

[Detailed guide: Work with planting material for forestry purposes](#)

Updated: We have published an updated edition of the guidance on “Regulations controlling seed, cuttings and planting stock for forestry in Great Britain”, which is accessible from the text link “FRM and controlled species”.

If you collect and market seeds, cones, cuttings or planting stock for use in forest establishment, or collect seed and grow it in order to sell as planting stock to be used in forest establishment, there are rules applying to 46 controlled tree species that you must follow. You must be on the Forestry Commission’s Forest Reproductive Material public register of suppliers – it’s free to register, find out how to register below.

See the [list of controlled species](#)
(PDF, 913KB, 2 pages)

There’s also a voluntary scheme for the certification of non-controlled species of native trees and shrubs to help collect further valuable information – see below.

Read the detailed policy document that includes information on the regulations that cover [FRM and controlled species](#)
(PDF, 6.81MB, 40 pages)

The Forestry Commission is responsible for a system of identification and control of seeds, cuttings and planting stock used for forestry purposes in England, Scotland and Wales so that the people who buy forest material have enough information on the provenance, origin and genetic quality of the material they’re buying.

The system covers ‘basic material’ (see below) used for any forestry purpose, including:

- timber production
- forests and woodlands for tourism, recreational, sporting, educational or amenity purposes
- the conservation and enhancement of the forest and woodland environment

The term ‘forestry purposes’ excludes:

- landscape planting for transport infrastructure
- urban planting associated with industrial and urban developments
- production of Christmas trees

Basic material and forest reproductive material

The term 'basic material' refers to the sources of FRM. There are 6 sources of basic material:

- seed sources – these can range from a single tree to any collection of trees within a region of provenance, or a native seed zone that includes an altitude band above or below 300m
- stands – defined areas or groups of trees with identified boundaries
- seed orchards and parents of tree families – sources based on known individuals derived from tree breeding programmes (and the FRM produced will be seeds)
- clones and clonal mixtures – individuals from breeding programmes, but the FRM will be produced through vegetative propagation

FRM can consist of:

- fruits
- seeds
- cones
- all parts of plants obtained by vegetative propagation, including embryos and plants produced from any of these

You can only market FRM from registered basic material. There are 4 categories of reproductive material according to the basic material you collect it from:

- source-identified FRM comes from general or specific locations within a single region of provenance or native seed zone with an altitude band, but with no specific superior qualities recognised
- selected FRM is collected from stands showing superior characteristics (for example, better form, growth rate and health)
- qualified FRM derives from the selection of superior individual trees that have not undergone any form of testing
- tested FRM derives from the selection of individual trees or stands that have been evaluated for genetic quality or, in comparison to accepted standards, have been shown to be superior

National Register of Approved Basic Material

The Forestry Commission maintains the National Register of Approved Basic Material for Great Britain (The National Register). This is published in accordance with the Forest Reproductive Material (Great Britain) Regulations 2002 and European Union directive 1999/105/EC, which controls the marketing of Forest Reproductive Material in the EU.

Download and search the [National Register spreadsheet.](#)

(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 469KB)

The link on the right-hand column of the spreadsheet ('NR entry') will then take you to a 2-page .pdf showing stand, location, contact and site information, together with a map.

Or you can use the search facility to find:

- [registered stand of approved basic material](#)
- [seed orchard, clonal material or parent\(s\) of family\(ies\) material](#)

[Download the full 651-page National Register \(without maps\).](#)

(PDF, 2.35MB, 653 pages)

The National Register is kept under constant review and will be regularly updated. The version available is current as at 31 January 2018.

Apply to register basic material

You can only apply for registration on the national register of approved basic material if you're the owner or authorised agent, or a person with written authority from the owner.

Download and submit form [FRM1A](#) to apply for the registration of a stand or orchard as an approved source of basic material.

The Forestry Commission may want to inspect the basic material and check all relevant information. Applications to register stands in the 'Selected' category and applications to register 'Indigenous' stands will always be inspected to ensure they meet the relevant criteria. If the Forestry Commission accepts your proposed material, you will receive a copy of the register entry, including a unique register identity.

Once you have Forestry Commission approval of basic material, you must keep copies of all documents relating to the application. You must keep these documents for 5 years from the date of your application or for as long as the basic material is on the national register, whichever is greater.

The Forestry Commission will let you know if your application is rejected and you can make an appeal (see below).

