



Tidy Towns community planting in Balrothery, Fingal, Co Dublin

A hundred thousand welcomes to our newest hundred thousand trees

By ORLA FARRELL

I ALWAYS love writing up the parade of our glorious adventures of the last six months. Only, the phone is hopping all day today with typical amazing news. This morning alone RTÉ News want to come and film us planting an orchard in Scoil Mhuire Tullamore, with the Refugee Council and the Museum of Everyone. The *Sunday Independent Life* magazine want an interview for a piece called 'Small but mighty' about green ideas making a big change. I've been able to connect a student group with the ex-tree-ordinary 'Speedie' Smith and his Terryland Forest project in Galway who planted 2,000 saplings for our joint Science Week project at his city forest. Set up a planting day in the New Year with an Educate Together Parents' Committee in North Dublin with their teacher. Worked on the Rethink Ireland final report due next week. Spoke to a teacher and his 17-year old pupil about how much his agriculture-horticulture pupils have enjoyed our project. Plan a team site visit to Swords Manor Park. So, never a dull moment in the Tree House – and it's not even coffee time.

So What's Been Happening?

- Our sell-out Earth Day TEDxCrannTreesforIreland Climate Conference! Having run four Plant-for-the-Planet Tree Academies for children, we thought it time to offer a climate conference to the adults. We've found we are spending a lot of time advocating for trees and begging for space for nature. And what better way to spread the news of their central importance to solving all of our problems – well, most – than running a Virtual Conference? We



also ran a series of TEDxCircles, as *Gaeilge san áireamh* and watch-parties. In a year without many invitations, we sent out lots, to join in making our dream of re-leaving the world and especially home come true. Our talented team of young volunteers managed our major event, with 19-year old Canqi Li of Brown University, USA co-ordinating the TEDxCountdown morning all the way from Budapest!

- Our distanced Jerusalem Challenge Dance video, which featured a giant white dancing rabbit wielding a planting spade, had over 1,000 views in its first week!
- Want to take action on climate? Learn how our Crann – Trees for Ireland director Diarmuid McAree mobilised his neighbours to plant 'Trees for All' for the residents of Shankill; or how Crann Director Joan Whelan started the first Forest Schools Project in Ireland.
- Pick a small tree to plant in your garden with Sarah Blake of Earthology.
- Join our call to #stoptalkingstartplanting

Being There

Bee, Crafted, by Jade O'Reilly, age 14, Enfield, Co Meath, winner of the Greenore Tidy Towns and Residents' Association biodiversity project schools' competition for a logo for their great Nature Based Solutions #GenerationRestoration project. They are planting trees in Greenore to clean the air, to compensate for trees downed in storms, transferring window-box perennials into the lanes after each season, etc.

and learn from Gerhardt Gallagher how Ireland has space for a billion trees and nothing to stop us planting them but the will to do so.

- Hear Éanna Ni Lamhna's idea, 'One Thing for Nature' and take a walk in Ballyseedy wood with Tom Houlihan of Teagasc..
- In May, flush with our success, we answered the call of the Irish Environmental Network (IEN) to run our popular talks for Biodiversity Week series hosted by Crann Chairman Mark Wilkinson and our stalwart educator Diarmuid McAree with contributing guests.
- June brought World Environment Day – Crann's birthday – cue a tree planting ceremony on the shores of Carlingford Lough to mark the occasion.
- Summertime saw us hosting a tour around the historic trees of Greenore with veteran tree planter and expert Don Brasil as we launched two specially-commissioned films.
- We featured in the Culture Night Dublin Programme for the fourth year in a row and what a superb evening of art and poetry we

enjoyed from the comfort of our homes with our poet-in-residence Anto Kerins and a new collaboration with artist and author of *The Self-Care Squad*, Amy Claire.

- We've had discussions with Macra na Feirme, Foróige and the ICA, and are involved with several Rotary Ireland projects.

- It was also really exciting to team up with Laudato Si for the Season of Creation Planting initiative earlier this year; thanks so much to Trocaire for spreading the love of trees and mobilising every parish to plant trees on church lands, inspired by Pope Francis's call to action <https://tinyurl.com/fh7ysb9r>.

And the result of all this action is the Easy Treesie – Crann Project planting 100,000 trees in just one year!

How did we do that? 100 per cent growth on last year's National Tree Day count when we presented our 100,000th sapling after four years of mass planting parties to our Crann Patron, President Michael D Higgins. What is going on, given that we were for a second year in the grip of so many Covid-19 restrictions?

200,000 trees planted; that was the figure boldly drawn on our wooden tree counter in October in Avondale Forest Park when we planted some of the 2,000 native bird cherry trees provided by key partner teams in our climate action, the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte nurseries. The boy planters of Rathdrum, Co Wicklow, were all smiles for the cameras for the *Irish Times* and *Independent Newspapers* after walking through the crisp autumn leaves from their national school. Everyone loves a good news story right now!

