

9.17 Weed Control

Weeds reduce both the survival and height growth of trees by competing for light, moisture and nutrients. It has been demonstrated that the most effective and efficient means of controlling weeds is by the use of herbicides. By controlling vegetation in a 1m diameter spot (or 1m wide band) around the base of trees in the initial 4 years successful establishment to Forest Service standards should be achieved.

Weed control should be undertaken in accordance with the booklet 'Guidelines for the use of Herbicides in forestry' published by Coillte Teoranta on behalf of the Forest Service (available from the local Forest Service Inspectors). Please note that the use of chemicals is governed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1989 and users should be familiar with manufacturers instructions.

9.18 Standards at Year 4

9.18.1 General

Only when all the plantation is established satisfactorily should a Form 3 be submitted for payment. Where part of the plantation is up to standard and part of the plantation is not the applicant should not submit Form 3. Any Form 3 applications submitted that fall into this category will not be paid.

9.18.2 Stocking levels

A crop is established when at least 90% of the original specified stocking, spread evenly over the site, is free from competing vegetation and is free growing.

9.18.3 Fertility

Plantations where trees are showing signs of nutrient deficiency should not be submitted for 2nd installment payment. In such cases a foliar analysis should be undertaken to determine the fertiliser type and rate to be applied. The site should then be fertilised accordingly and following a successful response to the application of fertiliser the site should then be submitted for 2nd installment payment.



Figure 7. Norway spruce (4 year old).



Figure 8. Ash (4 year old).



Figure 9. Oak (4 year old).



Figure 10. Douglas fir (4 year old).

9.18.4 Fences, Roads, Firebreaks, Drains, Sediment traps, etc.

All fences, roads, firebreaks, drains, sediment traps etc. should be in good working order.

9.18.5 Formative shaping

Formative shaping of broadleaves is an ongoing integral part of plantation maintenance and is included in the afforestation grant scheme. It is necessary to have this operation complete at 2nd installment stage for ash and sycamore.

It may be necessary to shape oak and beech prior to 2nd installment stage. Where oak or beech plantations have been successfully established by a Forestry Company which is mandated the 2nd installment grant and are deemed not yet ready for shaping a Form 3 may be submitted by that company with a declaration that formative shaping to Forest Service standards will be carried out at a specified time period at the forestry companies expense.

Formative shaping should occur when the trees are between 1m and 2m in height and when completed should give a minimum of 60% of Grade 1 and Grade 2 plants evenly distributed throughout the plantation (see Figure 13).

Conifers after suffering a late spring frost attack may produce multiple leaders. It is important that rather than replacing these trees that they are formatively shaped to leave one leader on each stem. If only a small proportion of the crop (<5%) is affected it may not be necessary to carry out this operation.

9.18.6 Pests and Diseases

In addition to the section in Form 3 relating to establishment problems, please contact your local Forestry Inspector directly if any unusual pest or disease is observed.

Forest plantations should be adequately fenced to ensure that trespass does not occur from livestock. For comprehensive information on Forest Protection see Forest Protection Guidelines published by the Forest Service.