

J & A Growers Ltd

Nursery Blog - April 2015

Welcome to a fourth edition of our Nursery Blog. We hope that you have managed a good winter and sales continue into the late season for those who satisfy this market. Despite the uncertainty going into the winter, demand for forestry & hedging plants has exceeded our expectations. The forestry market is still buoyant in Scotland and hedging did happen, although for a narrower window than many had hoped for.

When speaking to nurserymen across Europe, there are tales of a German market that never got going and a poor season had by many. There are lots of small growers who sell to the larger trading hubs, with reports of only 50% of their produce being required. Will they carry on growing for the tree and hedging market?

It was a positive outcome to get new grant schemes opened for business in both England and Scotland this spring. In England, applicants must submit woodland creation applications by 30 April 2015 to allow time for a site visit to take place and subsequent changes to proposals to be made (if necessary) ahead of the final deadline of 31 May 2015. We hope there will be a good uptake and a rapid turnaround to help generate new planting this coming winter.

On the Nursery

It has been a cool and damp start to the spring, but we eventually managed to prepare seedbeds and are now sowing and establishing our next crops. Over the past two weeks the soil has become very dry, so we are irrigating the sown beds as required to keep conditions moist. Each year throws different challenges and it makes you wonder, is there such a thing as a perfect spring!!!!

We have moved onto some rented land on the opposite side of the main road, giving the opportunity to rest our soils and add back some fibre. This new land was growing cereals last year and had salad/vegetables prior to that. It is very similar to our soil and is accessible for our irrigation. The main field is half a mile long.

HDC Trials

This year J & A Growers are hosting two HDC trials. The first is a herbicide trial to test for crop safety and weed control efficacy, following treatments at the end of the dormant season in a crop of second year *Crataegus*. The next is a second year trial of Biofungicides in a seedling crop of *Crataegus*. The HTA Tree & Hedging Group are planning a combined event with the HDC in September. The day will review these trials and others such as the Growth Regulator trial which is now moving into the third year at Wyevale Transplants and showing some promising results.

Early Summer Events

HTA Tree & Hedging group AGM (16th & 17th June)

The AGM this summer will be joint hosted by Forestart and Maelor Forest Nurseries. During the two days, there will be a tour of the new purpose built premises and seed orchards at Forestart and a trip around the production site at Maelor. There will also be a speaker from the Future Trees Trust (FTT) to give an insight into their current work and a summary of their projects. The HDC will give an update on the relevant research currently being funded by our sector. This event brings together like minded people with a business focus and is a great place to share knowledge and ideas.

Confor NPG AGM (1st July)

The Nursery Producers Group will be meeting at Alice Holt for this years` AGM, thanks to the kind invitation of the Forestry Commission. This occasion plays host to an annual industry meeting, which invites relevant people and organizations to discuss current topics which influence our businesses. The aim is to promote communication between the private and public sectors and give joined-up direction within the industry. Over recent years, this 'working together' has given several opportunities to get the voice of the nursery industry heard, prior to new policies and legislation being created.

Nursery Machinery web site www.nurserymachines.com

Many will have noticed there are several new entries on the nursery machinery web site for both field grown and container production. If you haven't already registered for automatic notification through weekly updates, then please visit the site and subscribe now. Remember it is still currently FREE to list any unused machinery you would like to sell.

J & A Growers web site www.jagrowers.com

We have recently updated our web site, which offers an insight into our business and what we do. This site is now suitable for viewing on mobile phones and other smaller devices.

Harvesting (2yr thorn)

