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Forestry and Wood Update

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# COFORD News

## COFORD/Teagasc Seminar: The role of site classification in forest productivity and management

Good silvicultural decision-making and planning require knowledge of the growth of tree species across the full range of forest sites in Ireland. While site classification has long been used in forestry as a means of species selection and for estimating growth and yield, no overall system has been adapted for widespread use. Soil classification has been used to estimate productivity and to aid species selection, while indicator species and vegetation type are used as secondary indicators of soil fertility.

Anderson’s site classification (1950) has been used to classify the fertility class and moisture of sites, based on plant communities. It remains in use but recent years have seen growth in the use of multifactor classifications in Britain and Canada. These systems work by focusing attention on ecological site quality and its relation to the ecosystem, and can provide a sound basis for the sustainable production of wood and for the conservation of wildlife. Ecological Site Classification (ESC), currently in use in Canada and Britain, recognizes different site types according to environmental variables and provides an ecological basis for silvicultural practices, given that understanding the role of species variability in forest productivity is one of the essential elements for sustainable wood production.

In order to better understand the role and potential of site classification in the choice of tree species, site productivity and forest management, Teagasc and COFORD are holding a seminar on 4 June 2008 on the theme ***The role of site classification in forest productivity and management*** at the Tullamore Court Hotel, Co Offaly. The seminar will be addressed by invited speakers, including a number of eminent scientists in the area of site classification in Ireland and abroad.

All those interested in silvicultural decision-making and planning, and forest ecology will find attendance at the seminar worthwhile.

The programme includes the following presentations:

* *Soil classification, soil maps and their use in site classification for forestry in Ireland -* Niall Farrelly, Ray Fealy and Toddy Radford (Teagasc Research)
* *Ecosystem site classification, principles, concepts and rationale and application in forest resource management -* Karel Klinka (Emeritus Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada)
* *Potential productivity concepts and productivity of forest tree species in Canada -* Han Chen (Associate Professor, Faculty of Forestry, Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada)
* *Site, soil and climatic factors and the productivity of Sitka spruce in Ireland -* Niall Farrelly (Teagasc), Áine Ní Dhubháin and Maarten Nieuwenhuis (UCD)
* *Site factors and windthrow risk assessment* - Áine Ní Dhubháin (UCD)
* *The problems associated with afforestation and reforestation with reference to site factors -* Michael Keane (Coillte)
* *Afforestation of cutaway midland peats – with respect to site classification and species success -* Florence Renou-Wilson (UCD)
* *The impact of climate change on species selection in Ireland -* Kevin Black (FERS/UCD) and Duncan Ray (Forest Commission)
* *The use of GIS derived estimates of topographical exposure to aid species suitability and windthrow risk in Irish forestry -* Stuart Green (Teagasc)

[Click here to download the information brochure/booking form](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/programme040608.pdf).

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## COFORD, Teagasc and SEI Bioenergy 2008 conference

The 2007 Energy White Paper and Bioenergy Action Plan have set out ambitious targets for the contribution of bioenergy to renewable energy and Ireland’s future energy mix. A one-day conference will take place on Thursday 19 June at Teagasc Mellows Centre, Athenry, on the eve of Bioenergy 2008. The conference, presented jointly by Sustainable Energy Ireland Renewable Energy Information Office, COFORD and Teagasc, will highlight progress too date, providing practical solutions to some of the most pressing issues and looking at new opportunities in the bioenergy sector with a commitment to local and national sustainability.

Sessions will include presentations on:

* *Bioenergy in Ireland – the Driving Forces* – looking at the economic drivers and financial support for bioenergy.
* *Delivering Quality Products to the Irish Market* - looking at sustainable and efficient biomass supply chains.
* *Bioenergy for Ireland’s Energy Managers* - this session will look at a number of case studies.
* *Emerging Bioenergy Technologies.*

Programme details are available on the Teagasc, SEI and COFORD websites. [Click here to download the full programme and booking form.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/bioenergy2008conference.pdf)

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## Bioenergy 2008 at FarmFest

Following on from the highly successful Bioenergy 2007 event, Teagasc, SEI and COFORD are organising Bioenergy 2008, on 20 June 2008 at the Teagasc Mellows Centre, Athenry. The day will feature outdoor wood energy exhibitions, as well as many trade and information stands. Bioenergy 2008 will be held in association with Teagasc’s national farming and rural development event, ***FarmFest.*** If you are interested in reserving exhibition space, please contact Paul Dykes, SEI – tel: 023 63393 or 087 9978723.

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## Field day: Thinning of young ash plantations

The third in a series of field days on the thinning of young ash plantations takes place on Wednesday 17 September in the Cork/Limerick area. Organised by COFORD, the Forest Service and Teagasc, the programme is aimed at those who have ash plantations at or close to the first thinning stage, and will discuss the issues to consider when planning a thinning, including regulation and felling licences, access to the plantation, internal access racks and roading requirements to extract the felled timber. There will also be a practical thinning demonstration of the process of identifying the candidate potential crop trees and marking of stems to be removed. In a hands-on session participants will make the potential crop tree selections based on earlier demonstration with the help and advice of the instructors. For more information contact John Fennessy (tel: 01-2130725; email: john.fennessy@coford.ie).

