



Scottish  
Forestry  
Coilltearachd  
na h-Alba



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# Integrating Trees Network

**Why Trees? The benefits for your business,  
your community and the environment.**



Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation

Is e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd



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# Why Trees?

## The benefits for your business, your community and the environment.

We know that Scotland's farmers and crofters are committed to producing high quality food, taking action to address climate change, supporting nature and improving the resilience of their business.

Planting and maintaining trees on your farm, croft or estate can support any or all of those outcomes.

This document sets out what the benefits of trees are and helps you to decide how integrating trees into your farm or croft could help your business. There's also advice on what to consider to help you integrate trees within your business and there are pointers of where to get more information.



# Business benefits

Integrating trees into your farm or croft could help your business to grow and become more resilient. That comes from both the value of the trees as a crop and the other positive impacts they can have on your farm business.

## How the trees help your farm business



### Shelter for livestock

Woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows can [provide shelter for livestock from high winds and inclement weather](#). This means stock can be left outside longer, extending the grazing season and so reducing feed costs. This helps to increase productivity as well as improving animal welfare. Shelter can offer significant benefits for lambing and calving: good shelter promotes bonding between mothers and offspring and increases the survival rate of newborn animals, with [lamb losses reduced by up to 30% if good shelter is provided in cold, wet and windy weather](#).

### Shade for livestock

Trees are important in providing shade for livestock in hot weather. This can increase productivity and improving animal welfare by reducing stress on the animals. [For dairy cows, woodland creation could help protect the future of your dairy business](#). Mild heat stress can result in reduced weight gain, decreased fertility and reduced milk yield. In more severe cases, heat stress can cause increased morbidity.

### Supplementary browsing

Trees offer the opportunity for [supplementary fodder](#) providing a range of micronutrients and anti-parasitic properties.

### Windbreaks to protect crops

Trees can be used as windbreaks which can help prevent damage to crops and reduce soil erosion.

### Pollination

Woodlands host a large number of insects which can help pollinate nearby crops.

### Supporting your soil

Trees can help to reduce soil erosion, preventing the loss of your vital nutrient-rich topsoil and reducing manure and fertiliser run-off. This helps to maintain your productivity and reduce costs.

### Adapting to climate change

Trees will support your business and your wider community as the climate changes. For example, as we begin to experience more extreme weather events, [trees could help to minimise the impact of flooding](#) or provide additional shelter and shade during heatwaves.

### Meet changing consumer demands

With consumer pressure for the food supply chain to reduce emissions towards net zero, integrating trees on your farm or croft can help you to ensure your business is resilient and on board with this overall aim.







## Trees as a product

### Timber production

Woodlands can, over time, be a useful way of generating a new income stream, if location and scale are well considered. Fast growing species can produce saleable timber in around 20 years through thinning, which also helps manage the woodland for future quality timber production.

### Carbon credits

The carbon sequestered by trees on your farm could off-set your emissions from agricultural activity. Under the [Woodland Carbon Code](#), eligible woodland creation can generate carbon credits which can be sold to provide a new income stream.

### Food production

Trees can generate new income streams from fruit and nut production. While still relatively small sectors in Scotland, some farmers and crofters are already making this work for them. You can read about Roger Howison's agroforestry system on the Soil Association website at: [Growing apple trees and barley together in a silvoarable system](#).

### Other on farm uses

Trees can offer useful products for use on farm. They can provide a fuel source for your farm or, when chipped, can be used as bedding.

### Value from less productive land

On your less productive land, planting new trees may increase profits from that land without impacting your productivity. It could also lead to that land becoming more valuable and an asset to the farming business. [Why plant trees on farm, on the Scottish forestry website is a case study showing this on a Scottish farm](#).

### Renewing or redefining boundaries

An important benefit for many businesses is that the current [Forestry Grant Scheme](#) helps with costs associated with fencing new woodlands. New woodlands can be planned to provide a real opportunity for the business to redefine or renew boundaries farm or croft and, as a result, help in the future management of the land.



