It therefore has an important place as a natural coniferous associate with broadleaved species. Norway spruce stands are a favoured habitat for the red squirrel. In the past, its resin was used as a source of turpentine and pitch, and its fresh shoots for making spruce beer.

**Position in Irish Forestry**

Norway spruce is one of the most popular coniferous species used in Irish forestry today. It has a long history as a timber tree in Ireland, the first plantations of Norway spruce having been established at the beginning of the eighteenth century or earlier. Following the establishment of the State Forest Service, it was extensively planted in commercial plantations up until the 1950’s but fell out of favour during the 1960’s. The planting of Norway spruce as a diverse conifer is now actively encouraged. Irish forest nurseries produce and sell over 5 million Norway spruce transplants annually. Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board, currently manage an area of over 19,600 hectares of Norway spruce, making it our third most common conifer after Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine.

**Uses & Markets**

Norway spruce is well known in the timber trade and is used extensively in the building industry as structural timber and for flooring and joinery. The timber is relatively “white” and is therefore particularly favoured for boxes and packaging for foodstuffs. Norway spruce timber is easily worked and is said to give a better finish than Sitka spruce, although both timbers are classified in the timber trade as “white deal”. Lower grade material is used in pallet manufacture and in Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) and Oriented Strand Board (OSB).

Further Information

Further information on growing Norway spruce can be obtained from your local Forest Service Inspector or any Professional Forester.