



What's going on in Ballyedmonduff?

Here in Ballyedmonduff, we're removing an area of Sitka spruce forest that was blown over in the wind a number of years ago and replanting it as a mixed woodland featuring both native and non-native trees. This mixed woodland will develop into a more natural-looking forest that enhances the habitat for wildlife, enriches the forest's recreational appeal and brings more autumn colour to the hills.

We call this approach to forest management 'R&R-mix': Removing all of the windblown trees and Replanting this coming winter with a mix of spruce (non-native, to shield the natives in this exposed site) and birch and rowan (natives).

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/



What is R&R-mix?

Some areas of the Dublin Mountains - like this site in Ballyedmonduff - are higher up and more exposed to the wind, with wetter, peaty soils. Here, the conditions led to an area of timber forest blowing down in a storm a number of years ago.

Wind has a major influence on forestry in Ireland, with the frequent storms often overturning trees.

Harvesting these windblown trees is a lot more difficult and hazardous for the operators than a normal felling operation. The trees fall in all directions on top of each other, so a mix of machines and a chainsaw operator will be needed. Clearing the trees in this kind of situation takes more time than normal, so please be patient while we work.

In places like this, the wet soils, exposure to the wind and high elevation make it more difficult for native woodlands to grow. That's why we'll be

replanting with a mix of Sitka spruce along with native trees like birch and rowan. The Sitka spruce will act as a shield for the native broadleaf trees, giving them shelter and protection while they establish themselves and start to grow.

The native trees will be scattered throughout the spruce, creating a more natural looking mixed forest over time.

Unfortunately, Sika deer are very common in these forests. They like to eat our native trees so we will have to erect protective shelters that wrap around all the new seedlings so the deer can't get at them.

The site will also be cultivated prior to planting to give the new seedlings the best chance on these exposed mountain slopes.

We'll back again in the winter to plant the new mixed 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.

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.

After clearfelling, branches are left on site. Once the needles fall off, we'll remove and chip them to leave everything looking tidy before we plant.

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 pallets (for transporting goods) and fencing products.
- The **pulp wood** from the tree tops will be made into wood-based panels like OSB and MDF.
- Here in Ballyedmonduff though, the trees blew down a number of years ago and are mostly dead. These **poorer quality logs** will be used for biofuel as they aren't suitable for processing by the sawmill sector.

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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