.

Forestry and Wood Update

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COFORD

Arena House

Arena Road

Sandyford

Dublin 18

Ireland

Tel: +353 - 1 - 2130725

Fax: +353 - 1 - 2130611

Email: [info@coford.ie](mailto:info@coford.ie)

Web: [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie)European Pellets Conference 2007ndp logo

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This newsletter was compiled and edited by Lauren MacLennan,   
Technology Transfer Co-ordinator, COFORD

Email: [lauren.maclennan@coford.ie](mailto:lauren.maclennan@coford.ie)

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# New COFORD publications

On 19 July two COFORD publications were launched, these were "*Brackloon - the story of an Irish oak wood*" by Deirdre Cunningham, and "*Small-scale forestry and rural development - The intersection of ecosystems, economics and society*" edited by Sarah Wall. The latter is the proceedings of the IUFRO 3.08 conference hosted by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), Galway, Ireland, from 18 to 23 June 2006 and is a joint publication by GMIT, COFORD and IUFRO. Both of these publications can be ordered from COFORD by phone or on-line by following the bookshop link on the COFORD website.

Launching “*Brackloon - the story of an Irish oak wood*", Ms Mary Wallace, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food, said "Remnant native woodlands such as Brackloon in County Mayo are more than traces of the great woods of the past - they have a social dimension and a history of use that gives them their special character. Their existence remained under threat until the early 1970s when they began to be designated as nature reserves. Recent operations have seen the gradual removal of the planted conifers and their replacement by native broadleaved species, with the aim of restoring the full area as native woodland. I would like to congratulate Deirdre Cunningham, the author of this tale on a beautifully presented work which describes the history and the present status of the wood. A rich biological and cultural heritage is associated with our native woodlands and this is a story written for a wide audience that through its pages will appreciate the need for continuing conservation and expansion of a priceless national asset”. The Minister thanked COFORD for supporting this work and making it possible for the history and importance of the woodland to be recorded for all to appreciate.

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# Forest Energy 2006 Chipping Demonstrations

ForestEnergy 2006 aims to provide forest owners, managers and contractors with systems applicable to different crop and site conditions for the production of quality chips for wood energy. The second phase of the Forest Energy 2006 programme is due to take place in the weeks from 23 August to 1 September. The programme is an initiative of COFORD, Teagasc and Waterford Institute of Technology, aimed at demonstrating cost effective production of quality wood chip fuel.

Harvesting systems in first thinnings were demonstrated in March 2006 at sites located throughout the country. Crops included a range of conifer and broadleaf stands, and birch and lodgepole pine on Bord na Mona cutaway peat. In addition, the programme documented the performance, productivity and cost of each system. Moisture content, the critical factor in wood chip quality, was tracked from felling, and over the summer drying period, until chipping in August (demonstration dates below).

In the spring series of demonstrations, operations such as motor-manual felling by chainsaw, single-grip harvester and forwarder operations and a Danish feller-buncher were shown. The feller-buncher, a machine not currently used in Ireland, is a harvester base with an accumulating head that cuts and accumulates two to six trees at a time without any cross-cutting or delimbing before laying them on the ground. All felled logs were left in the forest to dry over the summer. Chipping will commence in late August and three chippers will be demonstrated: a tractor-mounted chipper with self-loading grapple and towing a chip trailer; a self-propelled terrain chipper with a chip forwarder; and a truck-mounted chipper. The tractor-mounted chipper and terrain chipper are capable of driving along the extraction racks, grabbing the felled trees and chipping into a trailer. The truck-mounted chipper will be used to chip energy wood stacks at the roadside.

The demonstrations are open to all interested in the developing wood energy market and take place on the following dates:

* Wednesday 23 August: First thinning of Sitka spruce, Frenchpark.  
  Meet at Ballinagare Community Centre, Co Roscommon.
* Friday 25 August: First thinning of Sitka spruce, Swan.   
  Meet at Community Centre, Timahoe, Co Laois.
* Monday 28 August: First thinning of ash/sycamore, Portlaw.   
  Meet at Community Centre, Piltown, Co Kilkenny.
* Wednesday 30 August: First thinning of Sitka spruce, Kilbrin.   
  Meet at Kilbrin Community Centre, Co Cork.
* Friday 1 September: Clearfelled birch and lodgepole pine, Bord na Móna, Boora.   
  Meet at Community Centre, Leabeg, Tullamore, Co Offaly.

