

# FORESTRY

December 2022

## Forest photo competition open

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The exciting forest photo competition, 'Celebrating a shared national vision of trees, woods and forests' is in full swing and images are invited for category 3, 'Forests for Wood' up to December 13, 2022. This competition is co-ordinated by Teagasc, with support from the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

Celebrating our shared national vision for trees, woods and forests is a tree-themed competition focusing on some of the many benefits of our trees and forests, running since early October. Teagasc is delighted with the wide range of photographs submitted to the competition to date from all across the country.

Teagasc recently announced the deserving

prize winners of category 1 of the competition 'Forests for Nature'. Category 1 winner, Ciaran Willmore's stunning picture, titled The Hidden Waterfall, captures an impressive cascade beneath the forest canopy in Glenmalure, Co. Wicklow. Ciaran received a voucher worth

€400 and will also be entered into the Grand Final on December 16, when an overall winner will be chosen from each of the three category winners. The overall winner will receive a further voucher for €600.

There is still time to join in on this great competition, open to non-professional photographers, by submitting an image that captures the essence of forests for wood. Please consult [www.teagasc.ie/forestphotos22](http://www.teagasc.ie/forestphotos22) for full details, as well as terms and conditions.

**New  
Forestry  
Programme  
announced**  
(see details  
overleaf)

# New Forestry Programme announced

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD along with Minister of State with responsibility for Forestry, Senator Pippa Hackett, and Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McCauley TD recently announced a proposed investment by the Government of €1.3bn in Irish forestry. The funding will be for the next national Forestry Programme and represents the largest ever investment by an Irish Government in tree planting. The Programme will now be the subject of State aid approval by the European Commission. In a press release An Taoiseach said: “Forestry is at the heart of delivering on our sustainability goals and strong support is needed to encourage engagement from all our stakeholders in reaching our objectives”.

Minister Hackett said: “Planting trees is one of the most effective methods of tackling climate change as well as contributing to improved biodiversity and water quality. One of my main aims is to re-engage farmers in afforestation. I’m delighted therefore to be proposing a new 20-year premium term exclusively for farmers, as well as introducing a new small-scale native woodland scheme, which will allow farmers to plant up to one hectare of native woodland on farmland and along watercourses outside of the forestry licensing process”.

The proposed new Forestry Programme is the main implementation mechanism for the new Forest Strategy (2023-2030), which reflects the ambitions contained in the recently published ‘Shared National Vision for Trees, Woods and Forests’ in Ireland until 2050. The new Programme is built around the principle of the right trees in the right places for the right



*An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Forestry, Senator Pippa Hackett plant a birch tree from the Teagasc birch improvement research programme to mark the announcement of the proposed new Forestry Programme.*

reasons with the right management. It aims to deliver more diverse forests, which will meet multiple economic, social and environmental societal objectives. Higher grant rates for forest establishment are also proposed with increases of approximately 20% to reflect rising living costs.

The new Programme will be 100% Exchequer funded and is subject to State aid approval from the EU Commission. Landowners with valid approval who commence work in 2022 will be paid at the current support rates offered through the Forestry Programme 2014-2020 (extended to end 2022).

**Table 1** shows the proposed new afforestation grant and premium rates compared with the current Forestry Programme including 12 forest types.

Teagasc in conjunction with the DAFM will be organising information events on the new Forestry Programme. See [www.teagasc.ie/events](http://www.teagasc.ie/events) for details as they emerge.

**Table 1: Proposed new afforestation grant and premium rates.**

		Grant rates (excluding fencing)		Premium payments			
Forest type	Current grant	Proposed grant	Current premiums	Proposed annual premium	Current number of premiums	Proposed number of premiums for non-farmers	Proposed number of premiums for farmers
	€/ha	€/ha	€/ha	€/ha			
FT1 Native forests*	5,620	6,744	665	1,103	15	15	20
FT2 Forests for Water*	New	6,744	New	1,142	New	15	20
FT3 Forests on Public Lands**	9,920	11,044	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
FT4 Neighbour Woods***	8,800	10,200	New	1,142	New	15	20
FT5 Emergent forests	New	2,500	New	350	New	15	20
FT6 Broadleaf, mainly oak	5,620	6,744	645	1,037	15	15	20
FT7 Other broadleaf	3,595	4,314	605	973	15	15	20
FT8 Agroforestry	5,620	8,555	645	975	5	10	10
FT9 Seed orchards	New	10,000	New	1,142	New	15	20
FT10 Continuous cover forestry	New	5,421	New	912	New	15	20
FT11 Mixed high forests: conifer, 20% broadleaves	3,710	4,452	590	863	15	15	20
FT12 Mixed high forests, with mainly spruce, 20% broadleaves	3,215	3,858	510	746	15	15	20

Native Tree Area Scheme will be paid at FT1 and FT2 rates. Premiums will be paid over 10 years rather than 20 at a rate of €2,206 per ha annually for NTA1 and €2,284 per ha annually for NTA2.

\*Additional payment of €1,000 per ha may be paid to landowner on completion of planting.

\*\*Grant includes trails, seats and signage facilities, and derelict site payment.

\*\*\*Grant includes facilities payment.

## RESEARCH UPDATE



# Small diameter Irish-grown alder

Research by Teagasc Walsh Scholar COLIN MARRÉN examined the exploitation of the working properties and utilisation of small-diameter Irish-grown alder.

Teagasc Walsh Scholar Colin Marren graduated from Atlantic Technological University in November after completing his MSc by research at the Letterfrack Campus. His Teagasc-funded project 'Exploitation of the working properties and utilisation of small-diameter Irish-grown alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)', investigated the potential for, and development of, value-added end uses, novel products and alternative markets, for small diameter Irish-grown alder. This involved scientific testing and analysis of the wood properties and, based on those results, examining potential applications and uses. Testing was divided into three sections:

- mechanical testing;
- machinability testing; and,
- product development/testing.

Mechanical and machinability testing were conducted following industry standards BS 373:1957 and ASTM D 1666-11, respectively.

The results from mechanical testing showed the small diameter alder to perform similarly, but slightly lower than, mature common alder and American red alder (*Alnus rubra*), and that it would not be suitable for load-bearing applications.

Machinability tests showed excellent results across all test methods and presented very high levels of machinability in sanding, planing and CNC routing. Research indicated that the material tested can be dried aggressively, without pre air drying, with little to no degradation in the quality of the material.

The product testing gathered qualitative and quantitative data from industry professionals through practical experience and a questionnaire. The material showed some promise for use in the skirting and architrave market. Testing in post-primary education settings resulted in encouraging feedback from teachers, who felt the alder could replace some imported timber species they currently use and that they would buy this material for their classes if it was available.

The results of the project indicate that small diameter Irish-grown alder has potential to be utilised for more value-added end uses than it is currently being employed for. For further information, contact [Ian.Short@teagasc.ie](mailto:Ian.Short@teagasc.ie), or see: [www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/research/exploitation-of-small-diameter-alder/](http://www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/research/exploitation-of-small-diameter-alder/).