



85% of Irish adults are concerned about the implications of global warming for the country and its people

Over 9/10 adults believe trees clean the air we breathe and help lower global temperatures

The vast majority of adults agree we need to grow more trees and increase forestry cover to combat global warming

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A Coillte commissioned RED C poll* reveals most Irish adults or 85% are united in their concern about global warming and its implications for Ireland and its people.

The research also reveals 92% of adults agree trees clean the air we breathe by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen - and help lower global temperature increases, caused by carbon dioxide trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The vast majority of respondents (85%) believe Ireland needs to grow more trees and increase its forest cover significantly and quickly to combat global warming.

Other research highlights include:

- 81% of adults don't know Irish forests absorb about 5 million# tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per annum or the equivalent of 80% of annual car emissions.
- 86% of respondents are unaware that Coillte planted its largest number of trees ever i.e. 22 million~ trees in 2020, to re-stock its forests.
- 72% of those surveyed don't know Ireland has just 11%** of its land covered in forests compared to an average of 38%*** forest cover in Europe.
- 83% of adults don't know that just 1%~~ of Ireland's land surface was covered by forests in the early 1900's.

"Trees and forests have a very important role to play in our fight against climate change," said Imelda Hurley, ceo Coillte.

"Trees and well managed forests act as a carbon sink, constantly removing carbon dioxide from the air and converting this to oxygen as the tree grows. They literally clean the air we breathe," she said.

"Ireland has one of the lowest proportions of forest cover in the EU at just 11% and we have a long way to go to catch up with our European neighbours."

Hurley added that well managed forests have a triple climate benefit. Trees not only clean the air, they also store carbon in their trunks and branches and produce wood, an environmentally friendly substitute for the construction of homes and buildings.

Coillte as the nation's largest forest and land owner, with over 440,000 hectares or over 1 million acres is also one of the country's largest carbon sinks.

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Notes for Editors

- *A RED C poll was conducted amongst 1,006 Irish adults, aged 18+ between August 20 and 26, 2021.
- #Source Department of Agriculture Food and Marine, 2019 (4.9million metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent removed by total Irish forests) and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland SEAI car emissions represent 6.11 million metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent. 4.9/6.11 equals 80%.
- ~These are trees that are planted to replace harvested trees. Coillte replaces at a minimum, one tree for every tree harvested in line with best international forestry practice.
- **Source: Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, Forestry Inventory 2017
- ***Source: Forestresearch.gov.uk 2015 [Forest cover: international comparisons - Forest Research](#)
- ~~ Source: Teagasc.ie <https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/forestry/advice/general-topics/history-of-forestry-in-ireland/>