



Silver Birch Recommended Seed Choice



Balchraggan Stand

Category of FRM (Forestry Reproductive Material)

Source Identified (SI). Seed collected from a single stand where no specific growth characteristics have been registered.

Selected Collected from stands showing superior characteristics e.g. better form, growth rate and health.

Qualified An orchard grown from selected plus trees based on form and growth rate.

Tested A stand or orchard which has undergone genetic testing for superior characteristics. No such stands exist for Birch planting in the UK.

When growing Silver Birch for timber quality, research has shown that local seed will not always provide the greatest yields. The form of Silver Birch is highly variable and it is important to use the best quality seed sources in order to grow trees of good form and maximise the potential for saw logs. Alba sources seed from the best Selected Stands and Orchards for this objective.

Selected Stand

High Altitude Sites: Straanruie. Available Oct 2015.

Stand is at 300m and suitable where site altitude is likely to be a critical factor for establishment and growth. The trees are of good form, but do have some pubescens characteristics.

Wet/Poor Sites: Fort Augustus. Available Oct 2014.

Registered as a pendula stand, the trees have many pubescens characteristics so are more suitable for a range of sites where Silver Birch might be considered to be marginal. Form is good.

Good Sites: Balchraggan. Available Oct 2014.

This is the only Selected Stand which is pure pendula with at least 10m of straight stem from the base of the tree. There are some minor bends with heavy branching limited to the upper crown, but trees are generally of good form. Appropriate for sites where Silver Birch would be considered 'suitable'.

Orchard Material

Borders/Yorkshire Selected Orchard.

Available Oct 2015.

The fastest growing of the FR/FTT stands, currently undergoing further trials. Derived from individually selected superior 'Plus Trees' and grown in an Orchard. Should be suitable for a variety of sites throughout most of the UK and is at a higher level of improvement than the Selected Stands



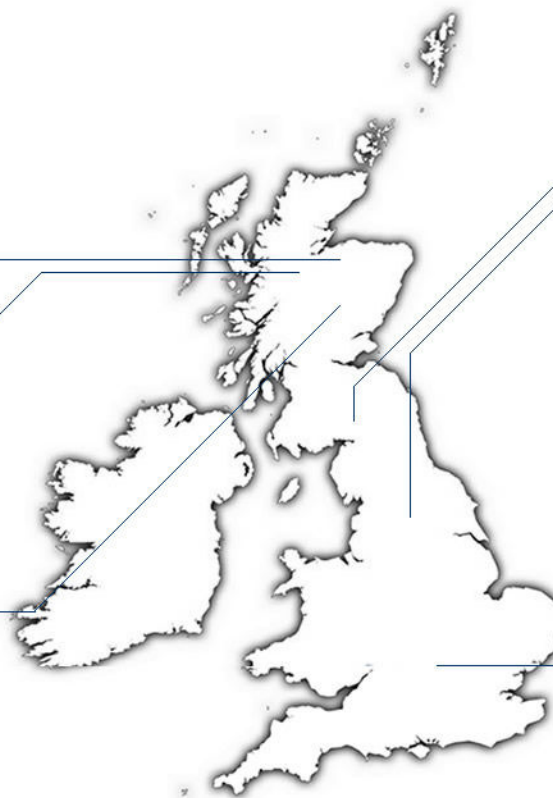
EU Stands, unsuitable for the UK

Research has demonstrated that seed from Sweden and Finland are inappropriate for use throughout the UK and should **not** be used. Scandinavia lacks the wet winters and hard, spring frosts of the UK which makes it a poor climate match for Birch.



EU Stands, possibly suitable for S England

It is possible that Selected seed from Denmark and France may be suitable for warmer sites on Southern England, but this has not yet been established by trials.



Source Identified Stands

Research shows that although locally sourced seed normally produces averagely performing trees, for the best growth rates it can be beneficial to use seed from more southerly regions. However, movement should be limited to 140 miles and altitude can be important for establishment.

