

# *J & A Growers Ltd*

## **Nursery Blog - October 2015**

Welcome to a sixth edition of our Nursery Blog. The lifting season must be getting close as the fields have now turned from dust to mud!!!! Many of the surrounding mature trees are now filled with autumn colours and growth in our crops has come to a close.

### **On the Nursery**

We finished undercutting the crops by the end of September and over the next few weeks they will continue to form stronger and more fibrous roots on the back of this. The seedling thorn has also been topped to 80cm which leaves better presented bundles of the 1/0, 60-80cm size and reduces space requirements in the coldstore.

Irrigation pipes are now getting gathered in from the fields and stored away until they are next required at seed sowing time in the spring. Water usage this summer has been similar to the previous two years.

Our Liftmaster harvesters have been fully serviced over the summer and some new modifications added after picking up ideas at the Egedal machinery event in Denmark last year. The tracks on the John Deere were also stripped back to replace some worn parts. The sandy soil is so aggressive when wet in the winter months. Hopefully we will manage two more seasons before needing new rubber treads as that is no doubt costly.

This summer we have purchased a second hand pneumatic precision drill which was previously used for vegetable production. We will start trialing precision field sowings for smaller seeded tree species this coming spring and look forward to seeing the results. We are very happy with the crop of Sitka that was precision sowed this spring for a contract grow project. Our aim is to establish crops with more uniform spacing between the plants to eliminate the number of undersize trees and culls from the crop. This type of sowing does rely upon clean seed with a high germination rate. As we all know too well, tree seeds can be very variable from one year to the next and between batches so requires some close working with seed companies.



Betula Pubescens 1/0

## Recent Events

### HTA / AHDB event (2<sup>nd</sup> September)

It was nice to see so many of you at the HTA / AHDB 'Advances in Crop Protection' event on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. It is without doubt that everyone present took away something new from the morning session and found it most interesting hearing from the vastly knowledgeable Heinrich Losing (German nursery stock adviser). We hope that you enjoyed looking over the trial plots and walking our crops in the afternoon.

### AHDB Smart Agriculture conference (8<sup>th</sup> September)

This conference was organised by AHDB to address the need for 'multiple disciplines to come together to explore innovations and develop applications' for the future benefit of food and farming. The advances in Robotics and how close we are to new technology is mind blowing. It is now becoming affordable to smaller businesses and developing at a very fast speed. The potential here is massive and ranges from robots to carry out labour saving menial tasks to highly specific crop protection operations. We need to open our eyes to these new developments and think how we could benefit most within our own businesses. There is a new research project going forward with the AHDB for a grower reprogrammable robot for plant production tasks.

## Outlook

Nurserymen tend to think the worst at this time of year with a nursery full of trees and mammoth workload ahead. Let's try and remain optimistic for this season and hope that people plant trees regardless of grant funding.

We still await more details of the HS2 project and the exact breakdown of requirements for the first phase and confirmation of what provenance(s) they require for the different species lots.

### Nursery Machinery web site [www.nurserymachines.com](http://www.nurserymachines.com)

If you have any unwanted machinery or equipment you no longer use, then please post it on the Nursery Machinery website as it is still currently FREE to list.



Egedal bed lifter,  
custom reverse model