

Planting Small Woodland (160 trees 0.05ha)

Specification extract · Pages 51–54

What this document is

This is an extract of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) document “ACRES Co-operation Non-Productive Investments Specification”, Version 2.2, July 2026. It contains the pages covering the Planting Small Woodland (160 trees 0.05ha) action (pages 51–54 of the full specification).

Because the specification runs each action straight into the next, the first and last pages of this extract may also show the end or beginning of a neighbouring action. The section for this action starts on page 51 (the printed page number matches the page number in the full document).

Always check the current version

DAFM updates the specification from time to time. The full document is the authoritative version and should be consulted before undertaking any work. It is available from:

Full specification (PDF, opens at this action):

https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/f8e2ccf8/NPI_specifications_July_2026_2.pdf#page=51

ACRES NPI page on gov.ie:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/f5a48-agri-climate-rural-environment-scheme-acres/#non-productive-investments>

About this action on the ACRES CP website

<https://acresireland.ie/action-projects/npi-planting-small-woodland-160-trees-0-05ha/>

Small Woodland

Background

Small woodlands on farms can sequester carbon, support biodiversity, help reduce soil erosion and sediment loss and recover leached nutrients. They also contribute to increase water retention, provide shelter and shading for livestock when mature, and enhance the visual appearance of the farm landscape.

Site Suitability

- This action can be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare > 0.
- This action is available on CP and Non-CP LPIS parcels that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- On CP forage parcels, this action can only be selected on fields with the following scorecards assigned or submitted: Grassland, Rough Grazing and Scrub/Woodland.
- This action cannot be selected within an archaeological monument buffer.
- In Non-CP parcels this action is not available on areas that are SAC/SPAs, NHAs, pNHAs, or Annex 1 Grasslands. **Allowed in Breeding Wader Hotspots but may fail screening in certain areas.**
- The ecological value of the habitat and the number of positive indicators present in the immediate vicinity of the proposed planting location should be considered.
- Small Woodland action is not suitable on blanket bog, raised bog or heath, or potentially high scoring grasslands.
- Site should be free of invasive plant species.
- Sites should be suitable to establish the chosen tree species and should be reasonably sheltered and have no requirement for additional drainage.
- Sites should be below 300m altitude.

Note 13: The planting of trees in any area greater than 0.1 hectare which has tree crown cover of more than 20 per cent of the total area, or the potential to achieve this cover at maturity is considered a forest. To remain in line with the Amendment of Forestry Act 2014 under Animal Health and Welfare and Forestry (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022) which facilitates planting of native trees in areas not less than 0.1 hectare and not greater than 1 hectare without an afforestation licence, the total cumulative area of forest that can be planted on a holding is limited to 1 hectare. This would apply to the combination of all tree planting actions in ACRES General /ACRES CP that could be considered forests depending on planting layout and density i.e. Planting trees in riparian buffer zones, Tree planting and Tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyards.

Note 14: Where an investment has been grant aided under TAMS or any other National/EU funded Agri-environment or Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018, this cannot fulfil part of the requirement for this ACRES NPI action.

Fencing-Barbed Wire, Fencing- Permanent Electric or Fencing-Sheep Wire NPIs cannot be used to fulfil the fencing requirement of this ACRES NPI.

Requirements

1. Select the LPIS parcel(s) for the small woodland action by drawing one point on the map to mark the location of the woodland. Each small woodland applied for is only eligible for one NPI payment and once claimed must be maintained for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
2. There are 2 options for planting small woodland, 160 trees in an area of 0.05Ha or 300 trees in an area of 0.09Ha.
3. Trees must be planted with a spacing of 1.5m to 2m between trees. Planting rows of trees 2m apart with 1.5m spacing within the rows, will achieve the required planting density.
4. Do not plant in the vicinity of overhead wires or within 20m railway lines. See Table 11 for clearance distance for overhead lines.
5. Plants must be of Irish Origin or Irish Provenance and purchased from DAFM registered professional operators.
6. All trees purchased for this action must have an accompanying plant passport and participants must ensure that they retain the plant passport(s) and receipts(s).
7. Trees must be selected from Table 12 and purchased trees must be a minimum of 60cm in height.
8. The woodland must be fenced off from livestock. The fencing must be stockproof, fit for purpose and be undertaken with permanent stakes and wire.
9. Tree planting must be carried out between November 1st and March 31st.
10. Grass and competing vegetation must be controlled around the trees annually.
11. Failed or dead trees must be replaced during the next dormant season.
12. Only one claim for payment is allowed per approved NPI-Annual Works Plan. This action can only be claimed for payment once delivered in accordance with NPI Specification.

Additional Guidance

- It is recommended that at least 4 species of tree should be planted with no one species accounting for more than 50% of the total.
- Planting trees near salmonid rivers require consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland/Loughs Agency and additional measures to reduce sedimentation to rivers, particularly during spawning seasons (November/December) and when eggs are in gravels (January-February), to protect these sensitive rivers. Trees should be planted without the use of heavy machinery near sensitive watercourses to reduce possible sedimentation.
- Trees should be planted between November and March. Bare root trees should be planted as soon as possible after delivery.
- Trees planted in small woodlands should be located near existing hedgerows, scrub areas or woodland. These areas will support colonisation by woodland species of plants, insects, and other animals.
- **Trees should not be planted within 60m of a neighbouring dwelling house.**
- Do not remove existing trees, scrub, or hedgerow to facilitate the tree planting action.

Table 11. The required clearance distance depends on the voltage of the overhead line

Power line type	Clearance distance (from centre of line)
Low voltage (230/400V)	5 m
10 kV and 38 kV	10 m
110 kV	31 m
220 kV	34 m
400 kV	37 m
Note: All trees must be outside their falling distance from line support structures.	

Table 12. Native Trees for Small Woodland

Common name	Scientific name	Common name	Scientific name
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Strawberry tree	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Bay willow	<i>Salix pentandra</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	English whitebeam	<i>Sorbus anglica</i>
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i> Where possible, Mc Griggors (Crab) Cavan Sweet (Crab) Lough Key (Crab)	Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Black poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i>	Irish whitebeam	<i>Sorbus Hibernica</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	Rock whitebeam	<i>Sorbus rupicola</i>
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Bird cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>

Table 13. Example of Small Woodland Planting Mixture

Scenario	Example of Planting Mixture
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Scenario 1 Dry Mineral Soil (i.e. podzols, brown podzols & brown earths)	Oak (30%), Birch (30%), Scots pine (25%) and other native species (15%). Oak planted in predominantly pure groups, with birch scattered intimately throughout. Scots pine planted in small pure groups, focusing on areas away from any watercourses adjoining or crossing the small woodland. The remainder of the Birch planted in pure groups.
Scenario 2 Wet Mineral Soil (i.e. gleys)	Alder (50%), Birch (30%), Oak (15%) and other native species (5%). Alder and Birch planted in pure groups (30-40 trees), with groups interspersed alternately. Oak planted in small pure groups, focusing on the dryer parts of the small woodland.