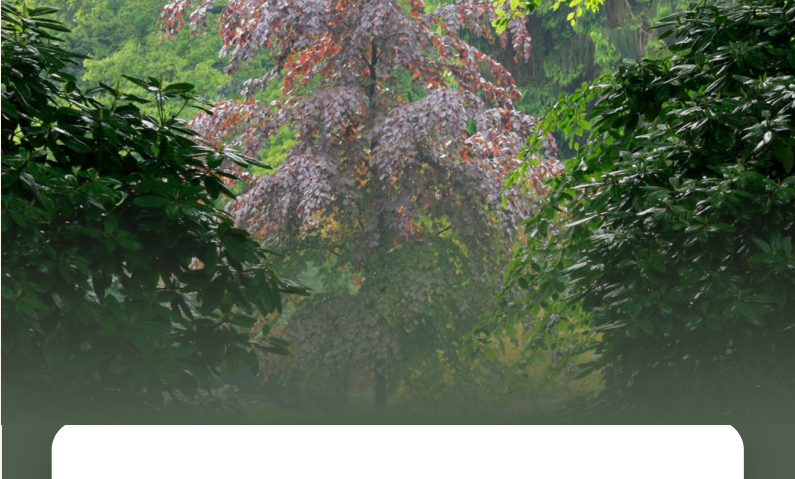

CULLEN NURSERIES

GUIDE TO PLANTING

Native trees & hedging that will thrive in Irish soil

CULLENNURSERIES.IE

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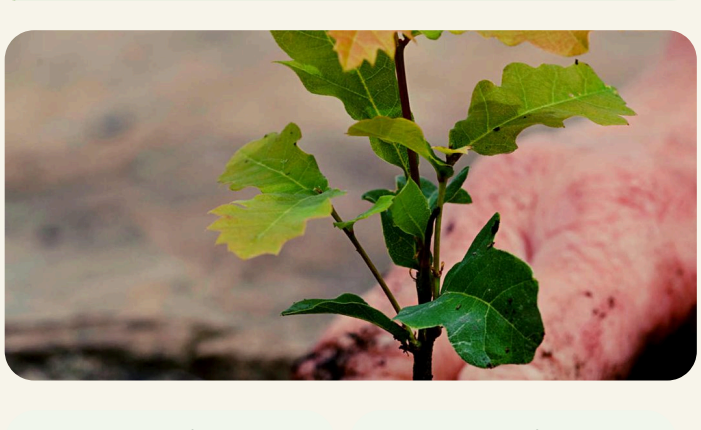
WELCOME

Welcome to Cullen Nurseries

This practical guide brings together our experience of planting native trees and hedging in Irish conditions. Use it to choose the right place and plant, establish bare-root or potted stock correctly, and give new planting the best possible start.

> **A note from the Cullen family**
> We've grown native trees and hedging in Carlow for over 25 years. Thank you for your interest in planting, protecting and preserving Ireland's trees and hedges — keep this guide handy through the seasons, and get in touch any time.

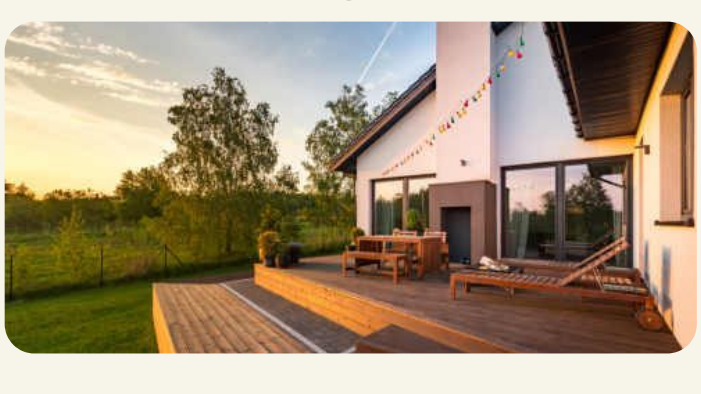


- Choose the Right Place
- Choose the Right Plant
- Plant for Biodiversity
- Bare-Root Planting
- Potted Planting
- Aftercare
- Bare Root, Potted or Root Ball?
- The Mighty Oak
- Hardy Heroes

✓ DAFM-Approved Nursery
25+ Years Growing Irish Trees
Nationwide Delivery

1 · LOCATION

Choose the Right Place



No garden or home is complete without trees. They create structure, shelter and privacy, and provide a magnificent backdrop for shrubs and lawns — the right location gives a tree room to mature without causing problems later.

