

11.1 Traditional Orchard - Recreation

Definition: areas of unimproved and improved grassland suitable for planting with native fruit varieties.

Aims: The option offers the opportunity to conserve local history, ensure the survival of old fruit varieties and enhance the visual and historical value of the landscape.

Biodiversity objectives: to reintroduce biodiversity in a practical manner and maintain genetic resource, which may help in the future development of new varieties or play a part in strengthening the disease-resistant properties of modern varieties.

Management requirements:

- Fruit trees must be from the approved list of varieties given in Table 4.
- Plant bare-rooted trees at a minimum spacing of 7 metres spacing during the dormant season (November to March).
- Grafted trees must be grown on standard or half-standard rootstock (M106 or M111). **Dwarfing varieties are not eligible.**
- At least three different varieties of apples must be planted. No variety should comprise more than half the total number of trees in the orchard. Intersperse different varieties and types of tree to assist cross-pollination.
- The orchard may be mown or grazed with sheep. Mowing before July is not permitted. Sheep grazing is only permitted if the newly planted fruit trees are protected with suitable guards (see figure below). Do not graze with cattle.
- A 1-metre diameter area around newly planted trees must be kept weed-free for 3-4 years.
- Inorganic/organic fertiliser or lime must not be broadcast between the trees.
- Cultivation, ploughing, re-seeding, rolling or chain harrowing is not permitted.
- Application of insecticides or fungicides is not permitted. Noxious weeds such as thistles and ragwort may be controlled with herbicides, applied using a weed wiper or spot sprayer
- Supplementary feeding sites, temporary silage clamps or storage areas for big-bale silage or hay are not permitted.
- Trees that do not survive must be replaced.

Further advice

The ideal site is a south facing gentle slope with deep soil, open to the sun with shelter from prevailing wind and low frost occurrence. The soil should be reasonably deep and slightly acid (pH6.5). Shallow, alkaline or waterlogged soils are unsuitable as are sites exposed to sea-laden salt breezes. Exposed sites may require protection in the form of a high hedge.

Choose varieties traditionally grown in the same area as indicated in the list in Table 1. When planting, avoid digging an excessively large 'tree pit', which can create a drainage sump, particularly in clay soils. This can result in roots sitting in water and cause tree death. For successful pit planting:

- strip excess grass from the site,
- dig a hole just large enough to hold the entire root system,
- place the sods, grass downwards, at the bottom of the hole,
- drive a suitable stake into the bottom of the hole,
- carefully place the tree in the hole,
- replace the soil, using the best soil around the roots, gently shaking the tree to ensure the soil is well settled around the root system,
- trample the soil firmly around the tree,
- tie the tree to the stake with a suitable tree tie.

When grazing an orchard, mature sheep are preferable, as lambs are more likely to eat the bark of the fruit trees.

A 1-metre diameter area around newly planted trees should be kept weed-free for 3-4 years. Use polythene with fine gravel or quarry waste, a mulch of organic matter or a mulch mat.

Inorganic/organic fertiliser or lime must not be broadcast throughout the orchard. However, well-rotted farmyard manure may be applied around each tree. Fertiliser applied around the base of the tree can also be beneficial, particularly in the second year after planting. Lime may be applied in a similar manner but restrict applications to one year in four. Avoid over-liming.

TABLE 1

Varieties of fruit approved for use under agri-environment schemes for Recreation of traditional orchards option)

Variety	Area found	Type
April Queen	Ireland (c1908)	Eating
Ard Cairn Russet	Co Cork (c1890)	Culinary
Ballyfatten	North of Ireland (c 1800)	Eating
Barnhill Pippin	Northern Ireland (c1934)	Eating
Ballyvaughan Cooker	Ireland	Dual
Ballyvaughan Seedling	Ireland	Eating
Bloody Butcher	Ireland (c1950)	Culinary
Crown Crofton	Ireland (c1950)	Eating
Cavan Wine	Cavan	Culinary
Clearheart	Ireland (c1950)	Dual
Davy Apple	Ireland (c1950)	Eating
Dockney	NI - Armagh (c1941)	Culinary
Ecklinville Seedling	Eckinville (before 1800)	Culinary
Eight Square	Co Monaghan	Eating
Gibbons Russet	Cork (c1897)	Eating/Cider
Golden Russet	Ireland	Eating
Golden Royal	Ireland (c1950)	Eating
Greasy Pippin	Tyrone and Fermanagh (c1950)	Eating
Irish Peach	Co Sligo (c1820)	Eating
Keegan's Crab	Armagh	Eating
Kemp	Probably NI - Armagh (c1837)	Eating
Kerry Pippin	Co Kerry (c1802)	Eating
Kilkenny Permain	Co Kilkenny (c1831)	Eating
Kill Apple	Ireland (c1950)	Eating
Lady's Finger	Co Offaly and Monaghan (c1951)	Eating
Martin's Seedling	NI - Antrim	Culinary
Munster Tulip	Munster (c1950)	Eating
Peche Melba	Co Kilkenny (before 1930)	Eating
Red Brandy	Kilkenny	Eating
Reid's Seedling	Richill, Co Armagh (c1880)	Eating
Ross Nonpareil	Ireland (before 1802)	Culinary
Sam Young/Irish Russet	Ireland (before 1818)	Eating
Scarlet Crofton	Sligo	Eating
Sheep's Snout	Ireland	Dual
Sovereign	Armagh	Eating
Strippy	Co Armagh (c1949)	Eating
Summer John	Fermanagh	Eating
Thompson's Apple	Tyrone and Monaghan (c1950)	Eating
Uncle John's Cooker	Kilkenny	Culinary
Widow's Friend	Armagh	Eating
Winston Coloured Sport	Loughgall (c1950)	Eating
Yellow Pitcher	Ireland (c1951)	Eating

Rare or unusual apple cultivars grown in Ireland but not of Irish origin

Gascogne Scarlet
 Gladstone
 Golden Noble
 Lord Derby
 Norfolk Royal

Northern Greening
 Red Gascoyne Scarlet
 Ribstons Pippin

Other varieties of traditional fruit

Pear

Conference

Cherry

Morello

Plum

Victoria

Damson

Young River

Green Gauge

Horse

Acknowledgement: Above lists generated by J W Choiseul (1997) Faculty of General Agriculture University College, Dublin

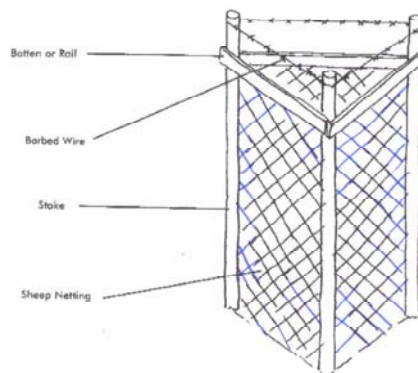
Sources of trees/varieties in the above lists:

1. The Irish Seed Savers, Capparoo, Scarrif, Co Clare Telephone (00353) 61921866 Internet www.irishseedsavers.ie
2. Future Forests, Co Cork Telephone (00353) 2766176 Internet www.futureforests.net

Guarding young trees

If sheep are to be grazed in the orchard, some protection is required around the tree. The guard illustrated below can be used for trees from maiden up to standard size.

SHEEP PROOF GUARD FOR ORCHARD TREES



Management plans are provided for participants in the Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Management Schemes

