

The Poplar Tree Company

NEWSLETTER



2008 Growing season

Its been another wet summer and the trees have grown well. All sites have put on good growth with the new Italian clones showing the way with some trees averaging over 3m growth.

Interest in planting trees is on the up, with an increased interest in timber production for domestic use. As a result we have been planting more mixed broadleaf plantations along side the poplar and also using poplar within the wood-fuel production as an early crop. This has in turn led to more enquiries about short rotation coppice. We have succeeded in getting some grant funding to do further research in the best productive methods of poplar working alongside willow in SRC biomass production. This will continue on from our four trial sites already around the UK. Further work will also be done with Renewable Energy Growers.

Applications for new planting spring 2009 are progressing well with sites throughout central England and Wales. Four of these include bio-fuel production or firewood for domestic wood boilers. There have been some issues with local councils with maintenance of

grasslands and landscape views, This has led to rejection or major changes being made to woodland planting, but this is in selected areas such as valleys where there is a perceived view of outstanding values.

With the carbon issue we have had discussions with the Forestry Commission on how we can bring more funding to land owners from the corporate sector. So far this looks promising and we are working to get full approval. As we said in the August newsletter we want to get this correct from the start.

The Accoya treatment project is moving on with further poplar wood going to trial.

Other markets are also being looked at with the sale of FSC poplar to Europe.

Work is also being done on updating our web site to give more information about tree planting in general and grants available. With Certainly Wood we have linked up with Prior & Ricketts (forestry management company based in Hereford) to bring more woodlands into managed production and give landowners more opportunities to make there woodland work for them. The new website will be up and running in the New Year any comments would be welcome. You will also be able to look at all newsletter and general articles on poplar.



3yrs old

Newsletter Date

Dec 2008

Special points of interest

2008 review

Certainly Wood

Woodland birds

Squirrels

Woodland management for birds

Although woodland cover has been increasing in England, the populations and ranges of a significant number of woodland birds are in decline. Several are declining rapidly and others are in moderate decline. Although the precise causes are not fully understood, detailed research is underway. In the meantime, the need for management guidance based on best current information is likely to increase. On the home farm at Lower Lulham the PTC with the help of the RSPB did a detailed survey of bird life within our woods. There were 39 species recorded on site and four of these are designated as Red or species at risk. These were Bullfinch, House sparrow, song thrush and yellow hammer. For more information go to the Forestry commission Web site and look up RSPB.

The issues with wildlife and woodland management is becoming more important with all applications for licences to work within woodlands now resulting in environmental assessments being carried out and cross compliance issue on mixed estates. Restrictions on timing of work for nesting birds / bats and field mice along with many other plant and animal issues will become more of a management assessment with EU regulations coming into affect now. From the PTC side of things this has led to a reduction in the time period we are aloud to work within poplar woods. Along with increased paperwork and woodland assessments to be carried out prior to thinning.





SQUIRRELS

We have noticed this year an increased level of grey squirrel damage within the poplar trees along with a general increase in their population in our area this year. This looks to be a general trend with some farms contacting us about increased damaged within the trees. The damage tends to look a lot like wind damage with tops of trees lying on the ground.



Our management regime of inter-row cutting, high pruning and thinning tend to make poplar woods unattractive to grey squirrels. There have however been some sites where damage has occurred, particularly where the poplar are adjacent to overgrown hedges and mature native broadleaved trees or where pheasant feeders are present in the wood.

Grey squirrels cause damage by stripping the bark from the main stem and bigger branches, this often results in the tops blowing out of the trees, the most obvious indication of damage. Damage usually occurs between the end of April and the end of July. The trees usually respond by throwing out multiple leaders and readily recover. It does not tend to affect the timber quality but can look a mess within the wood.

If you do have a problem act now, shooting squirrels in hedges and native trees before the leaves develop can help.

Warfarin baited hoppers are the most effective means of control but do need careful siting and pre-baiting to maximize their effect. Usually a hopper is required for every one to five hectares of woodland. Warfarin baited hoppers can be used legally between 15 March and 15 August where red squirrels are absent, special care must be taken in areas where dormice may be found. There are other methods of trapping available and we suggest using baited traps as a last resort.

If you think you may have a problem please give us a call so that we can advise on the supply and siting of warfarin hoppers and concentrate or mechanical traps.

If you are able to receive the newsletter by email or know anyone who would like to receive it, then please register on our website.

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Certainly Wood is going from strength to strength with the range of products increasing and production levels set to triple when the new kilns come online in the next few weeks. Due to increased demand two new kilns are being built to run off waste wood created from production processes. In time all the waste will be used and the PTC will be supplying material for chipping to supplement wood fuel requirements.

Sales of wood from the PTC to Certainly Wood have more than doubled in the last twelve months and we hope this trend will continue with over 2000 cubic metres of poplar processed this year. Certainly Wood will process in total over 8000 cubes of timber for the wood fuel market along with sales of compressed logs and now pellets. This is expected to expand in the future. For more information please go to

www.certainlywood.co.uk



Finally we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Hugh ,George and William.

