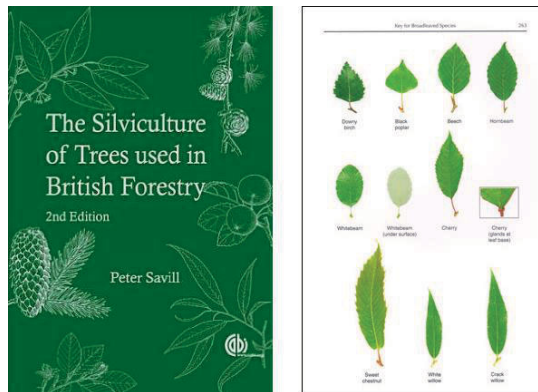


## The Silviculture of Trees Used in British Forestry

Peter Savill. CABI Publishing. 2013.

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The author Dr Peter Savill, a former lecturer on silviculture at the University of Oxford and more recently a Reader in Silviculture at the University of Oxford, is no stranger to Irish forestry, having worked with the Research Branch of the Forest Service in Northern Ireland for almost twenty years. When he first published *The Silviculture of Trees Used in British Forestry* in 1991, it became an immediate bestseller among foresters and all those associated with forestry. Since its publication it has also become an important reference source as well as a “bible” for all those who worked with or had an interest in trees and forestry in the UK. Similarly, in Ireland it too became an essential species guide for the forestry fraternity and anyone interested in trees and forestry. Since then it has been reprinted on several occasions and, just recently, it has been completely revised and updated and a new second edition has been published. As with the original publication, the new edition is also a must for anyone interested in forestry and all those with an interest in the wide range of trees found in forests in these islands.

The original edition was quite an extensive publication, covered almost sixty species and amounted to 145 pages of text. However, the new edition has been substantially expanded and covers sixty three species and extends to 280 pages. The author acknowledges the wide range of books published on trees that grow in Britain and mentions earlier publications such as Alan Mitchell’s (1974) *A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe* and more recently Thomas Pakenham’s (1996) *Meetings with Remarkable Trees* as well as numerous tree guides published by the Forestry Commission over recent years.

In the Introduction, Dr Savill highlights a number of key considerations when deciding on the choice of an individual species. These include the importance of

matching species to the site where the trees are to be grown as well as the critically important consideration of provenance choice, which is now of even greater importance due to the growing uncertainty of future climate change. The original edition presented data on the area and percentage of total forest by species in the UK in the 1980s and this has been reviewed and updated to provide readers with comprehensive information on the areas of high forest in the UK for the principal species growing there, based on information gleaned from the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees 1995 - 1998. A new feature in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition is a review of important developments in British forestry since the publication of the original edition to the present day, much of which also mirrors developments in Irish forestry. It also highlights development in the changing attitudes of the public to non-native species and the use of conifer and broadleaf species. Other changes reflected in this section include the important question of profitability of forestry, as well as the ever threatening spread of pests and diseases. Another important area which the author highlights is the growing problem caused by some of the most recent serious diseases introduced to Great Britain and discusses recent developments. The author concludes this section with an outline of what the new edition hopes to achieve, which is “to provide a guide for use in selecting species and for the management of trees”. Here the requirements of individual trees are described along with situations in which they are likely to do well; however, no particular consideration has been given to the relative economics of the different species. The main emphasis is on the biological suitability of individual species to particular site types and here it is assumed that the reader is reasonably well informed on the principles of forestry practice.

According to Dr Savill, Mitchell (1974) reported that about 35 species of trees are native to Britain. However, he suggests that over 500 species can be encountered by anyone looking in parks and gardens, and if special collections in botanical gardens and arboreta are included, the number rises to over 1,700. The author states that 35 genera and 63 species are dealt with in the revised publication, but these selections have inevitably been arbitrary and goes on to explain that “because of current interest as well as the growing emphasis on conservation, almost all native species that grow to reasonable sized trees have been included in the new publication”.

The species dealt with in the new edition are set out in alphabetical order based on their botanical name, commencing with *Abies alba* (European silver fir) and concluding with *Ulmus procera* (English elm). Each species' description is supported by very detailed botanical diagrams of the species' leaves and fruit (flowers and seed), expertly drawn by Rosemary Wise, as was the case in the earlier edition. Each species is generally treated in the text under a number of key headings such as: (1) origin, (2) climate requirements, (3) site requirements, (4) other silvicultural characteristics, (5) pests and diseases, (6) natural regeneration, (7) flowering, seed production and nursery conditions, (8) provenance and improved seed, (9) area, yield and rotation length, (10) timber and (11) place of the species in British forestry. The text is presented in a reader-friendly, easily understood style and avoids using technical terms except where it is necessary to do so.

Another useful addition to the second edition is a field key for identification of common forest and woodland trees, which covers 28 broadleaved species and 14 conifers and is supported by a simple but useful method on how to use the key, which will no doubt be a very practical addition for the lay person with an interest in tree identification. To use the key one first decides whether the tree is in the broadleaf or coniferous category, then it guides the reader in the identification of the particular species. To support the identification process a colour plate of the individual foliage (a single leaf) of each species is provided for the reader.

The new edition, like the first edition, is published by CAB International. The cost of the original paperback edition was only £29.95, while the new edition which is only in hardback costs £75.00. However, it is expected that a paperback version of this new second edition will be published early next year but the price of this version is not yet available.

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