

**Forest site yield guide to Upland Britain.** By R. J. N. Busby.  
Forestry Commission Forest Record 97. HMSO. 40p.

This is a 13-page booklet which attempts to solve in Britain the

foresters' ubiquitous problem of how to evaluate tree growth potential. The author uses soil groups and elevation zones as broad criteria in the formulation of guides to yield class for each of the nine Conservancies embracing Upland Britain. The guides are presented in tabular form in which the soil groups within each Conservancy are listed and the yield classes are given for the tree species chosen at two or three elevation zones. Species selection is determined by the moisture and vegetation status of the site and the time(s) when fertilizers should be applied in order to achieve the predicted yield class are also indicated.

The text of the booklet is confined to a very short introduction which outlines the main features of the system used to determine the guides and includes a brief explanation of the term yield class. A discussion section dealing with the background to formulating the guides would have been informative. For instance, the use of elevation as one of the two major criteria in the guides is bound to puzzle many, since investigators elsewhere have found elevation-tree growth relationships to be very variable. Also, the somewhat arbitrary selection of elevation zones does not inspire confidence in their usage. The absence of any reference to soil and foliar analyses leads one to believe that the Forestry Commission feel such analyses to be unimportant in predicting yield class, or perhaps it is a reflection of a lack of confidence in laboratory methods. References to fertilisers were limited to the element only; footnotes denoting type and quantity of fertilisers recommended would have been desirable.

To judge the merit of these guides and their relevance to Irish forestry one looked in vain for experimental evidence of the presumed relationships between soil groups and elevation zones to yield classes. There is no doubt that accurate yield class prediction is needed for more efficient forest management. What is in doubt however are the criteria upon which we predict yield class.

Finally, it is noted that the maximum production recorded in this publication is yield class 18. Thus, our drumlin soils, bearing stands of yield class 28, take on added significance, not to mention reports of yield class 40-plus in Co. Clare (Irish Forestry, pp. 30-33, Vol. 32 (1) 1975.