

News story: State of the art greenhouse unveiled in Cheshire

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today opened a £5 million cutting-edge glasshouse at Delamere Nursery in Cheshire.

The state-of-the-art growing facility covers a hectare and is set to boost timber production, with its tight environmental controls creating better growing conditions for the four million seedlings it will house.

It boasts computerised environmental controls, rainwater harvesting from the glasshouse roof into a 15 million-litre capacity lagoon and a boom irrigation system, which allows accurate watering and can apply fertiliser and chemicals.

The glasshouse will play a vital role in the maintenance and expansion of the Public Forest Estate throughout the UK, with the seedlings helping timber production and improving biosecurity.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said at the opening:

It is wonderful to be here to officially open this impressive new structure which will help ensure our forests are stocked with trees in a more sustainable and productive fashion.

The forests and woodlands that these trees will go on to be a part of are vital for providing timber, protecting wildlife, and helping us improve our environment for the next generation.

Simon Hodgson, Forestry Commission England, Chief Executive said:

I'm delighted our minister, Thérèse Coffey, officially opened our new forestry glasshouse today. This significant investment demonstrates how committed we are to the nation's forests.

The largest glasshouse dedicated to forest trees in the UK means that Forestry Commission England will be able to plant around five million of the very best trees every year in the nation's forests for timber, recreation and wildlife as well as supplying trees to Scotland and Wales. We are increasing the diversity of tree species we plant so the nation's forests are resilient; protecting them from pests, diseases and the effects of a changing climate.

I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in making this project a reality.

The glasshouse was completed in December 2017, with the first seeds sown in March 2018. It is anticipated that it will be fully stocked with a mix of species and ages by 2020.