

GMIT LIVING WILLOW OUTDOOR CLASSROOM



Case Study on Environmental Management and Sustainability, building a living Willow Outdoor Classroom. GMIT Mayo.

Collaborators: GMIT Mayo, Green Campus Committee, Heritage, Outdoor, Applied Social Studies Students, South west Mayo Development Company Tus scheme and Mayo County Council.

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In the spring of 2016 as part of a 4th year module entitled Environmental management and Sustainability. Students and staff from the aforementioned courses began to construct an Outdoor Willow Classroom on the grounds of GMIT Mayo campus. The inspiration behind building an Outdoor Classroom was the construction of a Woodland Trail on campus grounds in 2014 by Aodan Conneely a Heritage Studies student. The construction phase was preceded by a meeting expedited by the Green Campus Committee, in which ideas were expressed by interested parties as to what type of structure would be built. Andreas Konig a third year Applied Social Studies student and a master weaver designed and created a scale model of a willow structure which formed the template of the classroom.



Once a design had been agreed GMIT Green Campus Committee applied to Mayo County Council for funding under Local Agenda 21. Funding secured, Kevin O Callaghan and Davy Walsh lecturers transported students 40 minutes north of the collage to harvest the necessary Willow for the project. Following a number of hours of hard work sufficient Willow was transported back to the college.



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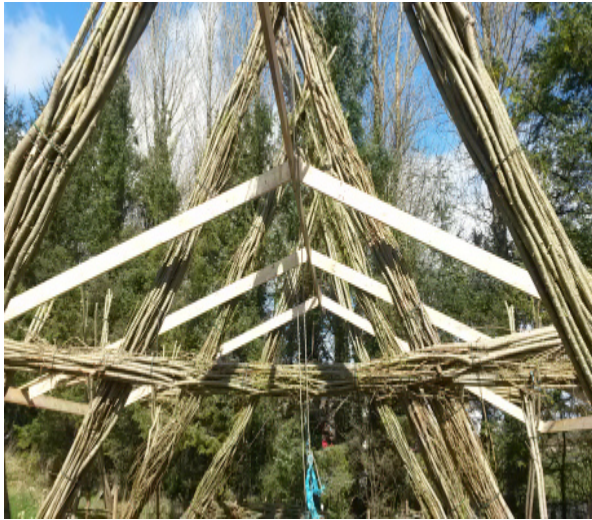
The task of build the structure began in February 2016. Stage one was building the pillars that would form the A frames of the structure. This was done by banding together lengths of Willow in one direction and inverting the same amount in the opposite direction to create stability.



Once six pillars had been constructed the task of erecting the A frames began. Measurements were taken as to space the frames equally apart and holes measuring approximately 2ft = 60.96cm were dug. The task of lifting the A frames into place require a large number of students working in unison. Once the first A frame was up it was simply a case of repeating the process.



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prevented us from doing so. We decided to construct a wooden frame within the structure and covered it with wooden cladding. This gave the students a sense of completion. It is our intension over time to weave the willow around the wooden roof. The project will continue to be an ongoing project and each year new students will have an opportunity to work on the classroom.

Once the pillars were in place the task of roofing the structure began. It had been our intention to weave a willow roof, however this was not practical as time constraints and pending student exams



By the end of April 2016 Less than three months later, the Willow had begun to grow.

Further information about the project is available on a Blog created by Lecturer Davy Walsh.

<https://davywalsh.wordpress.com/gmit-outdoor-willow-classroom/>

