

Growing Broadleaves – Silvicultural Guidelines for Ash, Sycamore, Wild Cherry, Beech and Oak in Ireland

Padraic M. Joyce (principal author). 1998. COFORD, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. ISBN 0 9523938 9 1. 144 pages. Paperback.

Reviewed by Gerhardt Gallagher, Forestry Consultant, Forest Service.

This attractive book is a timely addition to Irish forestry literature, and a serious attempt to shed light on the issues facing forest managers here in this relatively unexplored area. COFORD and its authors deserve praise for bringing it to publication.

The authors represent a significant stratum of forestry experience, with a strong background in research. The accumulated knowledge of growing broadleaves is, as the foreword admits, still somewhat limited in this country. The presence, however, of Professor Huss as a contributor represents an important balance in terms of central European experience. It is interesting to note that the authors have opted quite clearly for the high initial stocking rates favoured in European forestry, not surprisingly perhaps in that broadleaf programmes will be based primarily on European species. The extent to which our higher wind speeds and exposure will constrain quality objectives remains to be seen.

Five species are described in detail: oak, ash, beech, wild cherry and sycamore. This selection obviously reflects the main components of existing broadleaf woodlands and new plantings. Early experience with wild cherry has been disappointing and will probably reduce its importance as a species with significant commercial promise. A minor section on birch, alder, aspen and willow might have been useful, given the growing perceived importance of riparian woodlands as a forest component, and the desire for additional forest diversity.

The guidelines *per se* are comprehensive, well laid out and easy to follow. Site/soil requirements, mixtures and forest operations, from establishment to tending and thinning, are well covered, although I was left in some doubt as to what the recommended best course was for sites with inherent nutrient problems – avoid or ameliorate?

It was useful to have production goals relating to timber usage. An overemphasis on hurley ash might be limiting, as there are many other potential niche markets for the species, with picture framing being this reviewer's own particular hobby horse.

Yield and production data clearly indicate that growing broadleaves is in general a long term process, and the end result is achieved through quality rather than quantity, although I qualify this in the context of new uses for small scale material. Ireland as a natural temperate forest region will require both the quality of broadleaves and the quantity of conifers to achieve the various goals of sustainable forestry.

Excellent photographs showing broadleaves in the Irish and continental setting, together with Wendy Walsh's fine drawings, make the book an enjoyable visual experience.

Growing Broadleaves is a must for forest owners and managers embarking on this complex journey. The investment in its publication is money well spent. The book is not priced, but could grace the shelves of any bookshop.