



Forestry Commission  
England



Support & advice | climate change



Which tree species to  
plant for a changing  
forestry environment

# England's Woodland Management and Climate Change

Our woodlands have been established over many years in a relatively stable climate. Tree species selection has assumed that these climatic conditions will remain constant. **This key assumption no longer applies.**

We know our woodlands will be affected.

We need to ensure that the forests and woodlands we plant and their associated habitats are resilient to climate change and have the capacity to adapt to its likely effects. We must start to implement adaptation strategies today, as England's forests will be maturing in a very different climate.







## Selecting and diversifying tree species and use of the correct genetic material is a key action to adapt to climate change.

The negative impact of pests and diseases on our existing tree species makes it even more urgent that we diversify the species and silvicultural systems we use.

For further advice about these web pages contact John Weir, adviser for woodland creation and resilience, Forestry Commission England [john.weir@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:john.weir@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.forestry.gov.uk/climatechangeengland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/climatechangeengland)

### Some key points

-  Use the principle of **anticipatory adaptation** as this offers the highest potential gains for forest resilience, and the benefits they provide.
-  Don't be **risk averse**; take considered risks, rather than doing nothing, or only acting on proven facts which may come too late.
-  Consider **global emissions are currently tracking close to some of the more extreme emissions scenarios that have been published.**
-  It is very likely that climate change will have serious impacts on drought sensitive tree species on shallow, free-draining soils, particularly in southern and eastern England.
-  An important consideration for native woodlands and their associated biodiversity is that the English Channel has been a barrier to natural migration for more than 8,500 years – however it is no barrier to climate change.
-  When choosing tree seed for a species, it is recommended that an origin of between 2 to 5 degrees south of that currently used, is planted.

**Start to order tree species to diversify your planting. It could take three years to grow them. Please talk to your nursery managers.**

[www.forestry.gov.uk/treesforengland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/treesforengland)  
[www.eforestry.gov.uk/forestdss/](http://www.eforestry.gov.uk/forestdss/)