



FACTSHEET 05

European Silver Fir

'Massif Central' (Selected stand)



KEY FACTS:

- **Species:** Abies alba (European Silver fir)
- **Seed stand name and Location:** Massif Central, France
- **Category:** Selected
- **Site suitability:** Silver fir is suited to soils of poor to medium nutrient status with fresh to moist soil moisture. Intolerant of very poor soils or areas of heather completion however will grow on deep soils over calcareous substrates. It is cold hardy throughout Britain although has been known to be sensitive to frost and exposure.
- **Establishment:** Experience has shown that Silver fir can be usefully utilised as a component of mixed species selection forestry but should not be planted pure due to Adelgid issues.
- **Timber use, marketing and processing:** Produces a non-durable whitewood timber that is typically milled into large section beams for construction and panels for interior joinery. Whilst it is a relatively soft timber it widely used through Austria & Bavaria in engineered timber applications.

SUMMARY:

Whilst our existing resource of European Silver Fir is rather limited, it is likely to play an ever increasing role in UK forestry in the coming years. It's tolerance to shade makes it an ideal species for use in continuous cover forestry and its yield is high with an average of GYC 18-20. Producing an easy to work with timber, with a density of 480kg/m³ at 15% moisture content, it could be considered as having better strength than grand and noble fir. Our stock is produced from seed collected in in the Massif Central region of France. The seed stand is in the 'selected' FRM category so the trees typically show superior characteristics such as better form & growth.



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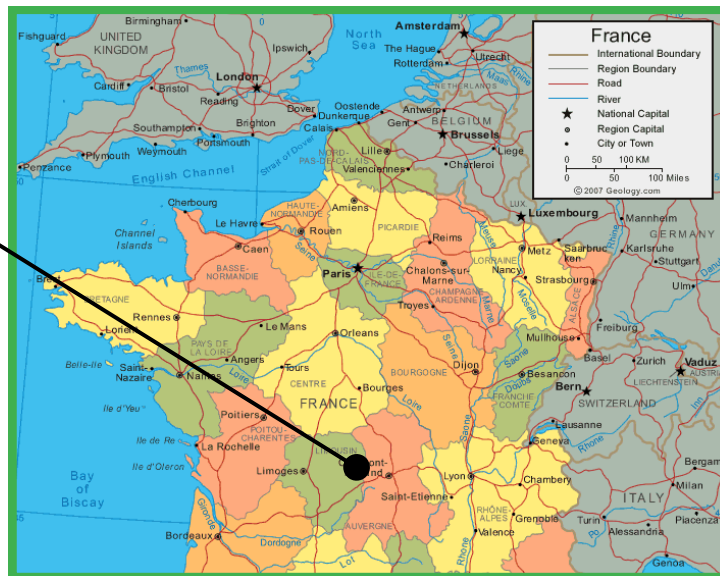
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'Massif Central' Stand Location

Current climate adaption strategies suggest that when selecting tree seed for a species, a provenance of 2-5 degrees South of the planting location should be selected in anticipation of our changing climate.

In this example the 'Massif Central', Clermont-Ferrand stand is located approx 10 degrees south of London or 8 degrees south of Edinburgh.



- Abies alba has been found to be very palatable to roe & red deer so protection is essential to ensure successful establishment.
- In France, the timber of Abies alba has been compared to that of spruce and due to the lack of resin; the fir is sought after for door and window construction.

Concerns with Adelges nordmannianae (Silver fir woolly aphid)

For many years there has been an opinion that Abies alba has been vulnerable to attack by Silver fir Woolly aphid. However some of these conclusions were drawn from the assessment of a limited number of sites which were almost pure plantations of Silver fir.

The opinion from Carter & Winter (1980) is that attacks of Woolly aphid were more damaging in open, sunny situations but were less common when trees were grown in a mixture. Kerr (1998), summarises that Abies alba thrives as a component of mixed species, uneven aged woodlands and if used in such a way, this may reduce the problems associated with silver fir woolly aphid.



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References:

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