Re-inspection of basic material

Once you've registered, you may need to prepare for a re-inspection of your basic material. The Forestry Commission gives you at least 14 days' notice of a proposed site visit. Re-inspection will concentrate on any material changes to the area and structure and composition of the material that could take it below the threshold for that particular category. Reasons for this might be:

- partial felling
- windblow
- disease
- pest attack
- thinning operations

You must inform the Forestry Commission of any changes to basic material – this is to prevent marketing of reproductive material that doesn't meet the requirements of the appropriate category. You must also tell the Forestry Commission of any reduction in area of the basic material – or any material change to its composition or stocking – no later than 28 days before a collection of reproductive material. Changes to basic material could mean it's either downgraded to a lower category or removed from the national register. This might trigger an inspection.

Register as a supplier of FRM

Check if you should be registered as a supplier – this will help you comply with the regulations.

Download, complete and submit [form FRM6 to apply for registration](#).

You must provide the following details:

- supplier's name, address and contact details
- nature of the business or trade in which FRM is marketed
- each address where you pursue FRM-related activities

The Forestry Commission will always register an application unless the applicant is likely to breach regulations or does not in fact market FRM. You'll be notified within 14 days of a refusal to register.

If the Forestry Commission is satisfied that a registered supplier has breached the regulations, their name may be removed from the register or conditions may be imposed on the continuing registration.

See the [register of FRM suppliers](#)
(PDF, 49.2KB, 6 pages)

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Inspections

You could be inspected by the Forestry Commission. Inspectors may visit collection sites, seed extraction units, seed testing facilities, nurseries, storage facilities and any other premises involved in FRM production.

Separation, labelling and mixing of FRM will also be inspected to ensure

compliance.

It's an offence if you fail to:

- adhere to the procedural requirements – find out more with our [guide to basic requirements of a registered supplier](#) (PDF, 34.8KB, 4 pages)
- notify the Forestry Commission within the specified period of changes to basic material
- notify the Forestry Commission within the specified period of the final results of testing basic material given 'conditional approval' in the tested category
- notify the Forestry Commission that an agreed production target for the propagation of clonal material has been reached
- provide documents, access to premises or reasonable facilities for copying

You must:

- register as a supplier to market FRM
- have an official certificate if you import FRM from a third country (non-EU country)
- comply with conditions under which a special licence has been granted

It's also an offence to obstruct an inspector in the course of their duties.

How to collect FRM

Make sure you register as a supplier before you begin to collect FRM.

You must:

- get permission from the owner of the collection site, or their agent, before starting work
- use the [Land Information Search](#) to find out if there are any designations or other sensitivities about the site that might need to be taken into account

You must provide the following details at least 14 days before collecting starts:

- your name, address and contact details
- place of collection – including a grid reference of collection site
- species to be collected
- basic material reference in the National Register, or for source identified (SI) material
- region of provenance or seed zone – download the [seed zone map](#)

(PDF, 1.54MB, 1 page)

for more information

- proposed date and duration of collection

Download and submit [form FRM7](#) to notify the Forestry Commission that you intend to collect tree seed.

Market and supply FRM – master certificates

Master certificates set out information relevant to each specific collection of FRM, such as:

- quantity
- species
- provenance
- origin

Each certificate has a unique number to identify that collection – it must refer to a single entry in the national register of basic material – see above.

The master certificate number allows the Forestry Commission to trace the FRM from collection to planting. You must keep master certificates for a minimum period of 5 years.

How to get a master certificate

Complete one or more of the following forms according to your FRM:

- [FRM4A](#) – seed sources and stands
- [FRM4B](#) – seed orchards or parents of family
- [FRM4C](#) – clones and clonal mixtures
- [FRM4c Aspen A](#) – reproductive material derived from clones/clonal mixtures of *Populus tremula* L
- [FRM4c Aspen B](#) – cuttings from recently selected clones, not already covered by a licence to market
- [FRM4c Aspen C](#) – application for a licence to market a clonal mixture

When to apply

You must apply to the Forestry Commission for a master certificate within 9 months of collection or before marketing FRM, whichever is earlier.

Supplier's document – when you need to provide one

Each time you market seed or plants grown from material covered by a master certificate you must give a supplier's document to the buyer at the time of delivery.

See the [FRM supplier's document and example – for multifunctional forestry.](#)

The supplier's document gives the following information:

- all the information required by the master certificate
- quantity of FRM supplied
- name of the supplier
- master certificate number
- additional information as required

You must issue a supplier's document whenever you market material at any stage in the production of planting stock for a single collection, not just when the original collector markets material.

