



# Irish Seed Savers

*Protecting Ireland's food crop heritage for future generations*

## **Title: Heritage Orchard Development and Management**

### **Description**

This course is aimed at organic farmers, landowners and community groups who are interested in developing a small commercial heritage orchard using organic practices along with sustainable management practices that work with nature and the lands existing biodiversity, while protecting beneficial habitats and species.

This course will be a combination of classroom based theory, practical demonstration and advice for the successful long term development of farmland heritage orchards. The course grounds the participants in useful theory lessons that compliment the practical outdoor learning modules.

### **Course Objective**

The overall aim of the course is to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence of the participants to successfully develop a small thriving commercial orchard for the long term benefit of the farmland and nature.

### **Course Aims**

To provide the participants with an understanding of the history and heritage of apple trees and orchards in Ireland and why it is important to re-establish small farmland orchards.

To provide the participants with an understanding of important site characteristics and aspect, soil science, soil types, soil fertility, natural mulches, composting, green manures and natural methods of pest and disease control.

To use demonstration, theory and practice session's methodology to allow the participants opportunities to acquire easily replicated new skills and knowledge.

To introduce the participants to the importance of protecting native biodiversity in the orchard and throughout the farmland.

To introduce the participants to Ireland's pollinator species (wild and managed), their role in the pollination of apple trees, how to provide for their year round requirements, resources and suitable habitats for pollinator species.

### **Course Modules and Timeline**

Length of CPD: 28 hours (five full day workshops)

This course consists of five modules, taught over five full days throughout the year.

Course Location: Irish Seed Savers Association, Capparoe, Scariff, Co. Clare

**Start and Finish Time:** 10am-4.30pm

**Number of participants:** 12 -15

**Total cost:** €550

Lunch not provided please bring your own packed lunch (Tea & Coffee available)

### **Dates in 2022**

- Feb 25th
- April 22nd
- July 29th
- Sept 16th
- Oct 21st

### **Course Module Details:**

#### **Module 1: Winter**

- Introduction and overview of the course and to Irish Seed Savers conservation work
- History of apples in Ireland – linking the past with the present
- How to choose the best site for establishing an orchard – preparing the site, shelter belts, drainage and soil
- Choosing apple varieties and how to plant a fruit tree correctly
- Health and Safety – safe use of pruning tools
- Winter pruning, demonstration, theory and practice (tools will be provided)
- Tour of Irish Seed Saver's heritage orchards

## **Module 2: Spring/Summer**

- Rootstocks, self rooters and growing from pips
- Health and Safety – safe use of grafting tools
- Grafting techniques – demonstration, theory and practice (Participants will take home the trees they have grafted)
- Soil and Fertility in the orchard

## **Module 3: Summer**

- Health and Safety – safe use of pruning tools
- Summer pruning – demonstration, theory and practice (tools will be provided)
- Natural plant based foliar feeds – benefits, how to make foliar sprays and application
- Mulching – benefits, types of mulch, how to use different kinds of mulches
- Making compost

## **Module 4: Autumn**

- Biodiversity & Pollinators in the Orchard – part 1
- Harvest – harvesting fruit, storage techniques and juicing apples
- Orchard Maintenance – part 1

## **Module 5: Autumn/Winter**

- Biodiversity & Pollinators in the Orchard – part 2
- Orchard Maintenance – part 2
- Orchard pests and diseases – Identification, prevention and natural treatment

*IRISH SEED SAVERS ASSOCIATION COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE*

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