



90% of Irish adults don't know the Irish forestry industry can supply enough wood to build over #44,000 new Irish homes p.a.

2/3 of people don't know 80%* of global construction wood comes from conifer/softwood trees not hardwoods like mahogany.

Over 1/3 Irish adults don't know wood has a lower carbon footprint than concrete or steel.

21 September, 2021

A Coillte commissioned RED C poll** reveals nine out of ten Irish adults don't know the Irish forest industry produces enough wood to build over #44,000 homes per annum.

"We think the 44,000 homes is a conservative estimate but is well in excess of the 33,000 annual homes the government's "Housing for All Plan" says is required each year from 2021 to 2030 to keep up with demand," said Mark Carlin, managing director, Coillte Forest.

Carlin added that Ireland is self-sufficient in providing a wide range of construction timber unlike the UK, which imports most of its wood and has done for many decades.

"Ireland is one of the best places in the world to grow trees due to its temperate climate and fertile soils. Softwoods or conifers typically grow twice as fast here as in Europe" he said.

- Irish grown wood helps support a vibrant domestic forestry sector which provides 12,000 jobs across rural Ireland and contributes €2.3bn to the economy annually.
- Coillte's forests supply wood, a renewable and environmentally friendly construction product. For every tree harvested, three new trees are planted in its place, to start the cycle over again - making wood a truly sustainable and renewable product.

80%* of global wood demand for construction timber is for softwood produced from coniferous trees:

- 2/3 of Irish people (67%) don't know the majority of global construction wood demand is for softwood produced from conifer trees (e.g. spruce, fir, pine) not hardwoods like oak, maple mahogany, teak.

"Many people probably think of oak floors, teak doors or mahogany furniture when they think of wood being used in their homes," said Carlin. "What they probably don't realise is Irish conifer trees like pine, spruce and fir trees are the most commonly used wood for roofs, rafters and joists in the walls and floors," he said. "About 80% of global demand for wood is for coniferous trees due to the wide range of products they produce and their ease of use. The Irish market is no different. The vast majority of modern new homes use a significant amount of Irish wood," he said.

Carlin added that wood from Irish forests is not only used in the construction of your home, but also provides a wide range of products such as fencing for our farms, decking for gardens, MDF for furniture and pallets for transporting our goods.”

Which type of wood do you think is most commonly used in the roofs, walls, floors and doorframes of modern Irish homes?

- 40% of respondents think wood from hardwood trees such as mahogany, teak and oak is used
- 37% think wood from conifer trees such as pine, spruce or fir is used
- 22% don't know

Almost four out of ten Irish adults or 38% don't realise that wood has a lower carbon footprint than concrete or steel.

- 10% think concrete has a lower carbon footprint
- 6% think steel is more environmentally friendly than wood
- 22% don't know.
- 62% think wood has the lowest carbon footprint

"People probably don't realise Irish wood used in people's homes, gardens, fences, decking etc. is also a great way of storing carbon and not releasing it into the atmosphere," said Carlin.

Other research highlights include:

- 58% of adults believe we should build more timber frame houses in Ireland rather than concrete or steel
- Of those who think more timber framed houses should be built in Ireland when asked; **“Where do you think we should source the wood for the timber frames?”**
 - 77% said: Domestically from local producers
 - 7% said : From somewhere else in Europe
 - 10% said: From wherever in the world is cheapest
 - 6% said : Don't know
- Only 17% of people know < 25%~~ of new homes in Ireland are built with timber frames compared with just over 80%*** of new homes being built with timber frames in Scotland.

Coillte is the largest forest owner in Ireland on behalf of the nation with over 440,000 hectares or over 1 million acres of forests and lands.

Ends

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Notes for Editors

- #Council for Forest Research and Development (COFORD) amount of sawnwood 2018 equals 533,000 m³ /12m³ equals (average amount of wood used in typical modern Irish home) 44, 416 homes.
- *80% of global wood demand for construction is for conifers/softwood source: www.sustainablewood.co.uk [Sustainable softwood, Renewable softwood, Fireproof Softwood Suppliers & Manufacturers - Creffields Timber and Boards](#)
- **A RED C poll was conducted amongst 1,006 Irish adults, aged 18+ between 20-26/8/2021.
- ~~Source: Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers Association
- *** Source: <https://scotframe.co.uk>
- 33,000 annual homes needed between 2021 and 2030 source: [gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland \(www.gov.ie\)](#)