# Climate and Environment Benefits

It is well known that trees can offer a huge variety of benefits to the climate and environment. They can support you to make your business more climate and biodiversity friendly, benefit your community and support the global efforts to address climate change and reverse biodiversity loss.

## Mitigating climate change

Trees absorb and lock up carbon as they grow. Planting trees can reduce your net carbon emissions and support the global efforts to address climate change. Scotland's forests and woodlands soak up 7.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year, which is 14% of Scotland's gross emissions.

## Biodiversity

Planting trees can increase biodiversity on your farm or croft. Native woodlands provide the greatest biodiversity value: the UK's two native oak species support 2,300 wildlife species. Woods and forests composed of mixed species, delivering multiple objectives, are also valuable. Scotland's forests and woodlands are home to 172 protected species and 75% of the UK's important red squirrel population. Woodlands, including shelter belts and hedgerows, also offer connectivity between larger habitats supporting wildlife, allowing dispersal and expansion, and improving resilience.

## Improving water quality

Trees, particularly native species, can help to maintain and improve water quality in the rivers and streams in and around your land by preventing sedimentation and contamination of streams from soil erosion. These trees also minimise the run-off of manure and fertiliser into water courses.

## Supporting aquatic life

Tree planting along the banks of watercourses on your land can reduce water temperatures and maintain oxygen levels during warm weather, benefitting fish and other aquatic organisms.

## Air pollution

Trees can help to reduce nitrogen and particulate pollution.

## Flooding prevention

Trees can slow the movement of water from land into water courses, which can help to reduce peak flows and so help to lessen the risk of flooding.







# Planting and Managing Trees – The Basics

If you would like to see these benefits on your farm or croft, you may wish to consider planting new trees on your farm or take forward some new management or maintenance activities on existing trees.

## Planting new trees

### Your objectives

The first thing you will need to decide is what your objectives are in planting trees: which of the benefits listed above are you aiming to achieve? When you finalise this, you can begin to identify where on your farm or croft you could plant trees, and what sort of trees you would like to plant.

### Get expert input

You may wish to engage with a consultant to help you through the process of planting trees on your farm. If so, there is an easy to access [£1,000 grant](#) available through the Farm Advisory Service to enlist the help of a specialist adviser. Your [local Scottish Forestry officers](#) will also be able to provide you with free guidance and support at the initial proposal stage.

## Funding

There are a wide range of funding options available through the Scottish [Forestry Grant Scheme](#) (FGS) which can support you to plant trees on your farm and ensure they are effectively protected and maintained. The FGS is open all year round for applications and land planted under FGS remains eligible for Basic Payment. The [Small Woodland Loan Scheme](#) can help with initial costs before you receive financial support from the FGS.

You may also wish to consider funding from other sources such as the Woodland Trust's [MOREwoods scheme](#) or private finance. Please refer to the [ITN website](#) for further funding and support opportunities





## Managing and maintaining your trees

### Long term planning

Like any crop, trees require management throughout their lifecycle to ensure a quality end product. In the first few years you will need to maintain weed-free areas around the trees, replace failed trees, maintain the deer/stock fencing and control herbivores. Pruning and thinning will become important as your trees grow.

### Felling permissions

It's an offence to fell trees without permission unless there's an exemption so make sure you understand the requirements for your woodland and secure any [necessary permissions before you fell any trees](#).

## Learn more and meet others

### The Integrating Trees Network

The network is a farmer-led initiative, jointly run by Scottish Government and Scottish Forestry to encourage more farmers and crofters to plant trees. We host events, sharing first hand experiences and providing advice on everything from the practicalities of accessing funding and planting the trees to the multiple business and environmental benefits.

If you would like to be involved or have ideas about what you would like events to focus on, please do get in touch with us:

[Lyn.White@forestry.gov.scot](mailto:Lyn.White@forestry.gov.scot) and  
[Hilary.Grant@gov.scot](mailto:Hilary.Grant@gov.scot)



## Applying for grants

You can apply for forestry grants all year round.

Let us help you. For more information visit:

**[Integrating Trees Network](#)**

**[Scottish Forestry - Woodland Creation](#)**

**[Scottish Forestry - Local Offices](#)**