To explain this progress. Well, we are on an accelerator programme all year, you see, as part of our Rethink Ireland Award and have been learning all the new tricks; which I am very pleased to learn are the old-fashioned tricks of good business. Not dissimilar to teaching! Quiz people. Ask them what they would like, then help them out if you can. Finally thank them for their work (Thank you everyone who has helped us in any way, big or small!) and issue a pat-on-the-back or, in these socially distant times, a prize (our favourite being Crann magazines and, of course, chocolate).

My favourite trick of all? Delegation. Though we love nothing better than getting our boots muddy, delegation became a necessity with the 2 km limit and, later, travel bans and advice; we have made a virtue of necessity and have put together a kit of easy guidelines to support our tree planting communities remotely. Our growing team has expanded again to include our dynamic Community Liaison Facilitator, artist, environmentalist and Orchard Project hero Steven Doody. And we are now interviewing for our third Masters in Sustainability TU



On SPAR National Tree Day at the launch of 'A Guide for Landowners to Managing Roadside Trees' by Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Pippa Hackett (second left) are, from left, Éanna Ni Lamhna, President of the Tree Council of Ireland; Cormac Downey, Vice-President of the Tree Council of Ireland, and Orla Farrell, Founder, Easy Treesie.

Dublin research intern in a row.

A huge boost to our project was the securing of a Woodland Support Grant by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry in August of this year. A grant under the same scheme was awarded to Crann itself and to the GAA who are rolling out the planting of 45,000 native saplings with our project this season through their new Green Clubs network. Not only do these awards provide

most valuable support to our project, we are also able to harness the considerable power of the Department's expert teams in spreading the good news of our work as we restore the countryside! There has been an unprecedented level of support from a huge variety of sectors, from companies working on the energy transition from fossil fuels such as Irish company Maxol to corporate groups keen to join our merry band through volun-tree days out and individuals such as a grandmother living abroad wishing to sponsor a tree for each of her Irish grandchildren for Christmas.

Which brings us neatly back to SPAR National Tree Day in October as we kick off our new planting season with ceremonies in Counties Wicklow, Dublin and Limerick launching our rolling timetable of mass



At the planting of an oak tree on their new school campus, to kick off the start of the Coláiste Chiaráin biodiversity forest planting project, are Principal Gerard O'Sullivan, John Kelly, Micheal Delohery and the school Green Schools Committee. This project is in collaboration with the Tree Council of Ireland, represented here by CEO Brendan Fitzsimons, and Crann/Easy Treesie's Orla Farrell.

planting over the winter months carried out with safety, fun and learning in mind!

And our reason for doing all this?

Easy Treesie is listed on the world trillion tree campaign, a challenge of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 to bring down temperature by 1 degree; enough to buy civilisation 17 extra years to work on other,

lasting solutions. We're planting 1M trees with Ireland's 1M children and their communities by 2023-4 (equal to 0.5 Phoenix Park's worth). Then we'll go large (1 Billion trees, equal to 500 Phoenix Parks)! As I write we have planted 205,009 saplings so far, partnering with almost 300 Irish communities, on public land as far as we can manage.

What questions might you have?

How is it going? We had a waiting list last year for 30 communities so we'd say pretty good.

How do we do it? We get tree-mendous support from myriad sponsors and supporters: Coillte, Trees on the Land and the many Irish nurseries and seed-growers who supply

I had better explain myself

I'm Orla Farrell, registered primary and second level teacher and climate optimist on this day when the US and China announce a new agreement in Glasgow. I've always loved getting outside the classroom and teaming up with others to do exciting things. After doing a lovely native hedgerow, a stand of native trees and then an orchard tree on our school grounds we ran out of space! We found Plant-for-the-Planet whose motto "#stoptalkingstartplanting" sounded exciting in the ex-tree-me. Felix, a 9-year old schoolboy, set a challenge for the children of every country in the world to plant a million trees. When we found out Ireland has a million school children we thought, what a Cinderella story, it's a fit! We planted 300 saplings in the park beside our school in 2017 during Ireland's first Tree Academy, a climate conference for children of a kind now running in 80 countries. Soon every local school surrounding Seagrang Park had joined us, planting a tree for every school in Ireland. We thought: if we could plant another 299 trees for every primary school, that would be the million done! I met with such interest in helping out with this project, started as part of our Green Flag action plan in school that I teamed up with all the experts and tree lovers in Crann –Trees for Ireland and then stepped out of my school to take the challenge on the road.

saplings, fruit trees and even some large specimens for our many special occasions .

What kind of trees do you plant? Our motto: the Right Tree in the Right Place. Native and common Irish trees, the odd fancy one for the fun. Subject to availability. Young ones, as they are the easiest.

When do you plant them? In the dormant season, winter and spring, it suits them.

Are they free? Nothing is free. There are some obvious terms and conditions, e.g. you'll commit to adding the trees to the map and minding them while they establish!

