

Planting Trees

Specification extract · Pages 37–41

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 Trees action (pages 37–41 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 37 (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=37

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-trees/>

Bloody Butcher	Horses Head	Sweet William
Brady	Irish Molly	Thompson's Apple
Brown Crofton	Irish Peach	Turkey Willouby
Buttermilk Russet	Irish Pitcher	Uncle John's Cooker
Cabbage Stalk	Keegan's Crab	Valentine
Cavan Rose	Kemp	White Crofton
Cavan Strawberry	Kerry Pippin	White Moss
Cavan Sugarcane	Kilkenny Pearmain	White Russet
CavanWine	Kiltoghert Blossom	Widow's Friend
Clearheart	Knights Templar	Yellow Clare
Councillor	Lady's Finger	Yellow Pitcher
Custard Scarlet	Leitrim Red	Crab Apples
Davy Apple	Leixlip	Cavan Sweet (Crab)
Dick Davies	Lough Tree of Wexford	Lough Key (Crab)
Dockney	Martins Seedling	Mc Griggors (Crab)
Ecklinville Seedling	Mrs Perry	

Planting Trees

Objective

To encourage the planting of native trees on farms where they will have multiple benefits while offering flexible planting options to suit the holding.

The planting of trees under this action does not contribute to the planting of trees as part of an Eco scheme for Pillar 1 payments.

Background

Planting trees 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. This action includes two planting options Rows and Groups.

1. **Rows:** The row option is planting of native trees in rows at least 4m apart e.g., along a field boundary/farm passageway or along electric fence boundaries, within a pasture or arable field along a riverbank for stabilisation, or to provide dapple shade to rivers. The row option is available on peatland habitats but is restricted to low numbers and planting is not permitted in open heath or blanket bog habitats. Each point drawn on GLAM NPI-Annual Works plan represents an application for 3 trees. If planting in rows, leave adequate distance between each point to allow for the 4m spacing between individual trees.
2. **Groups:** The group option is planting native trees in small groups at desired locations on the farm maintaining at least 4m spacing. The group option is not available in peatland habitats.

Site Suitability

- This action can only be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare > 0.
- This action is available on CP and Non-CP parcels that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- On CP parcels, this action can only be selected on fields with the following scorecards assigned or submitted: Grassland, Rough Grazing, Peatland and Scrub/Woodland.
- Where there is a peatland scorecard, this action is restricted to small numbers of trees (the row option) planted along watercourses to help stabilise riverbanks and prevent erosion or in small glens or gullies along upland streams.
- 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. Tree Planting action is not **suitable** on blanket bog, raised bog or heath, potentially high scoring grasslands, Breeding Wader Hotspots, Annex 1 grasslands and within archaeological monument buffers.
- Sites should be suitable to establish the chosen tree species, should be reasonably sheltered and have no requirement for additional drainage.
- Sites should be below 300m altitude.
- This action should not be used for planting trees in Riparian Margins, see Riparian Margin Tree Planting.

Note 7: 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 8: 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 tree planting action by drawing one point on the map. The minimum number of trees to be delivered is 3. Each point drawn on GLAM NPI Annual Works plan represents an application for 3 trees. They are only eligible for

one NPI payment and once claimed must be maintained in the same location for the remainder of the ACRES contract.

2. Do not plant in the vicinity of overhead wires or within 20m of railway lines. See Table 8. for clearance distance for overhead lines.
3. Plants must be of Irish Origin or Irish Provenance and purchased from DAFM registered professional operators.
4. All plants purchased for this action must have an accompanying plant passport and participants must ensure that they retain the plant passport(s) and receipts(s).
5. Purchased trees must be a minimum of 60cm in height.
6. Plant at least 3 native tree species from Table 7. below, of which not more than 25 per cent of trees planted to be Scots pine.
7. Maintain at least 4 metres spacing between each tree. If planting multiple rows, maintain at least 12m between the rows to allow for continued grazing or crop production.
8. Fit each tree (except Scots Pine and Holly) with a staked tree shelter, minimum 75cm in height (see Note 9 below) and fence trees off with appropriate fencing to protect from livestock. If using individual barbed protectors (see Note 10 below), the staked tree shelter and fencing is not required.
9. Grass and competing vegetation must be controlled around the trees annually.
10. Failed or dead trees must be replaced during the next dormant season.
11. 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

- Trees should be pruned annually to restrict them to a single leader.
- Fence should be placed at least 1m out from tree to prevent damage by livestock.
- Trees should be planted between November and March. Bare root trees should be planted as soon as possible after delivery.
- Planting holes for container grown plants should be three times as large as the root ball of the young tree.
- Soak the root ball before planting, tease out some roots from the root ball to loosen it before planting.
- A small amount of well-rotted farmyard manure or low nitrogen fertiliser can be mixed in with the soil used to backfill the planting hole.
- Bare root trees can be slit, or pit planted. Trees should be planted in a vegetation free area. Clear the area prior to planting so plants are planted on a weed free area (less than 1 metre in diameter).
- Trees should not be planted within 60m of a neighbouring dwelling house.
- Do not use a strimmer or Plant Protection Product to control competing vegetation, there is a serious risk of damaging the young tree.
- Use a mulch to suppress grass and other vegetation around the young tree. Two layers of corrugated cardboard covered by bark chips will suppress grass and weed growth for a growing season.

Table 7. Species for Tree Planting Rows & Groups

Common name	Scientific name

Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Strawberry tree	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i> Where possible, Mc Griggors (Crab) Cavan Sweet (Crab) Lough Key (Crab)
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Burren Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Sessile oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Common Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Irish whitebeam	<i>Sorbus hibernica</i>

Table 8. 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.	

Note 9: Tree shelter guidance

Tree shelters create a micro-climate for trees which encourages better establishment, higher survival rates, allows for planting of smaller trees and contributes to greater root development. They are designed to last a minimum of 5 years, boosting chances of survival and healthy growth through the early stages of establishment. Use 1.2m tree shelters but if fallow or red deer are known to graze in the area, 1.5-1.8 metre tree shelter is required. Do not fasten guards to the tree itself or allow guards to cause damage to the growing tree

Tree Shelter

Height 75cm (minimum)

Diameter 73-105mm (minimum)

Ties x 2 to support to stake

Flared Rim to minimise stem abrasion

Twin Wall construction

UV stabilised propylene



Note 10: Barbed protector guidance

Barbed livestock protectors have spikes protruding which discourages animal from pushing or rubbing up against them. They provide effective protection against cattle, deer, pigs, goats and sheep. They are placed around the tree, to fully protect the developing tree from grazing animals. They should be a minimum 1200mm high but preferably 1600mm high if protecting against cattle.

Barbed protector

Height 1.2 metres (minimum)

Diameter 0.32 metres

Rebar x 3 to secure

Galvanized steel