Whenever you market seed, a seed test certificate must also be copied to the recipient. Seed testing is carried out by approved seed testers.

Read the

[Forestry Commission seed testing guidelines](#)

(PDF, 715KB, 55 pages)

and

[further guidance on seed testing](#)

(PDF, 42.6KB, 7 pages)

for more information.

Approved seed testers

These are the nurseries that are currently approved by the Forestry Commission to test seed. Download the list of

[Forestry Commission approved seed testers](#)

(PDF, 9.37KB, 1 page)

Keep your documents

You must retain the following documents, or copies of them:

- notification to the Forestry Commission of the intention to collect FRM and a written record of the owner's consent to collection
- master certificates
- seed testing information
- supplier's labels or documents
- special licences for marketing issued by the Forestry Commission
- information supplied to the Forestry Commission relating to the movement of FRM to another EU member state
- plant passports

It's recommended that you keep master certificates until the FRM to which they relate no longer exists.

The Forestry Commission can require other documents to be kept by giving you notice.

You must make all documents – including books, maps, plans or photographs – available for inspection by the Forestry Commission and copies may be taken. This also applies to documents you hold in digital form.

What you must do to import and export FRM

You can import FRM from countries outside the EU, referred to as third countries, where their certification scheme is recognised in the EU as equivalent to the EU scheme. Before you do this, you must get approval from the Forestry Commission. You can do this using email (see contact details below), stating that you intend to import from a third country.

In exceptional circumstances of short supply, the EU may authorise the marketing of FRM that does not meet the standards of the directive. This is referred to as derogation.

You must notify the Forestry Commission if you export FRM to another EU member state. See section 3 of

[Issue 4, July 2014](#)

(PDF, 98.1KB, 3 pages)

for more detail.

Voluntary scheme

The Forestry Commission manages a voluntary scheme for the certification of native trees and shrubs (The Voluntary Scheme) that aren't controlled by the regulations. It was set up in 1999. You have to follow the same procedures to join the scheme as you would for those species controlled under the regulations.

The Voluntary Scheme has increased the number of native species included in the list of controlled species.

The scheme uses the 24 native seed zones (as shown on

[seed zone map](#)

(PDF, 1.54MB, 1 page)

). The native seed zones are a non-statutory sub-division of the statutory regions of provenance (for native species only). The regions of provenance have been split into 24 smaller native seed zones based on information about climate and geological variation. These seed zones are also divided into 2 altitude bands, above and below 300 metres.

Sign up for FRM news

Any FRM registered supplier is added to the email distribution list of the FRM newsletters, unless you choose to opt out.

If you're not currently on the distribution list but would like to be included, you can send your request to: frm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Read past FRM newsletters

- [Issue 5, December 2015](#)
(PDF, 406KB, 4 pages)
- [Issue 4, July 2014](#)
(PDF, 98.1KB, 3 pages)
- [Issue 3, October 2013](#)
(PDF, 60.5KB, 4 pages)
- [Issue 2, June 2012](#)
(PDF, 492KB, 5 pages)
- [Issue 1, December 2008](#)
(PDF, 310KB, 4 pages)

Appeal a Forestry Commission decision

You have the right to appeal against any Forestry Commission decisions, including:

- refusal to approve basic material
- withdrawal or amendment of approval of basic material
- time or production limits placed on the propagation of clones or clonal mixtures
- refusal to issue a master certificate
- refusal to register a supplier, or removal of a supplier's name from the register of suppliers
- refusal to grant a special licence
- refusal to approve seed testing practices as internationally acceptable techniques
- refusal to accept certain methodologies used in the application for approval of Basic Material in the Qualified and Tested categories

Contact the Forestry Commission for details on how to appeal as soon as you receive notification of the decision. You must send your appeal in writing. Procedures related to the Forestry Commission's decision must be suspended when you raise an appeal until you know the final outcome of the appeal.

Contact the Forestry Commission

For the national register of basic material and all matters related to basic material, register of suppliers, imports and exports, and queries on the FRM regulations, contact:

Forest Reproductive Material Manager

Forestry Commission

Silvan House

231 Corstorphine Road

Edinburgh

EH12 7AT

Phone: 0300 067 5041

Fax: 0131 314 6148

Email: frm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

For seed collection notifications and queries, master certificates queries and applications and general FRM enquiries contact:

FRM Admin support

Forestry Commission

Silvan House

231 Corstorphine Road

Edinburgh

EH12 7AT

Phone: 0300 067 5129

Fax: 0131 314 6148

Email: frm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk