SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: KNOCKMAA HILL

SITE CODE: 001288

Knockmaa Hill is a prominent limestone knoll located 10km west of Tuam, Co. Galway. The surrounding countryside consists of good quality, pastoral farmland on limestone. The hill itself is 180m high and is covered with deciduous woodland. Towards the summit of the hill there is an area of limestone pavement and heath.

The main tree species in the woodland are Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and oak (*Quercus* spp.) and the associated ground flora is species-rich. There is some Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) in wetter seepage areas and, close to the summit, there is an area of dwarf oak woodland on thin soils. The wood contains numerous exotic tree species including Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), larch (*Larix* spp.) and pine (*Pinus* spp.). Of these, only Beech and Sycamore are regenerating.

At the top of the hill there is an area of limestone pavement which supports a species-rich, Burren-type, flora with some small areas of heath.

Despite the incidence of tree felling in the past, the site is still of interest because it is a good example of deciduous woodland on thin limestone soil. Similar sites are rare in this part of the country. The occurrence of species-rich limestone pavement vegetation at the top of the hill adds significantly to the interest of the site.

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