Appendix 1:

A Tiny Forest is a small densely packed area of fast-growing native trees.

Other characteristics include:

...has at least 25 different tree species.

...has 3 to 5 trees per square metere

...provides space for the trees to grow undisturbed for at least 10 years.

...lets the branches, leaves, and dead trees lie where they have fallen.

...is at least 4 metres wide across the full length of the forest, without interruptions (such as a path).

...has a layer of mulch at least 15 cm deep.

...is enclosed by a fence for the first two years to protect the young trees.

…is planted by local residents, schools, youth groups or community groups.

Grant Rules:

The grant is enough to cover all costs associated with trees purchases, soil improvement, mulch, fencing and signage, any further costs in excess of the grant will have to be covered by the organisation applying for the grant.

1. Location of Tiny Forest should be agreed as part of your Grant application with the Parks Department. This should be a minimum of 10m from the boundary of a building, playground, sport facility and pavement on all sides.
2. Area of Tiny Forest should be no smaller than 100m2 and no bigger than 200m2. Although the Tiny Forrest can be any shape it must be contained within one area.
3. Soil condition is very important, Ground preparation should include the following:

No machinery can be allowed for digging in open spaces.

Try to prepare the ground ***well*** in advance of the planting day.

A **No Dig Method** is recommended to save hard labour and retain the microbial/fungal habitat within the current soil: there are several methods, for example:

1. Mow or strim the area. Remove any woody plants such as Docks or Bramble with a trowel or spade.
2. If prepared a couple of months in advance, lay a good layer of cardboard on the ground and cover with approx. 5cm (2in) of compost.
3. Alternatively cover the area in at least 15cm (6in) of compost which will be enough to exclude the light from the grass underneath.
4. Three saplings should be planted per square metre. No plant from the same Forest layer should be planted beside each other otherwise those in the smaller layers will suffer from lack of light sooner than necessary. Saplings should not be stored for any length of time before planting and roots should be covered and watered, as drying out will lead to plant failure. Sapling should be small ideally 600-900mm or smaller.
5. Weeding and watering is required for the first 2 years; after this the Tiny Forest should be left maintenance free. No chemical usage will be allowed. All weeding and maintenance must be manual.
6. Mix of Native trees and shrubs. These should be sourced within Ireland, be of Irish providence and the plant passports should be recorded along with the number of each species, nursery and location (open space) this information should be provided to the parks department within DLR as part of their biosecurity protocol.
7. A protective fence should surround the tiny woodland and should be sturdy no less than 500mm and no greater than 1200mm. Suggest materials: hazel hurdle, Willow hurdle. (No screening or Bamboo) These fence types are easily erected and flexible and need no permanent fixings. Permanent fixings such as concrete, are not permitted in open spaces. No plastic or netting should be used, and fence should be easy to remove, sustainable and be kept a minimum of 2 years in place and maintained. There are several Irish (fence) suppliers online including timber suppliers and some garden centres can also supply.
8. Signs can be erected on a post, which should inform the organisation responsible and logo, DLR logo, species and year planted.

Teagasc provide a list of tree nurseries in Ireland but there are others which are not on this list. Don’t forget to specify that the trees should be grown in Ireland / of Irish Providence.

<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/crops/forestry/advice/Nursery_List_Contacts_260811.pdf>

**Tree Species – a mix of plants from all forest layers is required and as many different species as possible.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scientific Name** | **Common Name** | **Forest Layer** |
|  |  |  |
| Alnus glutinosa | Common Alder | Understorey (Sub) |
| Arbutus unedo | Strawberry Tree | Shrub |
| Betula pendula | Silver Birch | Canopy |
| Betula pubescens | Downy Birch | Canopy |
| Corylus avellana | Hazel | Shrub |
| Crategus monogyna | Hawthorn | Shrub |
| Cytisus scoparius | Broom | Shrub |
| Euonoymous europaeus | Spindle | Shrub |
| Fraxinus excelsior | Ash | Canopy |
| ilex aquifolium | Holly | Understorey (Sub) |
| Lonicera periclymenum | Honeysuckle | Climbing (Shrub) |
| Malus sylvestris | Crab Apple | Understorey (Sub) |
| Pinus sylvestris | Scots Pine | Canopy |
| Populus tremula | Aspen | Canopy |
| Prunus avium | Wild Cherry | Understorey (Sub) |
| Prunus padus | Bird Cherry | Understorey (Sub) |
| Prunus spinosa | Blackthorn | Shrub |
| Quercus petraea | Sessile Oak | Canopy |
| Quercus robur | Pedunculate Oak | Canopy |
| Rosa canina | Dog Rose | Shrub |
| Salix caprea | Pussy Willow | Canopy |
| Sambucus nigra | Elderflower | Shrub |
| Sorbus aucuparia | Rowan | Understorey (Sub) |
| Sorbus spp. | Whitebeam | Understorey (Sub) |
| Viburnum opulus | Guelder Rose | Understorey (Sub) |

4. Make sure that the trees are planted at least 30 centimetres apart.

If a large group is planting it may help to sort the trees into groups of three, one from each forest layer and lay the groups in each meter square.

*Method 2.* Allow small children to randomly distribute trees throughout site. They are very good at random and don’t compact the soil!

**Activity 2: Plant the trees!**

Dig a hole with a spade big enough to take the full root system of the tree. Cover the root system with the soil to the root collar – just above where the roots begin to flare out from the stem. Firm the soil around the tree but not too hard as it will compact the soil. (*Don’t plant on a day when the ground is wet*).

**Activity 3: Mulch the whole area!**

Once finished cover the full area in at least 15cm of mulch for example bark mulch or straw. This will keep the weeds down and water in.

**Future Activities:** Maintenance Days!

1. Once a year for the first two years you may need to re-mulch if it is wearing thin.
2. Check your forest every 6-8 weeks during the growing season, if required organise a weeding day with the group. You can leave each weed on top of the mulch, as it decays it adds to the nutrients.
3. Check the soil under the mulch in places and water the trees if the soil is dry.
4. Keep paths through your forest clear of weeds also.
5. Although the fence will probably keep litter out, do collect and dispose of litter responsibly.

Now the only thing you need to make your location a forest is to add the trees. Once the soil is prepared for planting, you can begin. The planting day is perhaps the most enjoyable step in the creation of a Tiny Forest. Once the trees are in the ground, they can start growing into a real forest! Involve the local community, a school, or other community group in the planting activity as many hands make light work!

Schedule the planting day in the planting season, which runs from early November to March. November and December are generally best, but January and February are also good months but also most likely to have the worst weather, including frosts.

Lots of hot drinks and treats helps everyone stay warm!

Activity 1: distribute trees across the planting area. Before you begin planting, it is important that you spread the ±300 trees across the planting area. A Tiny Forest that is 100-200 square meters will be home to around up to 600 saplings of up to 25 different types of trees, shrubs, and bushes. Planting the saplings close together will make them grow taller, and the leaf canopy will fill in within 3 years.

How can you ensure the proper distribution of trees?

The vegetation in the forest will consist of three different layers: a shrub layer, an understory, and a canopy. Choose one of the following methods to decide where to distribute the trees and shrubs.

Method 1:

1. Plant the trees in a random pattern, not in rows or repetitive patterns. 2. Spread all 30 to 40 species over the entire length and width of the planting area. 3. Make sure that you don’t plant trees from the same species or layer next to one another. For example, don’t plant two Oak trees, or an Oak tree and a Scots Pine.

Tree Planting Day with your community!