

FORESTRY

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Tree planting under the new Forestry Programme

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The new Forestry Programme 2023-2027 has attracted a lot of interest with particular interest among farmers in the Native Tree Area Scheme (NTAS). There are also many options under the broader Afforestation Scheme, with 12 different forest types attracting generous grants and annual payments. Here's a short explanation of both options. You can contact your local forestry development officer to discuss what might suit you.

NTAS

The NTAS (NTA 1 and 2) supports the creation of small native forests (up to one hectare) on farmed land (**Table 1**). An afforestation licence is not required. Both farmers and non-farmers can apply. A registered forester is required to submit applications to the NTAS. Farms with a qualifying watercourse for NTA 2 can plant 2ha in total (1ha NTA 1 plus 1ha NTA 2). Some areas with specific

environmental sensitivities will not qualify for the NTAS but may still apply through the broader Afforestation Scheme for an afforestation licence.

Table 1: NTAS rates and premiums.

Native Tree Area Scheme	Grant rates €/ha (excluding fencing)	Annual premium payments €/ha	Number of premiums
NTA 1 – Small native forests	€6,744	€2,206	10
NTA 2 – Small native forests for water protection	€6,744	€2,284	10

Afforestation Scheme

The Afforestation Scheme provides establishment grants and annual premiums to plant and establish forests on suitable green field sites. To plant a new forest a farmer must engage a registered forester to make their afforestation application. Afforestation grants usually cover the cost for site preparation, fencing, tree planting and initial management

for four years. Forestry applicants will also receive an annual forestry premium. Farmers will receive annual premiums for up to 20 years and non-farmer applicants for up to 15 years (agroforestry is 10 years). The rate of afforestation grant and premium is determined by the particular forest type option planted. It is also possible to plant a combination of forest types with one application (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Afforestation Scheme forest types and premiums.

Forest type		Grant rates (excluding fencing) €/ha	Annual premium payments €/ha	Number of premiums for non-farmers	Number of premiums for farmers
FT 1	Native forests	€6,744	€1,103	15	20
FT 2	Forests for water	€6,744	€1,142	15	20
FT 3	Forests on public lands	€10,544	€1,103	15	n/a
FT 4	NeighbourWoods	€10,200	€1,142	15	20
FT 5	Emergent forests	€2,500	€350	15	20
FT 6	Pure broadleaves, mainly oak or beech	€6,744	€1,037	15	0
FT 7	Other broadleaves	€4,314	€973	15	20
FT 8	Agroforestry – silvopastural	€8,555	€975	10	10
FT 8	Agroforestry – silvoarable	€6,000	€829	10	10
FT 8	Agroforestry – forest gardening	€6,000	€829	10	10
FT 9	Seed orchards	€10,000	€1,142	15	20
FT 10	Continuous cover forestry	€5,421	€912	15	20
FT 11	Mixed high forests: conifer, 20% broadleaves	€4,452	€863	15	20
FT 12	Mixed high forests: spruce, 20% broadleaves	€3,858	€746	15	20

See www.teagasc.ie/forestry for more details of the Afforestation Scheme.

Forestry events 2024

Teagasc is planning an exciting programme of forestry events for 2024, kicking off with a nationwide series of one-to-one clinics beginning in January. These one-to-one consultations will be focused on people who are considering forestry, and are being held from late January to early February 2024.

Clinics will be held in Teagasc offices around the

country where a one-to-one consultation with an experienced forestry advisor can be arranged by appointment. Prior booking of a one-to-one forestry consultation is essential. Keep an eye out in the local press or scan the QR code for locations, dates and registration details.



Five steps to get started in forestry

1. Talk to your local Teagasc forestry advisor

This will give you the opportunity to discuss your specific site and objectives, such as: is (some of) my land suitable for establishing a forest?; are there environmental restrictions on my land or do any other restrictions limit my planting options – acid sensitive area, electricity lines, nearby houses, deer, etc.?; what do I want from my new forest, e.g., production of commercial timber, creating a native woodland?; and, how will planting interact with the various agricultural support schemes?

2. Choose a registered forester

Pre-planting applications must be prepared by a registered forester. These are professional foresters, working either as consultant foresters or employed by forestry companies. They are registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and authorised to submit forestry grant scheme applications.

3. Sign a contract

Ensure that you have a robust written contract with your registered forester, clearly setting out your chosen preferences as described below. The DAFM sets the standards of the Afforestation Scheme and approves grant and premium payments.

4. Make an application

Pre-planting applications are submitted to the DAFM and technical approval may be issued following assessment. Establishment operations can begin only once subsequent financial approval has been obtained. You can organise the establishment work yourself or hire a registered forester to organise some or all of the establishment and maintenance work.

5. Monitor progress

Regardless of who is establishing and/or managing the trees for the first four years, it is important to monitor progress.

Walk your forest regularly and pay particular attention to the following: competition from vegetation; fence and drain maintenance; general tree health; and, possible browsing damage to trees.

You are responsible!

Planting land is a major decision and you should be satisfied that the establishment option you choose is right for you. It is important to keep in mind that you, as the applicant, have ultimate responsibility to the DAFM for your forest.

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry advisor

We can discuss land
suitability and what forest
type may interest you.



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