Busses will depart from the meeting points to the sites at regular intervals between 12:00 and 1:30. No private vehicles will be allowed onto the demonstration sites. Attendance is free of charge and no registration is required. For further information see [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie); [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) and www.teagasc.ie/forestry.

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# Workshops on management of soils and nutrients in river catchments

Two COFORD/ECI workshops on *Management of Soils and Nutrients in River Catchments* will be led by Professor Calvin Rose¸ Griffith University, Australia, who is a world-renowned expert on soil erosion and conservation, land management, soil physics, chemical transport in soils and mathematical modelling of environmental systems. Professor Rose has authored five books and over 150 journal papers. Other contributors will include Dr Eugene Hendrick - COFORD; and Dr Michael Rodgers, Markus Mueller, Liwen Xiao and Dr Mark Healy – Civil Engineering Department, NUI, Galway.

The same material will be covered at both workshops. The venues and dates for the workshops are:

• 7 July 2006: National University of Ireland, Galway

• 14 July 2006: Marine Institute, Newport, Co Mayo

These workshops are of direct relevance to professionals working on projects related to the Water Framework Directive. Techniques for quantifying soil, nutrient and other losses from a number of forestry and agricultural activities, will be presented. These techniques will also be relevant to major infrastructural projects, e.g. motorway construction.

The morning session will include a number of presentations on work carried out by Professor Rose and at NUI, Galway. The afternoon session will include a short workshop where participants will be encouraged to explore methods of identifying and quantifying contaminant release from various land activities of interest to them. After the Galway workshop session, there will be a demonstration of equipment used in quantifying releases from soils. After the Newport workshop there will be a field trip to the research site where various pieces of monitoring equipment is installed.

The number of participants at each workshop will be limited to 30 and there will be a charge of €50 per participant. Early application is advised, and participant places will be allocated in the order of receipt of completed application forms. See <http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/defaultarticle.php?cArticlePath=129_205_330> for registration forms.

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# Workshop on wood biomass harvesting and supply chain - Galway, 4 September

The first in this series of workshops took place on 20 May 2005 as part of Wood Energy 2005, a conference co-hosted by COFORD and SEI REIO. The workshop has been repeated at six locations throughout the country since then. Due to demand, COFORD has decided to run the workshop again on 4 September 2006 at the Corrib Great Southern Hotel in Galway.

Presented by Pieter D. Kofman (Senior Consultant Wood for Energy, Danish Forest Extension) and Tom Kent (Waterford Institute of Technology), this is a vital workshop for forest managers and all others wishing to get involved in the supply chain of the emerging wood biomass sector.

Workshop contents:

• Introduction to wood biomass

• Overview of supply chain

• Wood biomass harvesting, transport and storage

• The Ten Commandments of wood biomass usage

• Quantification (conversion factors such as tonnes, m3, kWhrs, GJ, etc.)

• Irish and Danish case studies

• Biomass supply contract preparation

• Chipping and biomass boiler demonstration

This workshop and demonstration is limited to a maximum of 20 participants. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Please register before 28 August 2006 by emailing info@coford.ie or phoning 01-2130725. The registration fee of €150.00 will include course material, biomass calculator software and refreshments.

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# International conference on forestry and rural development

An international conference on *Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development* took place in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) from 19 to 23 June 2006. Addressing the delegates, the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food, Mary Wallace, TD, said "wherever we have forests, we will have options: options for jobs, for exports, for energy, for biodiversity, for the environment, for rural communities. Previous generations of planters have given us those options and it is up to us to ensure that future generations continue to have such options, by continuing a vigorous afforestation programme”. The Minister said that forests are truly multi-functional and commented that while the growing demands for environmental compatibility may be seen by some as restricting the economic potential of forestry, she believes that it offers greater opportunities. She went on to say that we need to look at how we value the very many non-timber benefits of our forests and how the public good they represent can be realised to the benefit of all. She pointed out that the average new forestry plantation in Ireland is now around eight hectares and that most of this planting is carried out by farmers. This provides a real alternative land use option for farmers as the pattern of traditional Irish agriculture changes.

