

Dear Sir,

In response to Brendan Fitzsimons' letter in your last issue I would like to comment, not as a conservationist, since he wisely skirts that arguments against the afforestation of all our blanket bogs, but on the 'aesthetic' ground he chooses.

Firstly the basic facts of life for Irish forestry is that it costs the taxpayer a huge sum every year and will continue to do so for the (politically) foreseeable future. In these circumstances professional foresters would be wise to listen to the opinions of the man and woman who are paying the piper. That the average punter finds monoculture conifer plantations an unpleasant, forbidding environment has been established in numerous objective studies conducted as part of recreational value surveys in the U.K. and elsewhere. Copies of relevant papers are available from my files.

Secondly Brendan's objective analysis of five individuals' opinions contrasts strangely with his own assertion that the dislike of afforestation on blanket peat is a "fashionable" opinion. Fashionable means "prevailing or in use" (Chambers' Dictionary) which implies an objective and wide survey of these opinions.

Thirdly from the use of the words "unappealing", "featureless", "absurd" etc., I wonder if Brendan's opinions are not a bit subjective too? Or is this a grammatical innovation — objective invective?

Pat Warner,
Ballinea, Mullingar.

Note: In the interest of brevity editor retains the right to edit letters.