



A Quick Guide
to **Continuous
Cover Forestry
Practice**
in Ireland



02

Benefits of CCF



www.prosilvairland.com

Forest management that respects both people and nature

Continuous cover forestry (CCF) is a way of sustainably managing forests for timber production in balance with other forest benefits.

Because a CCF forest is a permanent forest, it can provide multiple benefits, now and long into the future.



Key features of a CCF forest

- ✓ A mix of tree species
- ✓ Trees of different ages and sizes
- ✓ Deadwood
- ✓ A diversity of habitats
- ✓ Continuous and sustainable timber production
- ✓ A living, dynamic ecosystem

Benefits for the forest

One of the major advantages of CCF is greater Forest Resilience.

Better wind stability

Mixed forests with trees of different ages and sizes cope better with storms. Deep crowns and varied root systems help stabilise the forest compared with a forest of just one species (monoculture).



Reduced impact of pests and diseases

Diseases and insect infestations spread more slowly in mixed forests because susceptible tree species are fewer and more widely spaced across the site.

Improved adaptation to climate change

Different tree species use water, light and nutrients in different ways, helping the forest cope with changing conditions.

Healthier soils

Mixed forests build richer forest soil (humus), supporting strong nutrient cycling and long-term forest health.

Natural regeneration

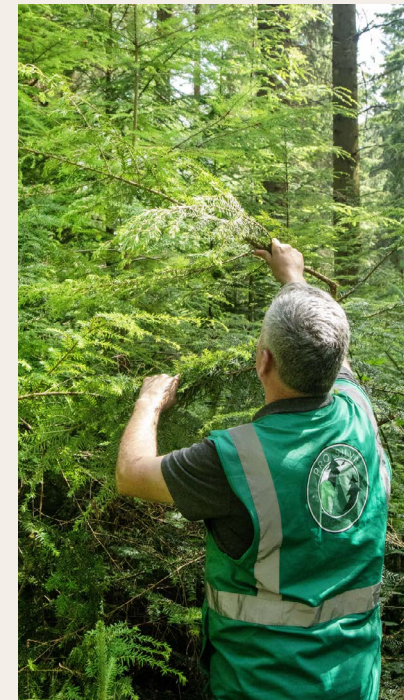
Young trees grow naturally beneath the canopy, gradually replacing harvested or damaged trees. This continuous regeneration allows the forest to renew itself without large-scale replanting.

Benefits for the owner

CCF can offer a range of economic and practical advantages, particularly over the long term.

More stable and predictable income

Regular harvesting of selected trees provides continuous revenue, avoiding the large swings in income and asset value associated with clear-felling.



Lower costs

Because the forest regenerates naturally, costs for intensive site preparation and replanting are minimised.

Greater flexibility and risk diversification

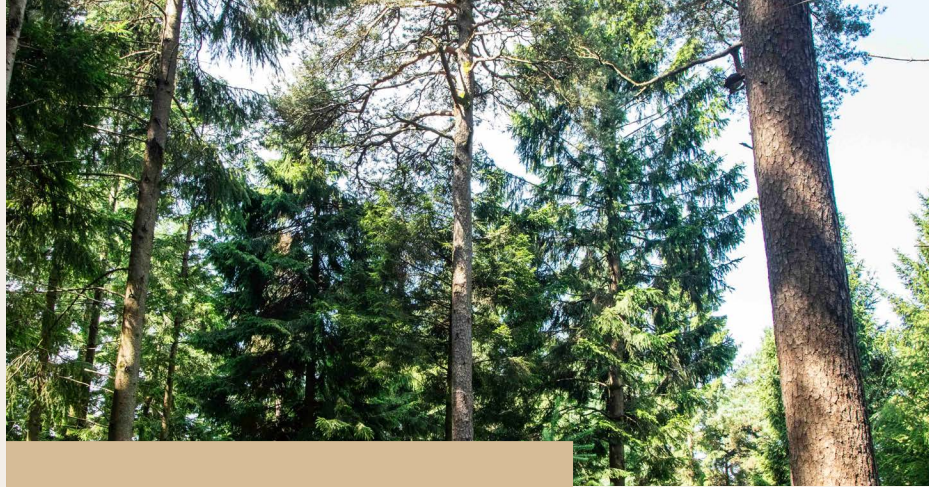
Managing a mix of species can help spread financial risk and increase resilience to market, climate and biological threats.

Opportunities for additional income streams

Permanent forests can support enterprises such as tourism, non-timber forest products and speciality foliage, adding value beyond timber production.

Long-term legacy value

CCF supports the development of a healthy, resilient forest that can provide sustained income, environmental stability and social benefits for future generations.



Benefits for the environment

CCF forests help protect and restore natural systems.

Permanent habitats for wildlife

The mixed, irregular structure of a CCF forest creates rich habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and biodiversity.

Healthier soils and improved water quality

Diverse tree species and continuous ground cover protect the soil, reduce erosion and help keep streams and rivers clean.

Natural flood management and soil protection

Permanent forests provide an important protection function by slowing rainfall runoff, stabilising slopes and reducing the risk of floods and soil movement.

Clean air

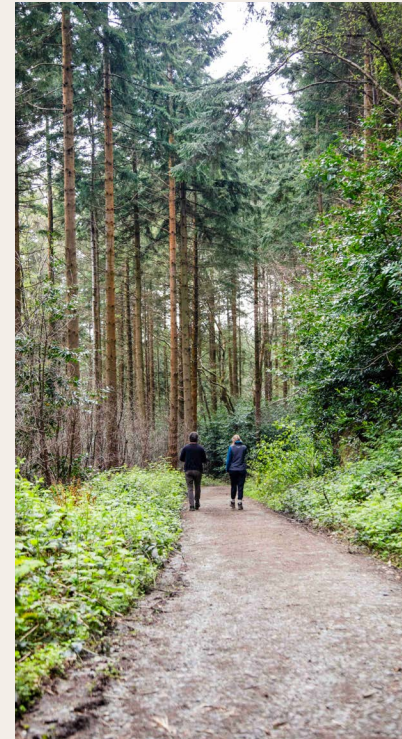
Trees and forests filter pollutants and produce clean, fresh air year round.

Carbon

CCF can enhance long-term carbon storage in both trees and soil, helping tackle climate change.

Benefits for society

CCF forests contribute to the well-being of communities.



Recreation and wellbeing

Permanent forests offer enjoyable, calming spaces that benefit physical and mental health.

High-quality timber

Continuous forest management supports the production of high-quality timber, providing a reliable source of renewable material for construction and other industries.

Protection of cultural and natural heritage

CCF management respects archaeological features, historic landscapes and natural characteristics.

A richer landscape

Permanent mixed forests add diversity and beauty to the Irish countryside.

As people increasingly value healthy environments, the wide-ranging benefits of CCF forests are becoming more recognised across Ireland.

If you want to learn more about continuous cover forestry in Ireland, please visit our website www.prosilvaireland.com, where we have lots of information about CCF, upcoming events and training, as well as the work Pro Silva Ireland does to help promote and educate on this sustainable forestry practice in Ireland.



Pro Silva Ireland is a registered charity founded in 2000 to advocate for, and educate on, continuous cover forestry. Part of the wider Pro Silva Europe network, Pro Silva Ireland is an all-Ireland organisation, embracing membership from both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

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Other guides in this series:

- What is CCF?
- CCF and biodiversity
- CCF forests for water
- Understanding CCF transformation
- Tree selection and marking in CCF
- Enrichment planting in CCF
- Light forest operations
- Guidelines for CCF harvest operations
- Supports for CCF

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