

# Investigating how we Benefit from Forests in our Daily Lives

## Lesson Plan Meanscoil

**Theme:** Forests & Community

**Resource:** Lesson Plan

**Green School Step:**

Step 3 – Action Plan

Step 5 – Curriculum Link

Step 6 – Informing & Involving

**Curriculum Links:**

- ✓ Living Things
- ✓ Myself & the wider community

**Global Goals/SDG Links:**

**Goal 11** – Sustainable Cities and Communities

**Goal 13** – Climate Action

**Goal 15** – Life on Land

**Skills:** Research; Observing; Recording; Global citizenship; Connecting with the wider community

**Focal Nua/New Words:**

Coppice

Wildlife Corridors

Ecosystem Services

Sustainable Forestry

Interconnectivity

Carbon Sequestration

**Aim:** To link the school with the wider community in relation to local community woodlands and forests

**Resources:**

- ✓ Worksheet per group
- ✓ Clipboards
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Tablet/Camera to record work

**Methodologies:**

1. Find out where your local woods is and carry out some research with the class prior to visiting it. Use Activity Sheet attached.

2. Find out the history of the woodlands/forest, it's name in Irish, etc. Invite a grandparent to come in an talk to the class about the woods
3. Search Google maps and find an aerial view of the woodlands or forest. Is it connected to any other woodland by hedges or stone walls? Find and record the GPS position – this can help when carrying out surveys here
4. Visit the woods and use the worksheet attached to explore and record the visit
5. If possible, invite a local Forester/Council Biodiversity Officer/ Heritage in School Specialist/Community Biodiversity Champion to meet you at the wood and bring you on a short tour. Or invite them to your school to talk to the class about the local woods before the visit
6. Record any information signs with pictures. If there are no signs. Find out how you can help the local community to get educational signage installed about this important local habitat
7. Write a short article for the local community circular or social media (with photos)

**Extension:**

Get in touch with your local Tidy Towns Group or Men's Shed, as they will be working on Community Pollinator Projects. Suggest creating a local Community Tree Nursery or planting a Community Woodland in some local waste ground.

**(Add link to website tree nursery/tree planting)** This would become a wonderful resource for the whole local community, humans and wildlife alike.

If there is already a local woodland or forest, help to get some educational signage installed, which you can use to

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benefit school walks and the wider community.

### **Safety:**

- ✓ The usual health & safety precautions apply when taking a class out to a local woodland/forest.
- ✓ Wear appropriate clothes and bring a change of shoes.
- ✓ Walk to the woodlands if at all possible.

### **What is a coppice?**

A coppice is a group of trees that are cut back almost to the ground and they regrow. Hazel and willow both are used for this purpose to make charcoal, fencing posts and weaving rods, bean-poles. There are also many other trees that can be coppiced but grow back a bit more slowly, examples: Ash, Oak, Cherry, Beech, Spanish Chestnut, etc. This work is done in the winter when the leaves have dropped. Trees that are coppiced usually have very strong root systems and can live for many hundred of years.

### **What is a wildlife corridor?**

It is usually a linear space for wild creatures and plants to travel along. Stonewall embankments are an example. Our native hedgerow system is another. The importance of our native hedgerows is often overlooked. They act like a network of linear woodlands in our landscape and are very special and valuable spaces. They also act as wildlife corridors for both wild plants and animals, shelterbelts from prevailing winds and noise, seed banks, flood defense, etc.

They have a vital role in the interconnectivity of biodiversity within ecological communities. The same is true of old stonewalls and embankments. Always plan for local hedgerows to be

connected to the local woodlands and forests, to help local wildlife to be able to travel safely through your built community environment.

### **Ecosystem Services:**

Woodlands, forests and hedgerows are an essential part of the biodiversity toolkit in terms of tackling a changing climate and biodiversity loss. See answer sheet.

### **Other new words to research:**

Sustainable Forestry  
Interconnectivity  
Carbon Sequestration

### **Links to follow workshop with:**

**Green Schools & Biodiversity Theme:**  
<https://greenschoolsireland.org/themes/biodiversity/>

**LEAF Theme – Forests & Biodiversity:**  
<https://leafireland.org/themes/>

**Tree Nursery Pack:** Put link in here to LEAF Website

**NeighbourWood Scheme & Native Woodland Scheme:**  
<https://treecouncil.ie/tree-advice/forest-service-grants/>

**All Ireland Pollinator Plan:**  
<https://pollinators.ie>

**Green Communities:**  
<http://www.greencommunitiesireland.org>

**Creating a Community Forest Garden:** <https://spiralseed.co.uk/making-forest-garden/>

**Trees on the Land (Purchase Bare-Rooted Trees):**  
<https://www.treesontheland.com>



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



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### **Coillte and Community – Recreation in Forests:**

<https://www.forestryfocus.ie/social-environmental-aspects/recreation/>

### **Coillte Forest Plans & Community Consultation:**

<https://www.coillte.ie/our-forests/public-goods/forest-plans/>

### **Maps:**

<https://www.osi.ie/blog/irelands-best-forest-trails/>

<https://www.google.ie/maps>

### **Background Information:**

Forests have always been of great importance to people and their communities. Our ancestors got their food by hunting and gathering plants from the forests. Before people began to clear forests for farming and for land to build on, forests covered about 60% of the Earth's surface area. Today, forests only cover about 30%. In Ireland we have temperate forests. In other part of the world, there are tropical forests. All are essential both in local and global terms.

Despite the developments of civilisation, people still depend on forests for their survival. Forests are of huge importance economically and environmentally. Forests provide a wide range

of products not only timber and firewood but also food, medicine and fibre. Communities around the world are linked to forests through products and associated livelihoods; we encourage schools to explore these links. We also encourage schools to examine the communities at risk of losing their homes due to illegal logging and agriculture. Investigate ways of alleviating poverty through sustainable forestry, while improving livelihoods and creating green jobs. Where possible explore indigenous communities/engage with local communities and share their knowledge and expertise. Finally, remember that the natural beauty of the forest offers a special source of enjoyment to all communities.