

Use of Chemicals in Forestry by Coillte

FACT SHEET

OUR BUSINESS IS SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction

Trees are normally the biggest plant in the woods. Therefore, once they have started to grow no use of chemicals is necessary as other weeds cannot affect their health. However, very young trees sometimes need protection while they are small to prevent attack from insect species, such as the pine weevil or suppression from competing vegetation. In many cases, if left unprotected, large amounts of young trees would be left stunted and in many instances die.

How are chemicals used?

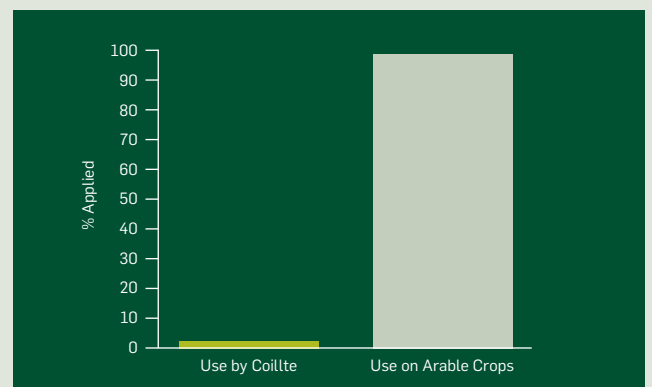
As a result of this, the amount of chemicals used in forestry is very low and would represent only a small fraction of the amounts used in other sectors. For example, data from an EPA report (Ireland's Environment 2008) shows that the amount of herbicide used in forestry in a year is typically less than 0.07% of the total used in Irish agriculture on arable crops alone. Even though the amounts we use in Coillte are very low, we are committed to reducing our use of chemicals even further.

At Coillte, we have developed in recent years an integrated management system to monitor our forests to determine if any chemical use at all is needed at replanting stage. In many cases our forest managers determine the trees do not require any further assistance, resulting in our chemical use significantly decreasing over recent years. In addition, we also use manual control methods for vegetation control in our forests, where possible.

Coillte only use chemicals which are fully approved as safe to use in forestry in Ireland by the Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Registration and Control Division.



Tree planting in Coillte's Forests.



Use of Glyphosate in Ireland.

Source: EPA Ireland's Environment Report. 2008.

Planting, growing, **protecting**, managing and harvesting; forestry is at the heart of what we do.

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Operations

All of Coillte's operators are fully trained in health and safety and environmental aspects of the use of chemicals and we erect notices to inform the public where the chemicals have been sprayed. The chemicals are always manually applied carefully and directly to the base of the trees and are not used near to watercourses and other sensitive natural features.

Occasionally, chemicals are used on our lands to control invasive alien plant species, such as Rhododendron. Best practice guidelines have determined that without safe chemical application it is virtually impossible to control the spread of these invasive species. These plants are cut manually and chemicals are applied directly to the cut stump where it is taken up directly into the plant.

Certification

Coillte's environmental management systems are certified externally to both ISO health and safety and forest management standards. Currently Coillte retains its OHSAS 18001 certificate for health and safety and Coillte's forest management is dual certified as fully sustainable by both the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)¹ and the Programme for Endorsing Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC™).

More information

If you would like to find out more about Coillte's regional forest operations, you can sign up as a stakeholder and receive regular news updates and information, at this link: <https://www.coillte.ie/about-us/social-responsibility/consultation/>

¹FSC licenced code: FSC-C005714



Young trees planted in a new multi-functional forest in Co. Wicklow.



FSC® auditor conducting an audit in a Coillte forest.



Manual removal of the invasive species, Rhododendron, from a Coillte forest.