

Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*



Natural distribution of Sitka spruce



You can recognise Sitka spruce from the flaky bark, chunky bluish needles that stick out all the way round the branch, and its hanging, papery cones.

illustration by John White

You probably use this tree every day.

The paper that many magazines and newspapers are printed on comes from Sitka spruce, as do cellophane wrappers and the three billion disposable nappies that we use each year in the UK.

In fact, most of the timber used in this country comes from Sitka spruce because it grows well in cold, wet places where other trees struggle. This means that it thrives on the upland sites where a lot of forestry takes place in Britain. Bedgebury is actually a little too dry and warm for our Sitkas, but its space lets them grow freely. You can see the wonderful shape these trees have when they are not being grown close together in plantations.

Support the British forestry industry by buying British timber where you can and look for the FSC logo that shows that timber comes from sustainably-managed forests.



Did you know?

Today the nose cones of intercontinental ballistic missiles are made from Sitka spruce because when the missile re-enters the earth's atmosphere it burns up with less heat than metal.

Sitka spruce is the most commonly planted tree in the British Isles, mostly for commercial forestry.



adventure in a world of trees

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