

FORESTFOLIAGE

Management, screening and evaluation of a range of forest tree species and associated ornamentals for suitability as cut foliage

PROJECT TEAM

Dr Patrick Walsh, GMIT
 Andy Whelton, Teagasc
 Amy Costello, GMIT
 Jim Costello, Forest Produce Ltd
 Jim Kelly, Independent Horticultural Consultant
 Paddy O Kelly, Coillte

* Address correspondence to:
amyhingston@gmail.com

COMPLETION DATE

January 2008

OBJECTIVES

The project comprises two parts : harvesting foliage from existing plantations, and foliage production from minor forest and ornamental species.

For established plantations the main objectives are to:

- determine the potential of harvesting foliage in association with timber production in three conifers: Japanese larch (*Larix kaempferi*), Monterey Cypress Goldcrest (*Cupressus macrocarpa* Goldcrest), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*).
- investigate the possibility of managing overmature noble fir (*Abies procera*) Christmas tree plantations for foliage production.
- evaluate forest foliage species.

For new species trials the main objective is:

- screen a range of ornamental tree and shrub species for suitability as cut foliage.

PROGRESS

Established plantations

The project has been extended to facilitate collection of data after two complete growing seasons from Japanese larch, Monterey cypress Goldcrest, western hemlock and noble fir. Data collected included height and diameter growth as well as foliage yield.

For the most part, foliage harvesting does not appear to have had a significant effect on tree growth after two successive harvests. To assess stem recovery rates, the number of commercial standard foliage stems (these meet criteria such as length, form, colour and volume) harvested per unit area was recorded for each treatment. Management recommendations for existing Japanese larch, western hemlock and Monterey cypress plantations will issue in the final report, which will also deal with the full range of new species tested.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED

All experimental work has been completed. Work in 2008 will focus on the analysis and reporting of results. Trial sites, especially new species, will continue to be monitored by the research team.

OUTPUTS

- On-site meetings were held with members of the project team, industry experts, and other interested individuals.
- COFORD Connects note – Forest Foliage.
- At the invitation Andy Whelton and Amy Costello were participants in COST Action E30 Economic Integration of Urban Consumers' Demand and Rural Forestry Production.
- *Foliage from Forests - a Growing Opportunity* – a two-day event was held in October 2007. The indoor session involved presentations from industry experts and researchers involved in the project as well as demonstrations of forest foliage products by two well-known designers. Day 2 involved a field visit to trial sites and foliage processing facilities at Foulksmills, Co Wexford. Seminar presentations are available on the COFORD website.