Over 50 papers were delivered during the five-day symposium by representatives from 23 countries including Europe, the US, Scandinavia, Africa and Australia. The conference aimed to explore the evolving nature of small-scale forestry and the challenges and opportunities this evolution presents to sustainable rural development. The conference was organised in collaboration with the International Union of Forestry Research Organisations (IUFRO) and supported by COFORD, Coillte and Teagasc as well as the Western Forestry Co-op, Sligo.

Sarah Wall, Conference co-ordinator and GMIT forestry lecturer, said: "In recent decades, there has been a marked shift in the nature of small-scale forestry worldwide. The emphasis in management objectives appears to have shifted from intensive, exclusive and singular (timber productivity) to a broader, more inclusive multipurpose approach. However, with such a multipurpose approach there are challenges of ensuring continuity of supply from a disparate source, creating new markets for new forest products, and devising methods for internalising the welfare benefits of healthy and diverse forests for the owners of these forests and their local communities. It is hoped that the discussions and ideas generated during this symposium will feed into regional and national policy-making, in a positive and innovative manner. The objective of the conference is to engender debate and discussion while facilitating a greater awareness of the balancing act required to create forest areas which contribute to and enhance the viability of rural areas, through innovative management and marketing."

Presentations made at this event will be available to download from http://ns2.gmit.ie/information/conferences/Forestry/. Individual papers can be downloaded from the COFORD website at https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/defaultarticle.php?cArticlePath=127\_331, and full copies of the proceedings can be purchased directly from COFORD or online at http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/product\_info.php?cPath=0\_1175&products\_id=966575

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# CARBON CORNER

## Adapting to climate change

All the indications from media reports are that the fourth assessment report on of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, due for publication in 2007, will say that climate change is now impacting on biological systems throughout the world, and that impacts will increase over the coming decades.

In the Irish context, research funded by the EPA and undertaken by the Community Climate Change Consortium for Ireland (<http://www.c4i.ie/top_documents.html>) indicates that:

*Projected temperature changes from the model output show a general warming in the future period with mean monthly temperatures increasing typically between 1.25 and 1.5°C. The largest increases are seen in the south-east and east, with the greatest warming occurring in July. For precipitation, the most significant changes occur in the months of June and December; June values show a decrease of about 10% compared with the current climate, noticeably in the southern half of the country; December values show increases ranging between 10% in the south-east and 25% in the north-west. There is also some evidence of an increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events (i.e. events which exceed 20 mm or more per day) in the north-west. In the future scenario, the frequency of intense cyclones (storms) over the North Atlantic area in the vicinity of Ireland is increased by about 15% compared with the current climate.*

These changes will impact on forests and forest operations, and need to be carefully considered in future planning. On the other hand, forests are likely to be part of the adaptation solution, to cope with increased flood risk and other impacts.

One of the first tasks is to determine likely impacts of changes in temperature, rainfall and other variables on Irish forests through modelling and other tools (see scoping document accompanying recent COFORD call for R&D proposals). Results from the work will provide a better basis for decision-making in areas such as species selection and silviculture.

The vast majority of Ireland’s forests are managed in one form or another. Management affords opportunities to use adaptation measures that may not be open in the case of natural forests. Options range from species selection and tree improvement to right across silvicultural operations, and drainage and harvesting.

Having robust information available on the impact and cost of adaptation measures depends, therefore, not just on research in the climate change area itself, but also on investigations in other areas such as genetics, silviculture, water relations, and economics. Continued investment in such high quality research is an essential part of the adaptation matrix.

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# Alder Working Group

A working group on common alder was established by COFORD in April 2004 to address the current supply and demand for seed and plants of common alder and to develop suitable seed sources to meet a projected increase in future demand on a sustainable basis.

