

# *J & A Growers Ltd*

## **Nursery Blog - September 2016**

Welcome to the eighth edition of our Nursery Blog.

Thankfully we have been blessed with some nice weather since the end of June when the taps from above were turned off. We have experienced some warmer temperatures and good growing conditions which were needed after the slow start in the spring.

It came as no surprise to see the Forestry Commission figures for new woodland creation last year. England achieved just 546ha of new planting, so miles short of their aspirations of 5,000ha per year. Spring 2016 applications have totalled around 1600ha of new planting so hopefully this winter will see more activity than last, but the current grant process is still not working.

Scotland has a commitment to plant 10,000ha of new woodlands per year, but applications so far this year have fallen far short of this figure. Despite this, the demand for hardwood trees is looking more promising than last winter.

The result of the Brexit vote sent the government into turmoil and halted any applications involving EU funding. Thankfully the Treasury made a high level announcement on Saturday 13 August stating they are now in a position to re-start issuing agreements for forestry and woodland grants. Hopefully we will start seeing evidence of this very soon.

### **On the Nursery**

Until the middle of July growth looked very similar to last year, but has since pulled away in most species. We will be happy for this growth to carry on for a while longer yet, as long as it stops in time for harvest (unlike last year when it was very mild until Christmas).

Several species have now been undercut to force a fibrous root system at the base of the plants and to halt growth in those species which have already reached size. This operation will pass through all outstanding crops very shortly.

We have relied heavily on irrigation this summer to keep the plants happy and growing to their potential. From the end of June until the 28<sup>th</sup> August we only recorded 40mm of rainfall which disappeared very quickly from our sandy soils.

The AHDB trial that we hosted this summer gave some clear results, but unfortunately these weren't as hoped. It is evident that herbicides sprayed between the rows of trees are too mobile when sprayed onto gritted beds, especially when the crop is Birch which is very susceptible to herbicide damage anyway.

We do welcome nursery visits so please get in contact to arrange a tour around the growing stock.

## Pictures of the Nursery



Acer Pseudoplatanus  
1/0



Prunus Padus  
1/0



Salix Caprea  
1/0

## Outlook

It is once again difficult to try and predict the season ahead. We are not expecting a sudden explosion of plant requirements in the UK, but hope for some improvements on last year. Whilst there is an unknown annual market and lack of confidence within the trade, there is no hope of becoming self sufficient for home grown planting stock produced within the UK. The message we push before politicians for the good of Plant Health and Biosecurity is '**stability, stability, stability**'.

Seed crops on mature trees are looking good for many species so hopefully they will harvest well to fulfill our demands from preferred sources. Once again we have resorted to our crystal ball to predict our requirements.

**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.