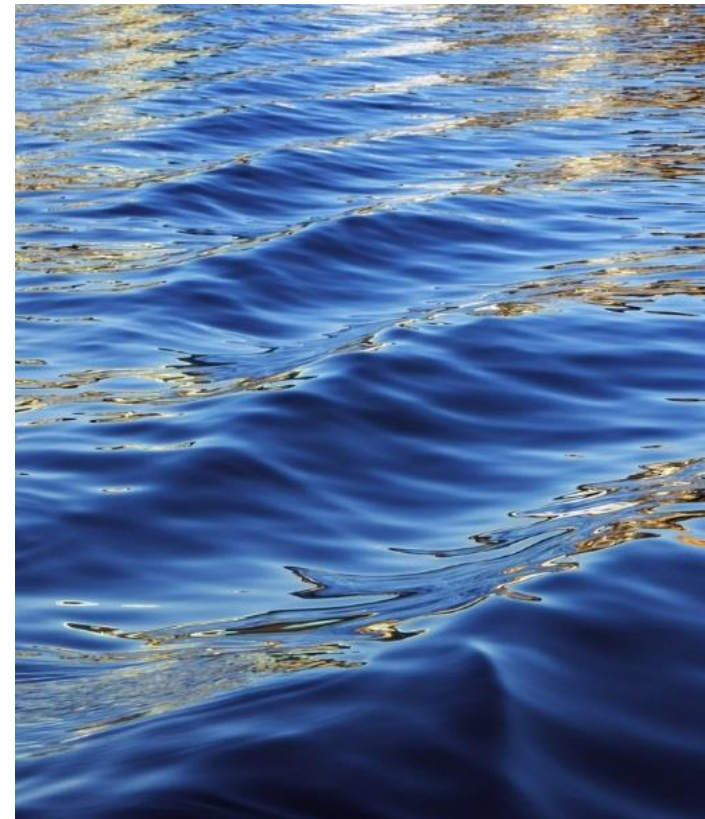




Hedgerows



National Rural Network



Importance of hedgerows

Hedgerow habitats are an important feature of the Irish landscape due in part to their roles in biodiversity, agricultural management and potential carbon sequestration.

Planting hedges along the edge of fields provided shockproof boundaries; shelters stock from inclement weather; and nurtures wildlife and plants.

As Ireland has relatively few forests, hedgerows provide an important habitat and food source for birds, mammals and insects. They also provide wildlife corridors, which allow creatures to move through the countryside.



Image: Whitethorn Blossom

Source: NRN



Planting new hedgerows

Planting new hedgerows has been encouraged through funding on environmental schemes such as GLAS. Approximately 7,300 farmers chose the planting new hedgerow option under GLAS 1.

Planting Hedgerows also allows other plants such as blackberries, dog rose and woodbine (honeysuckle) to flourish. Although whitethorn (hawthorn) is one of the most popular hedgerow species, other plants such as blackthorn, holly, spindle and hazel can also form an effective stock- proof fence.

The best time to plant new hedgerows is in spring and autumn, plants can be purchased and delivered in bulk bundles from nurseries.

Well-rotted farmyard manure encourages growth, if mixed in well with the topsoil. Six quicks should be planted per meter in a with a staggered double row of plants. The new plants face competition from established grass and weeds for light, heat, water and nutrients from the soil. Competing vegetation must be controlled until the hedge is established. You can spread mulch 150mm each side of the plant and control weeds if necessary. Fence the newly-planted hedgerow on both sides to protect from livestock.



Image Source: NRN