



## Dublin Mountains Makeover

# What's going on in Ticknock?

Here in Ticknock, we are converting two small areas of primarily Sitka spruce forest into native woodland to enhance the habitat for wildlife, enrich the forest's recreational appeal and bring more autumn colour to the hills. We call this approach to forest management 'R&R': Removing the productive timber trees and Replanting with natives like Scots pine, birch, rowan, oak and holly.

We'll start by clearfelling an area near the upper car park, where spruce and pine trees have blown over in the wind. Then we'll clearfell a spruce area near the Red Barn. There are a few scattered beech and oak trees here too - these will be left alone, we'll only fell the spruce. Afterwards, we'll fence both areas to keep the deer out. Then we'll plant native tree species this coming winter.

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. To stay up to date, sign up for our newsletter at [www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature/](http://www.coillte.ie/coillte-nature/)

## What is R&R (Remove & Replant)?

In the 1950s, the first conifer trees were planted here to produce a home-grown supply of timber. At that time, Dublin was a much smaller city and nobody thought much about outdoor recreation in forests. Today, these forests are among the most important recreational sites for a growing urban population: Ticknock sees over 550 visits a day. As well as enhanced recreation, there is also a strong call for more native woodlands to benefit nature.

We've identified two R&R areas here in Ticknock for new native woodlands:

- The first (near the car park) is an area where trees have been blown down by windstorms.
- The second (near the Red Barn) already has a mature oak tree, which will provide a seed source for the future. It also features non-native beech trees, which bring lovely autumn colour to the hills.

This summer, we'll clearfell these areas to remove the conifers (saving the oak and beech).

Next, we'll erect deer fencing: deer are very common in these forests, and they like to eat our native trees, so we have to protect the new seedlings we plant. The site will also be cultivated to give the new seedlings the best chance on these exposed mountain slopes.

Both sites have already been surveyed by an ecologist and forester to examine the soil type, ground flora and moisture regime. These factors determine the best mix of native tree species.

Each site has a different soil type, with different native woodland suitability. For the site near the car park, a mix of downy birch, Scots pine, sessile oak and rowan is best, with some additional aspen and whitebeam. Near the Red Barn, it's sessile oak, Scots pine, downy birch and rowan. Holly will regenerate naturally across both sites.

This winter, we'll back on site to plant the new native woodland.

## 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 stop rutting and protects 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 logs along the road. Each stack is a different timber product: sawlog, pallet wood or pulp wood. Timber hauliers collect the logs from the side of the road and deliver them to the sawmills for processing.

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

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 stacks of logs along the side of the road.

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