

# Forest nurseries in Europe

## Priorities to reach the Green Deal Goals of tree deployment

The vision behind the European Green Deal is to "make the EU the first climate-neutral area in the world by 2050, cutting pollution and restoring a healthy balance in nature and ecosystems". This includes the planting of three billion additional trees by 2030 in Europe. However, this plan can only be achieved if forest nursery production and plant deployment would increase by more than 20% over the next five years.

To enable this boost in production, deliberate decisions must be made regarding the choice of species and provenances, and strategic investments should focus on expanding nursery capacity in European regions that have so far relied on natural forest regeneration. Public support for reliable seed provision and focused subsidies for forest nurseries would help to meet these targets and maintain resilient, biodiverse forests across Europe.

### Key challenges

Many forest nurseries in Europe, especially in the private sector, face several challenges in meeting production demand. These include high production risk due to long production times and unsecure sales, problems in seed provision (seed quality is declining due to climate change) and staff recruitment, along with lack of specific or volatile subsidies, and rising production costs (staff, energy, consumables) with a parallel reduction in the number of forest nurseries, especially in Central Europe. These challenges make it difficult for nurseries to maintain stable operations and plan effectively for the future.

### Can we reach the Green Deal goals?

**3 billion trees in Europe by 2030**

**Do nurseries have the capacity to reach these goals?**

Yes, but production capacity strongly varies among European regions.

**Can we ensure that nurseries provide the FRM needed?**

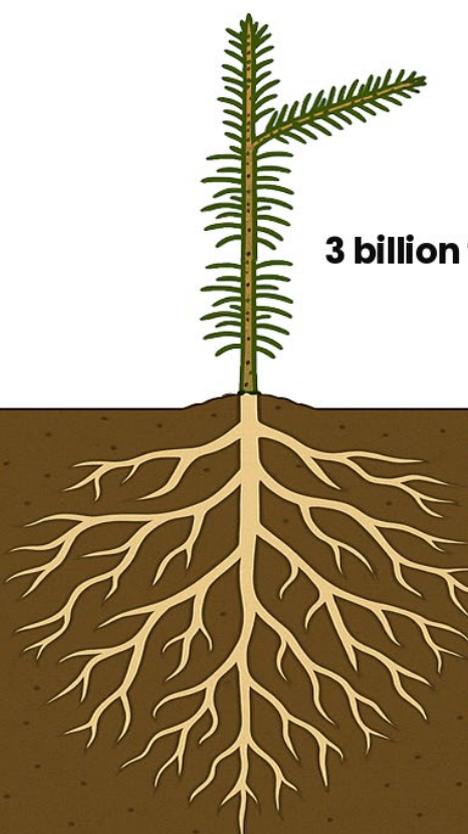
Yes, if governments provide clear deployment strategies and support forest nurseries through access to seed sources and specific subsidies.

**Can nurseries produce enough Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) to reach these goals?**

Yes, if the production would increase by more than 20% over the next five years.

**Can we produce the right species and provenances to be used in the right place?**

Yes, if FRM production is guided through national deployment strategies and off-take agreements guarantee sales of production for forest nurseries.



## Regional market structures

The forest nursery sector in Europe is heterogeneously structured, with predominance of private or public nurseries in most countries. A significant imbalance is observed across Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) production capacity in different regions of the European continent.



### Northern and Central Europe

- Strongly developed forest nursery sector with high production capacity, with a continuing process of market concentration on fewer and larger businesses.
- Faced with large scale shifts in general demand due to policy changes (natural vs. artificial regeneration, planting densities) and extensive forest damage in the face of climate change.



### South-western and Eastern Europe

- Have a much lower production capacity since their forest management plans are mainly focused on natural regeneration.
- Will need artificial regeneration, and thus higher production capacity, to address climate-related impacts (e.g., wildfires or bark beetle outbreaks) and to meet growing forest restoration needs.

## Reaching the Green Deal goals

To reach the Green Deal goal of 3 billion trees in Europe by 2030, European FRM production should prioritise:

- Support in deciding which species and provenances to use, since it is important to foresee production several years in advance;
- Support from the public forest administration to estimate the amounts of seeds needed and for their procurement (via seed stands and seed orchards), especially in countries with lower capacity production;
- Development of a common European strategy with clear guidelines for effective FRM deployment. These guidelines should include information on:
  - 1. Planting the right trees in the right place;**
  - 2. Facilitating exchange of FRM across borders;**
  - 3. Ensuring the proper collation and collection of national data.**

These measures will help foster the adaptation of European forests to climate change and halt biodiversity decline.

*This policy brief has been produced by the EU-funded OptFORESTS project, if you would like to contact the project coordination team please send an email to: [info@optforests.eu](mailto:info@optforests.eu)*

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