Near homes

Allow for the tree's eventual height and spread. Keep clear of buildings, boundaries, drains, overhead lines and future patios or extensions.

Driveways & entrances

Choose for mature size, form and year-round interest. Keep enough distance from road edges and hard surfaces for roots and the crown to expand.

Shelter belts

A broad, mixed belt slows wind more effectively than a solid wall of one species. Mix taller trees with smaller trees and shrubs, planted NW to SE.

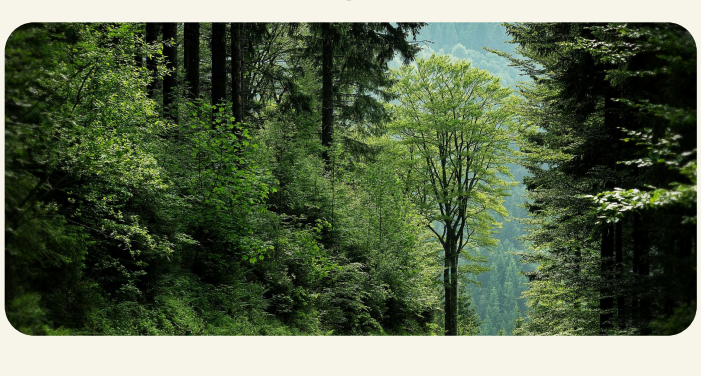
Streams & wet ground

Alder and willow suit damp ground and help stabilise banks. Keep a varied pattern of sunlight and shade along watercourses.

> **A useful rule**
> Avoid planting a large tree closer to a building than its expected mature height unless you have obtained suitable professional advice. Always check for underground and overhead services before digging.

2 · SPECIES

Choose the Right Plant



Over 500 species of tree grow happily in Ireland — picking the right one isn't easy. Start with the site, not the shopping list: match the plant to the soil, available space, exposure and purpose.

How large can it become?

Small: under 5m • Medium: 5–15m • Large: over 15m

What is the site like?

Sun or shade; free-draining or wet soil; coastal salt; wind exposure; frost pocket

What do you want it to do?

Screening, shelter, hedging, wildlife value, flowers, berries, autumn colour, timber

How fast should it grow?

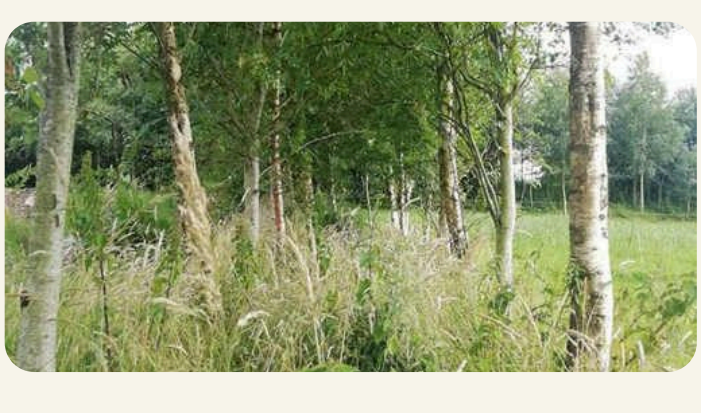
Fast growth can mean more maintenance. Mature size and suitability matter more than speed alone.

> **Good native choices**
> - ✓ Alder — excellent for damp ground and riverbanks
> - ✓ Rowan — compact, attractive and valuable for berries
> - ✓ Oak — a long-lived native tree with exceptional wildlife value
> - ✓ Hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel & guelder rose — strong components of a mixed native hedge

Free Planting Advice
Species Matched to Your Soil
✓ Hedge-Pack Discounts

3 · WILDLIFE

Plant for Biodiversity



Native trees and hedging provide shelter, food and movement corridors for birds, bees, butterflies, caterpillars and other wildlife. A diverse hedge generally offers more across the seasons than a single-species boundary.