How many trees can I get? 100/200 or 300 for suitable projects, around a wheelbarrow-full = (enough to plant 1,000 square metres, tops.)

How do I get trees? Contact us and we'll do our best at orla@easytreesie.com.

How else can I help? Easy as 1, 2, TREE.

1. If you can plant trees, please do and add them to the UN map on Tree Mapper (a free



6th year Leaving Cert Applied Horticulture students who have been involved in cherry tree planting at St Finian's Community College, Swords, Co Dublin, marking National Science Week, November 2021, from left: Phelim, Dean, Jakub, Leon and Cillian.

saplings to be put in the ground next spring. The children are excited to see these trees growing and they were delighted to have a day out planting and then having their goodies and drink." *Margaret Haugh, Balrobery Tidy Towns.*

"Our group, Go Greener with Grangecon, were absolutely thrilled with the large donation of trees we received through the Easy Treesie Project. It gave us a chance to bring our community together for a second year in a row in a tree planting project at a time when we couldn't be together in any other way. Ours is a great tree loving (now herbicide-free) community and this project brought such joy to so many. We especially loved seeing children happily getting stuck in with their shovels and watering cans. After all, these trees are for them and their future. *Go Greener with Grangecon.*

"Current Covid-19 restrictions has meant that the Association's planting programme for spring 2021 was somewhat curtailed. Swords Woodland Association was very grateful for the supply of 1,500 trees through the Easy Treesie project. Some of these trees were heeled-in, a means of keeping the young trees in a temporary location. Suitable sites had been identified in collaboration with the council and these trees are now being planted in their permanent homes where they will grow into mature trees and woodlands." *Swords Woodland Association.*

"St Finian's Community College is one of the 12 local schools which has been planting with our organisation and with Easy Treesie for a number of years. The pupils have benefited in terms of wellbeing and the positive feelings gained from doing something for our local environment and its biodiversity." *Ciaran Burke, Agriculture-Horticulture and Science Teacher.*

"I really enjoy doing Horticulture and getting outside to do things like planting trees. We get to learn about trees and nature. I enjoy physical work, it makes a change from learning from books and screens. I find it hard work but when we all work together it's great fun. It has really made me consider a future career in horticulture." *Cillian Harford (17), St Finian's Community College student.*

app for your phone). If you can't plant you can donate them: could you sponsor a community to plant a woodland for €3,000 on easytreesie.com or trilliontreecampaign.org (all paid to charity crann.ie)? Or receive a lovely gift certificate designed by Dublin artist Ruza Leko for a €10 single tree on the project? Or plant trees from 20c abroad on our sister projects.

2. Champion the trees!
3. Connect us to like-minded people!

Feedback from some community-based Crann/Easy Treesie Projects

"How to hide a forest in a city?" asked Paul Redmond of Mud Island Community Garden (MICG). "Working with the local community MICG have planted 800 native Irish saplings in Dublin's north-east inner city. There have been numerous greening strategies for inner city Dublin over the years which have had little impact. Bringing people together by keeping them apart, the initiative saw 800 saplings planted in gardens and buckets within a radius of 1 km of the garden. A map has been generated documenting where trees have been planted," adds Steven Doody.

"Last year with Tidy Towns, we planted 12,000 saplings around 4 villages. This year will see 700 saplings planted around the GAA club grounds and the grounds being declared herbicide free." *Kilmeade, Co Kildare, Tidy Towns Report.*

"600 saplings planted on the grounds of this social initiative." *Campbell Community Trust, Dunlavin, Co Wicklow.*

"Welcoming 1,000 project saplings on

campus part of our Green Week 2021,"

Green Campus Report, Maynooth University, Co Kildare.

"Thanks so much, Easy Treesie! By donating and gifting our village the tree saplings, Easy Treesie has helped us in many ways to:

- Enhance our beautiful green areas, e.g. our front shore promenade. Greenore is looking so much better with the addition of these trees and saplings. They have provided valuable habitats for biodiversity, a subject close to the hearts of our community in Greenore.

- Work towards improving the air quality of our village in an area with industrial dust and air pollution. Planting tree saplings is now part of a GRTT plan in allowing us to address these problems for now and the future.

- Bring community together with a shared goal.

- Share planting of saplings by collaborating with our neighbouring villages of Carlingford, Omeath and Grange.

We felt lucky to be included in such a fantastic project. It was a tremendous boost to the village 'togetherness', uplifting the spirits for our community. The pandemic was a socially isolating experience for many of our neighbours. Receiving the trees gave us the opportunity to work together. Would we recommend participation in this project to a friend? Most definitely." *Greenore Tidy Towns, Co Louth*

"We were delighted to be part of the Easy Treesie campaign. The families in Rosepark planted the mixed native tree saplings on the back perimeter of the large green and then continued to plant on the bank in Glebe Park. The children then planted six pots with