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## COFORD R&D programme project update: QUALIBROAD

*Each issue of the newsletter carries a short article on new and ongoing COFORD-funded projects. Feedback on the articles is welcome and should be addressed to the project leaders (contact details at the end of the article).*

QUALIBROAD, a collaborative research project between UCD and Coillte, commenced in 2001 and is scheduled to end in 2008. The main aim of the project is to improve the yield, quality and uniformity of common alder (*Alnus* *glutinosa* L.), downy birch (*Betula pubescens* Ehrh.), ash (*Fraxinus* *excelsior* L.) and pedunculate oak (*Quercus* *robur* L.) seedlings in the nursery. Mulch, cloche, fertiliser and seed dormancy treatments were investigated in a series of nursery and laboratory experiments. The results from the fertiliser trials indicated that higher levels of N than were being used operationally improved the yield and quality of plants, but the results for cloches and mulches were less consistent. In addition, new seed pretreatments to break seed dormancy and improved seed storage protocols were developed for all species. Many of these treatments have been implemented in practice. Furthermore, the results of these experiments have been published in several international refereed journals and presented at conferences in Ireland and abroad. New research in the area of seeds, fertilisation and mini-plug transplanting commenced in 2007 and 2008. The aim of the seed research is to develop new seed pretreatment protocols to improve the germination and storability of the seeds of spindle tree (*Sorbus* *aucuparia* L.) and rowan (*Sorbus* *aucuparia* L.). In a new nursery study jointly funded by US agencies and COFORD, as part of the QualiBroad project, Prof. Douglass Jacobs of Purdue University, Indiana, is collaborating to investigate the use of exponential nutrient loading to improve the quality of pedunculate oak seedlings and to examine leaching dynamics in a trial laid down at Ballintemple nursery. In another study conducted in collaboration with Prof. Anders Mattsson of Dalarna University (Sweden), the use of mini-plug alder seedlings is being investigated. Seedlings were grown for 4-6 weeks in Sweden and transplanted into a nursery bed at Ballintemple Nursery. The data from the new research have not been analysed yet.

*For further information, contact Dr Conor O’Reilly – email: conor.oreilly@ucd.ie*

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## Wild edible forest fungi in Ireland

Forests generate a number of wild edible products ncluding mushrooms, berries and nuts. In many parts of world there is a strong tradition of picking edible fungi. Because Ireland lacks a forest tradition people tend to be highly suspicious of any mushroom other than the common cultivated mushroom from the high street supermarket. Knowledge about forest fungi in Ireland is poor and we are unsure of what species occur in our forests and in what quantities.

COFORD has funded two projects at the University of Limerick, under the supervision of Dr Thomas Harrington, to examine edible mushrooms as forest products in Ireland. It is estimated that there are over 40 species of naturally occurring edible forest fungi in Ireland . In order to better quantify the occurrence and range of fungi the FOREST FUNGI project commenced in 2007.

Maria Cullen is currently assessing edible species distributions and yields in conifer and broadleaf forests. Surveys are being conducted throughout Ireland . Genetic strains will be identified and are being cultured from material gathered each autumn and spring. This work will complement a parallel project by John O'Connell who is examining the feasibility of using forest thinnings as a medium to grow oyster *(Pleurotus ostreatus)* and shiitake mushrooms *(Lentinula edodes)* under controlled conditions. If successful, it is envisaged that the cultivation of edible fungi could be extended to farm forests to create an extra income stream.

Readers interested in an edible mushroom course and/or participating as a volunteer to collect data from forest plots through the country in the autumn should contact Maria Cullen (email: maria.cullen@ul.ie or tel: 086 0442257).

COFORD is also involved in is the preparation of a new book on edible forest fungi in Ireland that will be published later this year. For further information contact John Fennessy (email: john.fennessy@coford.ie).

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## COFORD meets the Scottish SIRT team

Following on from the Strategic Integrated Research in Timber (SIRT) meeting held in Bush near Edinburgh in March, COFORD organized a meeting in Ireland on 16 May to update Irish researchers on developments in wood sector research area in the UK and to explore future collaborative research projects. Visitors from SIRT were Dr John Moore, Research Fellow, Centre for Timber Engineering, Napier University, Edinburgh and Shaun Mochan, Timber Properties Group Leader, Forest Research, Northern Research Station, Bush. The UK researchers gave presentations on:

* The SIRT Working Group’s objective, achievements to date and what it hopes to achieve in the future as well as ongoing current studies.
* The benchmark study in the UK – overview, main findings and future development plans.
* Overview of the study undertaken and the results from the Baronscourt Sitka spruce spacing trial in Fermanagh.
* Overview and results from study undertaken on an old Sitka spruce stand at Birkley Wood in UK.
* The potential development and future possibilities for using acoustic tools in the determination and quantification of wood quality and as an aid to better segration of wood in the forest and at the mill.