> *An oak tree alone can provide for over 326 different species of wildlife, including 257 different species of insects.*
>
> — ROBERT CULLEN

Food across the seasons

Catkins on alder, birch and hazel provide early pollen. Flowers support pollinators; berries and nuts feed birds and mammals later in the year.

Shelter & nesting

Dense hedges offer cover and nesting habitat. Allow some areas to grow informally and always check carefully for active nests before pruning.

Connected habitat

Hedges help wildlife move safely through the landscape. Link new planting to existing trees, hedges or rough margins where possible.

A mixed native hedge

Whitethorn gives structure; add hazel, guelder rose, blackthorn, spindle or dog rose for variety, flowers and fruit.

4 · BARE ROOT

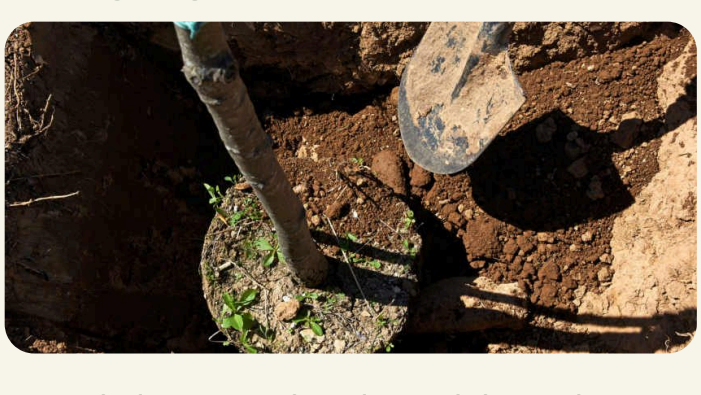
Planting Bare-Root Trees & Hedging

Bare-root plants are supplied without a pot or soil around the roots. Plant them while dormant, typically from November to early spring. Keep roots covered, cool and moist until planting, and rehydrate for up to an hour if they appear dry.

1. **Dig**
   Make the hole or trench wide enough for the roots to spread naturally, without bending or circling.
2. **Set the depth**
   Find the root collar — the mark where roots meet stem — and keep it level with the soil surface.
3. **Backfill**
   Hold the plant upright and return soil around the roots, shaking gently so it settles into the gaps.
4. **Firm**
   Firm with your heel so the plant is secure, without compacting the soil into a hard pan.
5. **Water**
   Water thoroughly after planting, even in cool weather, so the soil settles around the roots.
6. **Protect**
   Fit a stake and tie for exposed trees; hedges don't need staking. Use guards where rabbits or livestock are a risk.

5 · POTTED

Planting Potted Trees & Hedging



Potted plants can be planted throughout the year when the ground is workable. Avoid frozen, waterlogged or exceptionally dry conditions. Planting during warm weather requires especially careful watering.

1. **Prepare**
   Remove grass and weeds and mark the planting positions.
2. **Dig**
   Make the hole roughly twice the width of the root ball and no deeper than needed to keep the root collar at soil level.
3. **Remove the pot**
   Slide the plant out carefully. If roots are tightly circling, gently tease the outer roots without breaking up the whole root ball.
4. **Position**
   Set the plant upright at the same depth it grew in the pot. Planting too deeply can damage the stem.
5. **Backfill & firm**
   Return loosened soil, firm gently and make sure the plant is stable.
6. **Water & mulch**
   Water thoroughly. Add 5–8cm of organic mulch, keeping it clear of the stem.

6 · AFTERCARE

Aftercare: the First Year Matters

Good aftercare is often the difference between surviving and thriving. New roots occupy a small volume of soil, so water, weed control and stability deserve close attention.

Water

Water thoroughly after planting. During the first growing season, check soil moisture regularly and water deeply in dry or windy weather.

Firm after wind

Wind can rock new plants and open gaps around roots. Check after storms and gently re-firm any loose plants.

Keep weed-free

Maintain a weed- and grass-free circle or strip. Competition for moisture and nutrients can severely slow establishment.

Mulch

Apply 5–8cm of bark or organic mulch over moist, weed-free soil. Leave a clear gap around stems to reduce rot risk.

Protect

Use guards or fencing where rabbits, hares, deer or livestock are a threat. Check guards and ties so they do not rub or constrict stems.