Based on the recommendations of this group, a national survey of alder stands was undertaken by COFORD in late 2004. The findings of this survey suggest that many of the stands of alder in Ireland today fall into two distinct categories:

* Fine older stands – found in locations such as in Castlemartyr, Co Cork, Ballyseedy, Co Kerry, and a number of stands in the Sligo area, including Longfield (Killygar), Greaghfarnagh, Lough Meelagh (Ballyfarnan) and Temple House. These older stands exhibit the potential of the species on ideal sites with perfect growing conditions. These stands are considered unsuitable for commercial seed collection due to their age, the small crown size and their extraordinary height, which would present problems in climbing. However, these stands have presented possibilities for a tree improvement programme in alder. Following up on this an elite tree selection programme was undertaken in late 2005. To date about 90 elite trees have been selected and most were grafted at the Teagasc Research Centre in Kinsealy in early 2006. This grafted material will be used to establish clone banks (conservation areas) at a number of sites. In the autumn of this year seed will be collected from the selected trees and a series of progeny test will be established with this material at a later stage. Other considerations are the establishment of a number of untested clonal seed orchards later in the programme.
* Younger stands planted over the past 10/15 years - the best of these stands can be considered as future seed sources and a number of these were registered in 2005. The performanceof these young alder stands will be monitored on a continuing basis.

During 2006 more suitable stands will be selected as source identified/registered seed sources and this process will continue until sufficient suitable seed sources are identified.

For further information on the alder improvement programme contact Dr Ellen O’Connor, Teagasc Research Centre, Kinsealy email: [elaine.oconnor@teagasc.ie](mailto:elaine.oconnor@teagasc.ie)) or John Fennessy, COFORD (email: [john.fennessy@coford.ie](mailto:john.fennessy@coford.ie)).

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# Working group on edible forest fungi

The working group recently met for the second time to discuss progress on a number of issues, including the national woodland fungal survey which will be announced later in the year. While there is some information on edible forest fungi in Ireland, some of which was published as “*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*” in the late 1970s and early 80s, the fungal flora of Irish woodlands is generally poorly documented. To address this, the group has considered it necessary to undertake a comprehensive survey to establish forest species in Irish woodlands, their distribution and level of abundance.For further information on this working group, contact John Fennessy, COFORD (email: [john.fennessy@coford.ie](mailto:john.fennessy@coford.ie)).

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# Forestry promotion campaign launched

Speaking at the launch of a major forestry promotion campaign in Kells, Co Meath, Mary Wallace TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food with responsibility for Forestry, reiterated that “The current package of incentives available for afforestation is very attractive and I want to ensure that the information is as widely available as possible so that farmers and landowners can make the best possible decision in relation to land use. I also want to ensure that the public at large appreciate the wide range of benefits we get can from forestry, particularly wood energy, and the importance of investing in it now and sustaining it, for the benefit of future generations.”

The Forestry Promotion campaign was launched by the Minister Wallace on John McCartan's farm, Baltrasna, Kells, Co Meath, on Thursday, 29 June. It is a joint campaign between the Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) and the Department of Agriculture and Food arising from a call for proposals issued by the Forest Service of the Department in 2005. Pembroke Communications was selected to conduct the campaign over the next eighteen months and will avail of as many means and opportunities as possible to highlight the importance and benefits of forestry. Minister Wallace warmly welcomed the co-operation with the forestry sector, which will facilitate joint identification of the priority areas for intervention to ensure that the campaign is as focussed and as effective as possible. She said that the purpose of the forestry promotional campaign is to “encourage the better management of existing forests, promote new planting and increase awareness of the benefits of forestry, including the environmental and recreational benefits. Referring to the campaign's slogan *Forests For a Bright Future*, she commented that our current forestry is the result of the work and efforts of our predecessors and that it is important that we look to the future as trees planted now will not only sustain our timber industry and the associated enterprises in years to come but will also contribute to our environment and society.

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# SEI REIO seeks Bioenergy Project Executive

Sustainable Energy Ireland - Renewable Energy Information Office has advertised the position of Bioenergy Project Executive.