The meeting generated discussion on research on wood with particular reference to Sitka spruce and a number of areas of common interest were suggested including: benchmarking the Sitka spruce resource in Ireland on a similar basis as the UK study; the possible evaluation of new acoustic tools for the evaluation of moisture content for biomass; the development of engineered wood products from home-grown timber; and educating the public on the benefits and potential for increased timber usage in construction and its continued substitution for alternative building materials in the future.

 For further details see [www.cte.napier.ac.uk/SIRT/](http://www.cte.napier.ac.uk/SIRT/)

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### Hardwood Matters

COFORD produces *Hardwood Matters*, the catalogue for advertising hardwood timber, twice yearly. Published in hard copy and available on the website, it attracts a wide and growing audience in the forestry and timber processing sectors. Those in the business of selling or buying hardwoods can avail of the service, free-of-charge, by contacting COFORD. *Hardwood Matters* is also carried on TIMBERWeb, the global timber eMarket, [www.timberweb.com](http://www.timberweb.com). Material for inclusion in the next issue should reach the COFORD office by 15 June 2008. For further information contact John Fennessy at 01 2130725 or email: john.fennessy@coford.ie

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# Other Forestry News

## InnovaWood News

The regular supplement from InnovaWood ([click here to download](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/iwscoford_newsletter_june08.pdf)) contains information about:

* Events, conferences and courses
	+ Events in brief
	+ Joint partnering event for FP7 proposals
* Growing towards the future – joint innovation for successful forest-based business in Europe
* Calls for proposals
	+ COST launches new call for proposals to support scientific and technical collaboration in Europe
	+ Cooperation Specific Programme
* InnovaWood information service
	+ InnovaWood projects
	+ Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform: the first years
	+ Management of recovered wood: proceedings of the 3rd European COST E31 conference

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## Students seek work experience in the forestry sector

Every year the InnovaWood Secretariat receives numerous requests from international students of forestry and forestry-related subjects for help finding enterprises and organisations in Ireland where they can undertake a two to three month work experience placement. These placements are often a core part of student curricula and represent a vital contribution to ensuring that graduates are better skilled and more highly qualified upon completion of their studies, and that they are equipped to quickly adapt to a working environment.

By providing work experience opportunities to students, firms are able to actively contribute to graduate quality, and in doing so may even find prospective future employees.

If you feel your organisation is in a position to offer valuable experience to international students, and in turn profiting from their time, energy and enthusiasm, please contact InnovaWood for more information. Email: office@innovawood.com

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## Native Woodland Scheme Training Course

The Forest Service and Woodlands of Ireland are hosting a three day Native Woodland Scheme Training Course at the Lady Gregory Hotel, Gort, Co Galway and at Coole Park from 30 June to 2 July 2008. The course includes indoor and outdoor sessions covering native woodland ecology and management as well as the procedures and standards of the newly revised Native Woodland Scheme. Approximately 600 people have completed the course to date including landowners, foresters, ecologists, researchers, third level students, and representatives from a wide range of relevant organisations. Individual foresters or ecologists wishing to become a Participating Forester or Participating Ecologist under the scheme are required to complete the course.

For further information or if you wish to reserve a place at the course contact Kevin Collins at the Forest Service (tel: 01-6072502 or email: Kevin.collins@agriculture.gov.ie).

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## Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference

The Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference (ABIC 2008) will be held in University College Cork, from August 24-27 2008. The ABIC website provides full details of the conference sessions and the many international speakers who will be presenting the latest advances in agricultural biotechnology. There will be an associated poster session and also a trade exhibition open to companies and other exhibitors. For more information, go to <http://www.abic.ca/abic2008/html/program.html>

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## European forest week

The week of 20–24 October 2008 will be European forest week with the theme *Working together for sustainable forest management in Europe*. The objectives of the European Forest Week are to:

* Increase the visibility of the forest based-sector and its contribution to development of economy and society in Europe.
* Raise awareness about its important contributions to mitigating climate change, providing freshwater and protecting the environment.
* Engage other sectors in a participatory dialogue on forest related issues.

The European Forest Week will provide an umbrella for forest-related events organized by the public and private sectors as well as civil society throughout Europe. It is organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the European Commission (EC), in collaboration with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union at the time of the event, France.

At the regional level, the week will be marked by a series of events in Rome and Brussels including press conferences, high-level policy discussions and networking opportunities on a number of topical themes, including climate change, energy and water in relation to the forest sector.

Countries are invited to organize events to address forest issues of national relevance, sharing the objectives of the week and explicitly linked with it. These could be conferences or policy forums, public events such as forest fairs, nature walks or exhibits, symbolic events such as tree planting, or media events aimed at improved communication.

A dedicated website (www.EuropeanForestWeek.org) will link to national events and will provide suggested messages, a media kit and information resources for event organizers. For more information, contact Kit Prins at efw@unece.org.

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