

Book reviews

Diseases and Disorders of Forest Trees – A Guide to Identifying Causes of Ill-Health in Woods and Plantations

S.C. Gregory and D.B. Redfern. 1998. Forestry Commission Field Book 16. The Stationery Office, London. ISBN 0 11 710338 1. 136 pages. Stg£25.

Reviewed by David Seaby, Forest Pathologist, and Dick Schaible, Forest Research Officer, Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

From the viewpoint of a forest pathologist, *Diseases and Disorders of Forest Trees* is to be thoroughly recommended, and would be useful in all forest and arboricultural offices. The key is very ambitious, particularly in light of the real difficulty in preparing one which is clear and yet covers all possibilities, but is nevertheless excellent. The writing – a pleasure to read – is clear, practical and down to earth. The pathology photographs are well-chosen, of excellent quality and are generously scattered throughout the text, bring it 'alive'. At the asking price, a slim volume like this might appear expensive. However, the glossy quality of the paper, the number of photographs and the relatively specialised nature of the text mean that the enormous amount of work gone into this book will not be particularly well rewarded in financial terms. The layout is logical and easy to use, and a little detail greatly appreciated is the publication's narrow width, which enables it to fit easily into a coat pocket.

From the perspective of a silvicultural research forester, the descriptions of genetic defects and climatic and herbicide injury symptoms are particularly enlightening. In these sections, however, and in the section pertaining to frost damage, a few more photographs showing a wider variety of symptoms and effects on different species might have been worthwhile. In contrast with the comprehensive nature of the sections dealing with climatic injury and pathogenic agents, which reflect the individual authors' contributions to research and long practical experience, the section on nutrient deficiencies is somewhat disappointing, both in terms of descriptive text and photographs. Only one passing reference is made to the relationships between nutrient deficiencies and site factors, which are vital to understanding and diagnosing nutritional problems, while no reference is made to the relationship between apparent nitrogen deficiencies and the availability of phosphorus. Consideration of trace mineral deficiencies is also omitted, except for the highly appropriate implication of manganese and iron deficiencies in the section on lime-induced chlorosis. To a large extent, these shortcomings could have been redressed if reference had been made to other publications illustrating and describing nutrient deficiencies, such as *Nutrient Deficiencies of Conifers in British Forests - An Illustrated Guide* (Forestry Commission Leaflet 76. HMSO, London. 1980). While this omission might possibly be perceived as encouraging complacency as regards the potential impact and extent of nutritional problems in plantation forests, it does not seriously detract from the essential purpose and value of this book. The publication of *Diseases and Disorders of Forest Trees* is timely and fills a hitherto significant gap in Irish and British forestry literature.