Feed with care

Avoid fresh manure touching roots. Improve poor soil thoughtfully; many potted plants already contain slow-release fertiliser.

> *Water well after planting and keep checking through dry weather. The soil should be moist at root depth, not merely wet on the surface.*
>
> — ROBERT CULLEN

7 · ROBERT ANSWERS

Bare Root, Potted or Root Ball?

Robert Cullen, with the next generation of the Cullen Nurseries family

One of our most commonly asked questions. In Robert's words: "Well, it depends!" The best choice comes down to planting season, budget, plant size and how quickly you want visual impact.

Bare root

Best value for larger projects. Available in the dormant season. Roots must be kept moist and planted promptly.

Potted

Flexible planting window when ground conditions allow. Established root system in compost; usually costs more and needs careful watering.

Root ball

Often larger plants for faster visual impact. Usually lifted and supplied in the dormant season; heavy to handle and should be planted promptly.

> **Quick decision guide**
> - ✓ Large hedge in winter on a budget: bare-root is usually the practical choice.
> - ✓ Planting outside the dormant season: choose potted stock and plan for watering.
> - ✓ Immediate height or screening: consider larger potted or root-ball plants.

25+ Years' Nursery Experience
Nationwide Delivery
✓ Tailored Advice from Robert

8 · OUR FAVOURITE TREE

The Mighty Oak

"He that plants trees loves others besides himself." — Thomas Fuller

The oak is especially meaningful to Cullen Nurseries. Three oaks were planted in the Cullen family garden to mark the birth of Robert and Caitriona's three sons, and the oak leaf became part of the company identity. Pedunculate oak (Quercus robur) is one of Ireland's best-known native trees and a symbol of strength, wisdom and endurance — given room, it can become a very large, long-lived tree supporting a remarkable range of wildlife.

Give it Room

Choose a permanent position with space for a broad crown and extensive root system. Keep well clear of buildings, drains and overhead services.

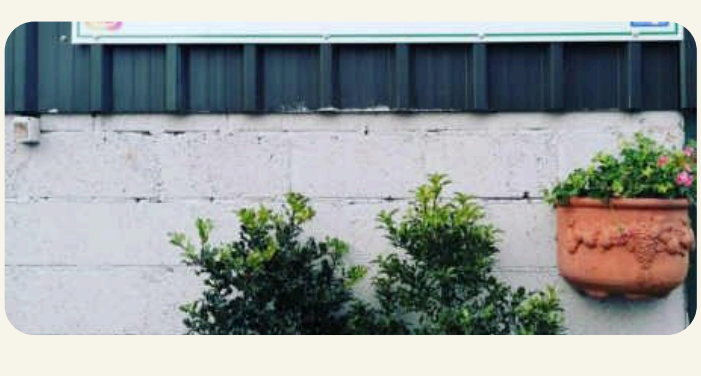
Think in Generations

Oak is not a quick screening tree. Its value grows over decades — for landscape, wildlife and the people who come after us.

#PlantATree

9 · RELIABLE CHOICES

Hardy Heroes



Three reliable choices, well suited to Irish gardens. Availability and sizes change seasonally — contact Cullen Nurseries for help choosing quantities and spacing.

Portuguese Laurel
EVERGREEN HEDGE

Glossy dark green foliage on reddish stems. A refined evergreen hedge for sun or partial shade in reasonably well-drained soil.

Photinia Red Robin
EVERGREEN HEDGE

Bright red young growth matures to glossy green. Best in a reasonably sheltered, well-drained position; prune after the main flush to encourage fresh colour.

Himalayan Birch
ORNAMENTAL TREE

Often sold as Betula utilis var. jacquemontii, this graceful birch is valued for luminous white bark and winter interest. Give it adequate space and suitable soil moisture.

> **Useful links**
> Shop native trees • Shop native hedging • Read planting advice & FAQs • Read the evergreen hedging guide — all at cullennurseries.ie

Plant with confidence

Choose the right plant for the site, prepare the ground, plant at the correct depth, firm and water well, then stay attentive through the first year. We supply Irish-grown native trees and hedging, delivered nationwide.

ORDER TODAY AT CULLENNURSERIES.IE

Planting & Care Guides
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