

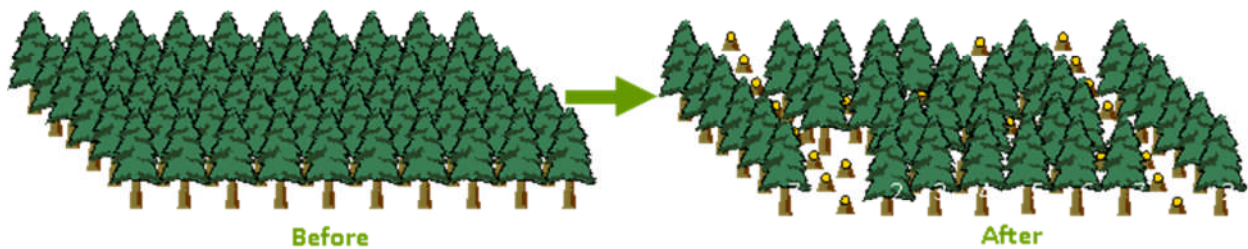
Thinning Ready Reckoner

Getting Ready for Thinning

Do you want to find out more?
Contact your local Forestry Adviser.

What is thinning?

Thinning is the removal of a proportion of trees from a forest crop. This increases the quality and size of the remaining trees, allowing larger commercial timber to grow. During thinning, normally every 6th or 7th line of trees is removed. This provides access to the crop. A selection of inferior trees is also removed from the remaining lines of trees. As a general rule, a maximum of a 1/3 of the existing number of trees and a corresponding 1/3 of the crop volume are removed in the first thinning.



Why thin?

If properly carried out, thinning:

- optimises the return from your forest crop
- provide periodic returns as the crop matures
- improves the biodiversity of the forest

What happens if I don't thin?

Not thinning will result in a larger number of smaller sized trees, with a likely reduction in crop value.

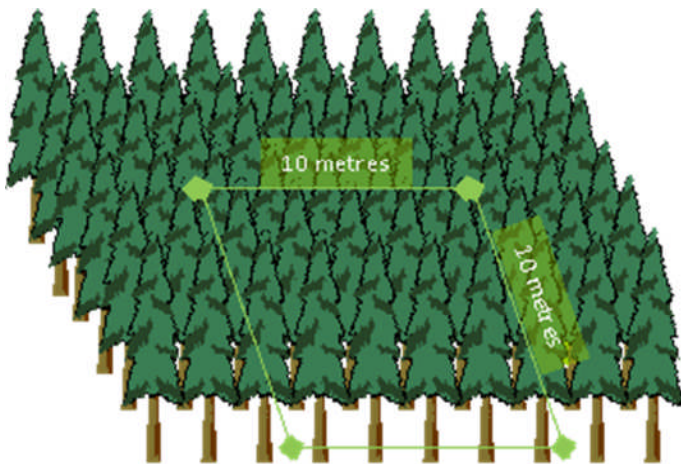
Is my forest suitable for thinning?

Most conifer forests are ready for thinning between years 14 to 24. In some cases the option may be to thin earlier or not thin at all. Thinning may not be an option where the site:

- is very exposed, and/or very wet
- has restricted access
- is not economically viable

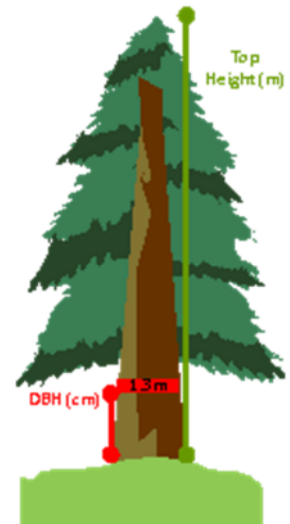
Is my forest ready for thinning?

The following steps describe a useful guide to assess if your Sitka spruce forest is ready for thinning. However, it should not be read as a Black or White indicator for suitability to thin! Teagasc advises that in all cases forest owners should seek professional forestry advice to assist with a thinning decision.



Step 1:

Count the number of live trees over 7cm in diameter in a 10 metre by 10 metre plot. Multiply this figure by 100. This gives you an estimate of the number of trees per hectare (i.e. stocking density).



Step 2:

Measure the Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) of all the live trees over 7cm in diameter in the plot and write the results down. Once all these trees have been measured, take the sum of all these figures and divide by the number of trees measured. This will give you the average Diameter at Breast Height.

Please note: DBH (cm) is measured at 1.3 metres above the ground using a specialised tape. This tape can be purchased from outlets specialising in forestry equipment.

Step 3:

Now that you know both the stocking density per hectare (see step 1) and the average DBH (see step 2), you can use the Ready Reckoner below to see if your Sitka spruce forest may be ready for thinning. But remember, this is only a guide and you should seek professional forestry advice prior to thinning.

DBH cm	Not suitable for thinning			Get ready for thinning			Suitable for thinning		
	2500	2400	2300	2200	2100	2000	1900	1800	1700
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
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Your local Teagasc Forestry Development Officer can provide free advice and information. Contact details can be found on www.teagasc.ie/forestry.