

Enhancing the quality, quantity and diversity of tree seed from the nation's forests.

We have brought together our commitments and plan to meet the England Tree Action Plan objective to enhance the quantity, quality, diversity, and biosecurity of domestic tree seed supply. We will increase the species and the genetic diversity of seed available.

We have 3 key outcomes:

- More registered seed sources in the nation's forests we manage.
- Exploiting the full potential of seed supply from the nation's forests for Forestry England.
- Increasing the opportunities for others to collect and use seed from the nation's forests.

1. More registered seed sources in the nation's forests we manage.

The Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) supports the new Seed Resources Manager post in Forestry England's Plant & Seed Supply team until April 2025.

From April 2025, the post will be permanent and fully-funded by Forestry England.

While funded by Defra, the post reports into the NCF Seed Supply Working Group which is chaired by Defra and meets quarterly. The Seed Resources Manager is leading on these key tasks:

Increasing the number of new registered seed sources in the nation's forests

- Establishing new, improved, grafted seed orchards of Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Douglas fir and Scots pine, with a view to adding oak and wild cherry as well. Other species may be added, depending on feasibility.
- Establishing new seedling seed stands of conifers and broadleaves. Depending on the species, these will be planted with trees of seed orchard provenance, selected quality provenance or appropriate source-identified provenance. They will include silver birch, bird cherry, common alder, field maple, Douglas fir, lodgepole pine and Corsican pine. Other species are likely to be added over time.
- Identifying, registering and managing existing young stands and mature stands of seed orchard provenance, selected quality provenance, or appropriate source-identified provenance, and arranging seed collections. The focus is currently on Scots pine, Douglas fir, Japanese red cedar, lodgepole pine, sessile oak, pedunculate oak, red oak, and beech. Other species will be added.
- Working with the Conifer Breeding Co-operative and Future Trees Trust to identify sites for finding high-quality plus trees and collecting scions from them for grafting to create qualified seed orchards. We will also establish provenance trials, and replace old clone banks.

Enhancing seed production from existing registered seed sources in the nation's forests

The Seed Resources Manager will work closely with the Forestry Commission's Forest Reproductive Materials (FRM) team in an NCF-supported project to enhance seed production from existing registered seed sources.

For existing registered stands of selected quality- and source-identified material, the following workstreams will mean that the stands supply more seed.

- Current registered selected seed stands, and source-identified seed stands will be re-inspected so that the data held about them remains accurate.
- The data will be used to establish long-term management plans for the stands making them more productive and resilient.

2. Exploiting the full potential of seed supply from the nation's forests for Forestry England.

We will still collect seed from the nation's forests for processing and supply by our seed facility in Delamere. The Nature for Climate Fund and Forestry England are investing in new seed processing facilities which will be operational at the Delamere site by March 2025.

We will still make surplus seed from a limited number of species available to the private sector.

If buyers from the private sector prove there is a market failure affecting their seed supplies, and we have seed, we will make it available. This is under an agreement made with Defra's Subsidies Team to negotiate the Trade and Corporation Agreement. The market failure situation will be reviewed every year.

3. Increasing the opportunities for others to collect and use seed from the nation's forests.

To fully exploit the seed sources in the nation's forests we will continue to grant other seed collectors access to identify seed sources and collect seed. These collections are additional to our own. We have a new, simplified process for other seed collectors to apply for access to seed sources in the nation's forests. Please see the Forestry England Seed Collection Protocol document at <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/seed-collecting-protocol-and-plan>.