



Dublin Mountains Makeover

# What's going on in Ballyedmonduff?

The Sitka spruce trees here in Ballyedmonduff were planted between 40 and 50 years ago. Ordinarily, they would have been felled by now and the site would have been replanted with a new timber crop. But here on the doorstep of Dublin city in one of the most popular forests in the country, it's time to put people's needs higher up the agenda.

That's why we're giving 22 hectares of Ballyedmonduff forest a Makeover. We're managing the area through Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) to maintain a permanent forest canopy and allow trees to regenerate naturally. This will enhance the habitat for wildlife, enrich the forests' recreational appeal for people and improve the wider landscape's aesthetic value.

This work is part of Phase 1 of the Dublin Mountains Makeover - a long-term plan to transform nine Dublin Mountains forests for people and nature. For project updates, videos, maps and more, see: [www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature/](http://www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature/)

## What is Continuous Cover Forestry?

CCF is a way of managing the forest that maintains the forest canopy. Individual or small groups of trees are cut down at certain times to allow light reach the forest floor and new seedlings to grow. Gradually over time, a multi-generational forest develops with trees of all different ages and a greater diversity of species.

It's sometimes called 'Close to Nature' forestry because it tries to mimic things that happen naturally in forests (e.g. small pockets of trees blowing over and creating gaps). CCF is a great way to manage forests where outdoor recreation, landscape aesthetics, soil stabilisation, water protection and biodiversity are especially important.

Here in Ballyedmonduff, we have marked the trees that will be cut down and removed with pink forward slashes. Some are marked with a zig zag to be 'ring barked' so that they die in place, creating valuable deadwood, which is an important habitat for many species.

The remaining trees are old enough to produce cones full of seed, so when these seeds fall to the forest floor, they will germinate and new seedlings will grow. Meanwhile, the trees in the canopy will continue to grow and eventually they will close the gap we've made in the forest canopy. So in a few years, we'll need to come back and open it again to ensure the seedlings have enough light.

Given that all the mature trees here are Sitka spruce, most of the new seedlings will also be spruce. We do see some native seedlings such as rowan and birch growing from seed blown in from other areas, but most of them are eaten by the deer. So in the future we will come in and plant some of these native trees in the bigger gaps (birch and rowan need lots of light to grow) and protect them from the deer by using tree shelters. This will gradually lead to healthier, more diverse forests with a greater mix of species and habitats for wildlife in the future.

## How does forest harvesting work?

Today, most tree felling is done by harvesting machines, with the operator using hi-tech controls to cut the tree, take off the branches and cut the trunk into different lengths.

Another machine called a forwarder works alongside the harvester, bringing the different lengths of log to the side of the road. The branches that are cut off the trunk are put on the ground to make a 'brash mat' so that the machines can drive over them as they work. This helps to protect the soil.

Some trees have grown so big – particularly along the edges – that a chainsaw operator will also be needed to fell these trees.

You'll see different stacks of timber along the road. Each stack is a different product: sawlog, pallet or pulp. Then the timber hauliers collect the logs and deliver them to the sawmills or panel mills for processing.

## What happens to the timber harvested here in Ballyedmonduff?

The trees that we remove from the forest will be cut into different lengths and processed into a range of different renewable products by an industry that supports 12,000 jobs across Ireland, mainly in rural areas. Modern timber processing is extremely efficient – no part of the tree gets wasted:

- The **long straight logs** will be processed into sawnwood for construction to build our homes.
- The **shorter logs** will be processed into pallet wood (for transporting goods) and fencing products.
- The **pulp wood** from the tops of the trees will be made into wood-based panels like OSB and MDF.
- The **poorer quality logs** will be used for biofuel.

Please take care!

In a few weeks, this section of forest will be open again to explore and enjoy. In the meantime, please take care if you visit the forest while works are taking place:

- Some trails and roads will be closed temporarily to ensure everyone's safety.
- Watch out for timber lorries.
- Don't climb on the piles of timber along the side of the road – they're really slippery!

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