

Operations Note 8

3rd May 2011

Poplar Rust

1 Purpose

This note provides guidance on FC England's support for poplar in light of recent rust attacks that have killed or significantly affected some woodland creation schemes. It details the requirements to rectify affected areas already planted under FC funding and what we will expect for new poplar planting proposals. This note applies to both approved Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) contracts and current / future English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) contracts.

2 Background

Recent rust attacks have killed or seriously affected significant areas of certain poplar varieties (notably Hoogvorst and Hazendans), to the extent that the site would be deemed unsatisfactory under the terms of the FC grant scheme. Other varieties have also been found in recent years to be susceptible to rust and are not recommended for planting now. The extent of impact varies depending on site circumstances, planting design and owner objectives.

Forest Research have published an information note called "[Tree death in Poplar Plantations, Summer 2005](#)" on the FC website about the recent developments and this note is guided by their findings and recommendations.

3 Planted Schemes

If a woodland creation scheme, which includes poplar, has been significantly affected by rust but the planting was done in accordance with good practice and the grant scheme contract, then the following principles and options would be implemented:

- Woodland must be established over the approved area to satisfy the conditions of the contract and to protect public funding.
- We will normally accept restocking of failed areas with poplar varieties which are currently known to be resistant at 5 x 5 or 6 x 4m spacing.
- Restocking should be with a mixture of tolerant varieties to minimise future problems.
- If the scheme holder wishes to change restock species to mixed broadleaf or native broadleaf, we will allow this at 3 x 3 or 4 x 2m spacing. Grant will only be paid if there is clear additional public benefit.

- Open space allowance may be adjusted to take account of the losses where the FC deem it appropriate and the total open space is normally less than 20% of the gross area, though up to 40% may be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- Any alterations from the original grant contract must be agreed in writing. If not, the FC would fall back to the original contract conditions if necessary.

If you do not wish to restock affected areas and the grant contract is not fulfilled, the FC will reclaim the grant paid with interest.

4 New Applications

Any new woodland creation applications for FC England funding that include poplar must comply with the following rules:

- They must meet the usual EWGS requirements e.g. those laid out in the special broadleaves category.
- Maximum block size of individual varieties within a woodland is 1Ha.
- At least 4 varieties must be used per woodland.
- Rust susceptible varieties must not be planted (currently this includes Beaupré, Boelare, Hoogvorst or Hazendans but others may be added if they are found to be susceptible).

Currently the following poplar varieties appear tolerant to poplar rust; however, the situation is liable to change and this note will be adjusted accordingly.

- Ghoy
 - Gaver
 - Gibecq
 - Trichobel (trichocarpa variety)
- } (deltoides x nigra varieties)

Please note the FC will not be held responsible if seemingly tolerant varieties at the time of planting subsequently suffer significant rust attack. If this happens and the conditions of the scheme aren't met, you will have to take remedial action without further grant support.

Sources of further advice

The [Grants and Regulations website](#) contains all the information you need to apply for grant support. Alternatively, you can request this information from your local [Forestry Commission office](#).

Versions

- Version 1.0 issued 15th November 2005
- Version 1.1 issued 1st June 2008 – minor changes and header change

- Version 1.2 issued 3rd May 2011 – minor changes permitting further grant payment in exceptional circumstances