

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 Appendix 1 below.

Seed collection protocol

For processing requests to collect seeds and plant material from the nation's forests.

1. Rationale

To have a clear process for Forestry England to make decisions on requests for access to the nation's forests to collect seed or plant material.

2. Definitions

The nation's forests - land managed by Forestry England

PSS - Forestry England's Plant and Seed Supply unit.

District - Forestry England's local management area.

District contact - Forestry England District staff member responsible for liaising with collectors.

Collectors (you) - individuals, companies or organisations collecting and removing any seed or plant material from Forestry England managed land.

Seed - all seed, fruits and cones.

Plant material - all parts of a plant obtained by vegetative propagation, including embryos, and plants produced from any of these.

Royalty - a payment, or portion of the collection in-lieu, made to Forestry England. The royalty will be agreed before the collection begins and will be relative to the commercial value of the collection. For forest seed collection this royalty will be 10% of the value of the saleable seed based upon the quantity of seed registered for sale as Forest Reproductive Materials (FRM). The royalty payment may also be taken by Forestry England as an agreed proportion (up to 10%) of the overall saleable seed where Forestry England wants such seed. For any unregistered seed, or other plant material, the royalty will be negotiated case-by-case, with the aim to achieve an equivalent 10% royalty based on the saleable value. The Head of PSS will decide if the royalty is a payment or seed. The Collector must give Forestry England a schedule of works

that clearly demonstrates they will collect according to the Forest Reproductive Material regulations. This schedule must also include the date when Forestry England will receive the royalty.

3. Step-by-step guide for collectors

You must have permission from Forestry England PSS and the district before collecting seed or plant material.

3.1. Initial contact:

At least 6 weeks before you intend to start you must email your collection request to: seedenquiries@forestryengland.uk

You must include details of the type and quantity of plant material you want to collect, the precise location of the collection and when you want to collect.

3.2. Permission from PSS:

PSS will assess the request and liaise with the relevant district contact about the collection.

Requests for collections may be limited by PSS where we need that seed or plant material.

If the request is granted, you will agree the royalty with PSS.

3.3. Access permission from district:

If PSS agree to the collection, they will send you the district contact's details and then you will liaise directly to arrange the access permission from the district. **Your access permission request must be with the district at least 4 weeks before collecting.**

The district contact will work with you to gather the information they need for the permission. This includes details of everyone, including sub-contractors, who

will be collecting, along with copies of documents such as insurance, tree climber certification, training certificates, appropriate First Aid+F certification, a site-specific risk assessment, lone working policy if applicable, and emergency procedures.

When your access permission is granted by the district, you must have a pre-commencement meeting on site between you/ your staff and the district contact before collection commences.

3.4. FRM collection notification:

If you intend to market the seed or plant material, or plants grown from the material, you must notify the Forestry Commission's FRM team of your intent to collect online at: <https://forest-reproductive-materials-forestergis.hub.arcgis.com/> or by emailing FRM@forestrycommission.gov.uk.

The notification to FRM must be received at least 14 days before the collection date.

Please inform seedenquiries@forestryengland.uk when you have done the FRM notification.

3.5. The collection:

The district contact will have operational control of the collection.

While you are collecting, the district contact may monitor progress and take any appropriate action needed such as suspending the collection for a breach of the permission's rules or a health and safety concern.

3.6. Completing and registering the collection:

When you have finished collecting, you will inform the district contact immediately that you are no longer on site.

The Collector will provide the district contact and seedenquiries@forestryengland.uk with a digital spreadsheet containing an accurate inventory of the total quantity of seed / plant material collected.

This notification must be received within 1 week of the collection being completed.

To comply with FRM regulations, to market seed / plant material you must register the quantity collected with the Forestry Commission's FRM team and apply for a Master Certificate.

The Master Certificate application form may be found on the FRM website:
<https://forest-reproductive-materials-forestergis.hub.arcgis.com/>

This must be done within 9 months of the collection, or before marketing, whichever is sooner.

You must email seedenquiries@forestryengland.uk with the quantity registered and the proposed sale price / market value before advertising the seed / plant material for sale or sowing the seed.

3.7. Royalty:

The royalty is then agreed with PSS, along with the means and timing of payment, which must be paid by the agreed date.

You must follow the guidance above and the overall terms detailed within the seed collection protocol or risk other permission requests being declined.