Renewable energy is a key component of Irish government policy to diversify Ireland’s energy supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Bioenergy is one of the indigenous renewable energy sources with the largest potential in Ireland. Reporting to the SEI REIO Technical Manager, the successful candidate will play a key role in fostering the establishment of the Irish bioenergy market by:

* advising on the practical requirements and business models for developing bioenergy enterprises;
* providing a one-stop-shop for independent information on technical issues, funding sources, policies and regulations;
* promoting quality in the in the area of fuel production and implementation of energy technologies;
* stimulating networking between the different stakeholders of the bioenergy sector at local, national and European level.

While bioenergy encompasses a wide range of fuels and technologies, the focus will be on wood energy for heating and power generation. The successful applicant will have a strong technical background (Degree in Engineering or equivalent), with a minimum 5 years relevant work experience. Business acumen will be a definite advantage as enterprise/market development and direct advice to new start-ups is an integral part of the role. The appointee will be a good team player, have excellent communication skills and a capacity to manage a multi-layered portfolio of tasks.

Applications should be sent to the Group Personnel Manager, SWS Group Ltd., Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. E-mail: [personnel@sws.ie](mailto:personnel@sws.ie) before Wednesday 12 July 2006.

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# Walsh Fellow 2006

Considerable national and EU funds have been invested in farm forestry in Ireland so that timber suitable for industrial use will be produced in farm forests. A key condition in ensuring the production of such timber is that the farm forests are thinned where appropriate.

A Teagasc funded project, entitled "The farm forest resource in Ireland and the objectives and harvesting plans of the owners of this resource", will examine the current information available on the farm forest resource. Through a survey of farm forest owners, their plans for their forest, specifically their harvesting intentions, will be identified.

Post-graduate students are invited to apply to conduct this research. The successful candidate will be required to undertake this survey and visit the farm forests and undertake an assessment of factors such as site accessibility and stand productivity. Applicants should have a minimum of second class standing in an honours degree in Forestry. The project will start in September 2006. The recruited student will be required to register for a Masters degree in UCD. The position will be located at Teagasc, Athenry, as well as UCD. The current value of the fellowship is €17,000 pa inclusive of fees and the duration is 2 years. Applicants should submit, before 31 July 2006, a curriculum vitae, detailing their qualifications and experience, together with a covering letter explaining why they wish to pursue the research project.

For further information, contact Dr Áine Ní Dhubháin, UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science, Agriculture and Food Centre, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4. Tel: +353-1-7167755, Email: aine.nidhubhain@ucd.ie

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# Diploma in Geographical Information systems

A diploma in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is offered by UCC. GIS is a rapidly growing field and is widely used by decision makers in many areas to collect, manage, and analyse spatial data. Businesses and government agencies need to know where resources and customers are located, how products and services can be delivered most efficiently, and how to plan for future developments, GIS can play a vital role in all of these undertakings.

The diploma is designed to give professionals a good theoretical understanding of GIS and practical hands-on training in GIS software. The course has been running successfully for seven years in University College Cork and for two years in Dublin in association with the IPA (Institute of Public Administration). To facilitate professionals the course is offered on a part-time basis. Further information can be found at http://www.ucc.ie/academic/geography/dipgis/

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# Irish Energy Research Council

On 15 June 2006, the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey TD, inaugurated the new Irish Energy Research Council at an event in Dublin Castle.

The Council, comprising leading academics, officials from government departments and agencies and prominent industry figures has been established to co-ordinate energy RTDI (Research and technological, development and innovation) activities in Ireland. It will advise not only on the development of policy for energy research but also on priorities for Irish energy research up to 2013 and on integrating energy research policy with policies for the transport, environment, agriculture, enterprise, science and education sectors.

At the launch Minister Dempsey spoke of the need for a new departure in energy research and the importance of integrated policy: "The various sectors of the economy are much more interdependent than they were in the past, and the solutions which we require are complex and multidisciplinary. We have a greater environmental imperative, together with its attendant international commitments, and we also have our concerns about security of supply and economic competitiveness. This demands a new and more sophisticated approach towards identifying and undertaking research."

