid for 20 years to farmers and 15 years to non-farmers.

Safeguarding Ireland's ash trees

RIGARDO PIMENTA, Postdoctoral Researcher, and **DHEERAJ RATHORE**, Tree Improvement Research Officer, discuss their work on the newly launched AshforFuture project.

On November 1, the AshforFuture project was launched by Senator Pippa Hackett, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry, at Teagasc Ashtown Research Centre in Dublin. She described the project as “a critical step” in addressing the challenges posed by ash dieback. This ambitious research initiative, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and Northern Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), aims to preserve and revive ash trees, which have been severely affected by ash dieback.

This four-year project involves a multidisciplinary team from Teagasc, University College Dublin (UCD), the DAFM, and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI). It also engages key stakeholders, including None-So-Hardy, Coillte, the Office of Public Works, Woodlands of

RESEARCH UPDATE



Pippa Hackett, Minister of State at the DAFM, with researcher Karuna Shrestha, at the launch of AshforFuture at Teagasc, Ashtown.

Ireland, the Native Woodland Trust, and the Forest Genetic Resources Trust.

The AshforFuture project emphasises the importance of partnerships across sectors and regions. Teagasc Director Frank O'Mara highlighted the collaborative model as a key to success, stating: "The approach of AshforFuture exemplifies how research partnerships can address real-world challenges. This initiative is vital for developing sustainable solutions to protect our forests and biodiversity".

Tackling ash dieback

Ash dieback, caused by the invasive fungal pathogen *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, has far-reaching consequences for Ireland's forestry sector. The AshforFuture project has four interconnected work packages:

1. AshComm: this focuses on improving communication among stakeholders. Efforts include the creation of the 'Report a Healthy Ash Tree' website, which encourages the public to identify and report potentially tolerant ash trees.
2. AshGen: the genetic component of the project aims to identify and propagate disease-tolerant ash trees using advanced genomic tools.
3. AshPath: researchers in this package will investigate the genetic and phenotypic variability of *H. fraxineus* in Ireland.
4. AshSilva: this explores sustainable silvicultural systems to support natural



The AshforFuture project aims to restore ash trees to our landscapes.

regeneration and resilience in mixed-species forests. Field trials will assess the impact of planting diverse species alongside ash.

Join the effort

The success of AshforFuture will be driven by continued engagement with stakeholders and the public. Those interested in contributing can visit the Report a Healthy Ash Tree webpage to learn how to identify and report tolerant ash trees.

AshforFuture aims to restore ash trees to Ireland's landscapes, while promoting biodiversity and sustainable forestry practices. The project also seeks to set a precedent for managing similar challenges in other countries affected by ash dieback.

For more information about AshforFuture and Report a Healthy Ash Tree, visit: <https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/research/ashforfuture/>.