



Without planning ahead and beginning to think about irrigation, Japanese maples may find it hard to cope with summer drought. Can you imagine Acer Glade at Westonbirt Arboretum without any acers?

14 Case Study 1: Planning for the future

Adaptation - the National Arboreta Long-term Planning Group



The National Arboreta - Westonbirt and Bedgebury - are two world renowned Forestry Commission tree collections. They are both located in southern Britain, the region predicted to experience the greatest changes in terms of milder but wetter winters and warmer, drier summers, with climate change.

The National Arboreta Long-term Planning Group includes

representatives from Westonbirt Arboretum, Bedgebury Pinetum and Forest Research, and has been set up in order to plan and react to these changes in our climate, and consider how they may affect the future composition and management of the collections. Although these changes are predicted to take place over the next 50-100 years, now is the time to make plans for any necessary shifts in tree species composition.

The group is preparing a climate change risk assessment for the Arboreta and is in the process of creating and implementing an adaptation action plan to address these risks. This involves looking at the content of the collections, including species mix and vulnerability or resilience to change, and assessing the risks facing the collections in terms of pests and diseases.

As well as nationally important collections at Westonbirt and Bedgebury, the Forestry Commission

has at least 20 other tree collections across Britain. These sites can be used as valuable repositories for species that might no longer be suited to arboreta in other parts of the country or the world.

The National Arboreta also have an important role in communicating the impacts of climate change on trees. Part of the role of the Planning Group is to raise awareness about the need to pre-empt and respond to projected climate change and its associated effects.