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# European Commission adopts the EU Forest Action Plan 2007-2011

The overall objective of the EU Forest Action Plan is to support and enhance sustainable forest management and the multifunctional role of forests.  It is based on the following principles:

* National forest programmes as a suitable framework for implementing international forest-related commitments;
* The increasing importance of global and  cross-sectoral issues in forest policy, calling for improved coherence and co-ordination;
* The need to enhance the competitiveness of the EU forest sector and good governance of EU forests;
* Respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

In the course of preparation of the Action Plan, the Commission and the Member States developed a common vision of forestry and of the contribution which forests and forestry make to modern society. In accordance with the above vision, the Action Plan has four main objectives:

* Improving long-term competitiveness;
* Improving and protecting the environment;
* Contributing to the quality of life;
* Fostering co-ordination and communication.

The Action Plan will span five years (2007-2011). A mid-term evaluation will take place in 2009 and a final evaluation will be carried out in 2012.

The EU Forest Action Plan can be downloaded from the [COFORD website](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/GeneralReports/EU%20Forest%20Action%20Plan.pdf). In addition, the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an EU Forest Action Plan and the Commission Staff Working Document, Annex to the Communication on an EU Forest Action Plan, can be downloaded from the website: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action\_plan/index\_en.htm

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# Unlimited Potential: Renewable Energy as an International Priority

The trio of trade fairs, RENEXPO®/IHE® WoodEnergy/reCONSTRUCT® from 28 September to 1 October are specifically devoted to renewable energy and energy efficient construction and renovation. The events will be held in Augsburg (near Munich), Germany.

The trade fairs run under the heading “Sustainable Energy Days” and support the EU-Campaign “Sustainable Energy Europe 2005-2008.” The campaign seeks to integrate the public at large in a wide range of activities related to the production or utilisation of renewable energy.

In the context of the trade fairs, six English language congresses and seminars are offered to supplement the knowledge acquired at the exhibition, includig the 5th International Straight Vegetable Oil Forum, the Renewable Energy in SouthEastern and Eastern Europe seminar, as well as the 6th Wood Energy Congress. Also of importance is the 3rd International Forum on the Environmental Market in Thailand: The Future Sales Market, which reports on the level of development and need for environmental technologies in Thailand.

Further information can be found at: www.renexpo.com

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# Myrica gale

Myrica gale, also known as sweet gale or bog myrtle, is a small deciduous shrub with reddish brown buds that grows in bogs, wet heaths and fens. It used to be common throughout the United Kingdom, but as wetlands were gradually drained, its habitat was removed and it retreated further north, finally making its home in the Scottish Highlands. The leaves of this sweet-scented plant are resinous and were used to flavour beer. Another well-known use was as an insect repellent. The bark was hung in wardrobes and stuffed into mattresses to repel fleas.

Recently, a Scottish company has started harvesting this plant to extract the oil for its insect-repelling properties. With £750 000 of commercial and government funding for research into the plant, there is huge commercial potential for the Highlands.

Bog myrtle, like many plants, was thought of as a medicine, and at one time was the standard treatment for scabies. The leaves were made into "gale tea", which was a cold remedy as well as being a useful astringent for upset stomachs.

Belonging to the Myricacea family, there are about 50 species of wax myrtles worldwide. They are nearly all aromatic and have a history of being used as a medicine. They are found in soaps, stomach remedies and catarrh mixes and can still be found in many herbal dispensaries.

*(Source: Edinburgh Evening News [Scotland, United Kingdom], 8 October 2005.)*

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# Wood Energy Advisory Service

The free advisory service on [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) is available and queries are being attended to by Pieter D. Kofman via email. Queries about the harvesting and supply chain sector of the wood energy industry, can be submitted online. Pieter can also be contacted between 9 and 12 am via Skype – the free software can be downloaded from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and allows telephone calls to be conducted via your computer, free of charge. He can also be contacted by phone during the designated hours on +45 75 88 1519 or mobile +45 28 55 77 58.

Please note that queries about boilers, stoves or approved installers should be directed to Sustainable Energy Ireland, Renewable Energy Information Office, Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: 023-42193, Fax: 023-29154, Email: [renewables@reio.ie](mailto:renewables@reio.ie).

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