



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**EMBARGO 7.30PM WEDNESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 07**

**BUDS OF THE BANNER - Ireland's newest guide to growing native trees and shrubs is launched in Clare**

Clare, IRELAND, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – Ireland's best-known wildlife filmmaker, Éamon de Buítléar officially launched the country's newest guide to growing native trees and shrubs at a ceremony in the Templegate Hotel, Ennis, County Clare this evening. *'Buds of the Banner – A Guide to Growing Native Trees and Shrubs in County Clare'*, a partnership project between Rural Resource Development and Clare County Council, has been initiated as an education and awareness measure to encourage and assist the public.

Deputy Mayor of Clare, Cllr. Brian Meaney said the new Guide would help equip people with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about planting native species. He added, *"The publication is designed to encourage more people to plant native trees like ash, oak, elm and hazel. On a personal level, I have planted over 7,000 ash trees on my own property so, therefore, recognise the value of promoting native species."*

Speaking at the launch, Éamon de Buítléar said, *"This is a very impressive publication, which I am sure will be very much in demand and should be a most useful guide to a whole cross section of people in County Clare and elsewhere around Ireland."*

Commenting on the new guide, Cllr. Patricia McCarthy (Ind), Chairperson of the Environment, Emergency Services & Consumer Protection Strategic Policy Committee stated, *"This practical guide provides information on the great variety of*

*trees and shrubs that are native to County Clare. You can choose for colour, shape, height and wildlife value, and to suit your soil and site conditions. This step-by-step guide will also show you where and how to plant your native trees and shrubs, including some great design ideas for the garden. Most importantly, it provides practical ideas for making your garden, village or housing development more attractive and nature friendly by planting native buds."*

The new guide has been published at a time when significant changes are being experienced in the appearance of the country's landscape due to the planting of non-native species such as Rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, beech, pine and sycamore.

According to Joan Tarmey, Environmental Awareness Officer, Clare County Council, *"Compared to twenty years ago, you are now more likely to see introduced species being planted in people's gardens and properties. Native woodland accounts for 1% of land cover in Ireland. While the exact percentage for Clare is unknown, it is likely to be about 1% or less. One single mature oak can provide a potential home for an amazing 423 different species of leaf-eating insects. That is because these species have adapted to live with the native oak over time. On the other hand, the non-native sycamore supports only a fraction of this number."*

Ms. Tarmey continued, *"Chosen species should naturally occur in the area they are being planted in. The species should be suited to the soil and local climate, and beneficial to local wildlife. Some berry-bearing trees and shrubs should be among those planted to provide food for birds and small mammals."*

Meanwhile, a public workshop on *'Buds of the Banner'* will take place from 7-10pm on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at The Great Hall, Templegate Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare. Author of *'Buds of the Banner'*, Dr. Janice Fuller will address the open event.

Doirín Graham, Chief Executive Officer of Rural Resource Development invited members of the public to attend the upcoming workshop, which would demonstrate the practical benefits of the new guide.

*"The Clare landscape is changing so quickly, that we want to remind people of what makes this county so attractive to look at and to live in. Native trees and shrubs literally shape and colour our landscape and provide the best possible habitats for wildlife. When people plant native, they are helping to retain and even regenerate the natural face of rural and urban Clare. We believe there is a growing interest amongst the general public in retaining the best of what nature has given us", Ms. Graham said.*

The launch of the Guide comes just days ahead of '*National Tree Week 2007*', which takes place from March 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 2007. Clare County Council in conjunction with the Tree Council of Ireland, is making young native trees available **free** to Community Groups for planting in public open spaces. This year the theme is '**Trees for Energy**'.

*'Buds of the Banner – A Guide to Growing Native Trees and Shrubs in County Clare'* (RRP €5.00) is available at selected bookshops and garden centres around the county.

Further details are available from [www.rrd.ie](http://www.rrd.ie) or [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie). Alternatively, please contact the Environment Section of Clare County Council on 065-6821616 or Rural Resource Development on 061-361144.