

AN ANSWER AWAITING A QUESTION: THE UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL TREE SEED PROJECT COLLECTIONS

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Forest trees are facing an increasing range of threats from pests and pathogens globally. Because of this, research into both natural and induced resistance is more important than ever to provide a solid foundation for informed management decisions. Despite this, there are a wide range of challenges researchers face including easy access to suitable native plant material. Here we present a forest tree resource developed by the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) Kew Millennium Seed Bank Partnership. The UK National Tree Seed Project (UKNTSP) was established in 2013 with the aim of collecting and storing seeds from all UK trees across their native UK distribution to capture as much the genetic diversity as possible. Now in its fifth year, this collection totals over 9.6 million seeds, with multi-provenance collections for 68 native UK species. For 22 species, we have between 8 and 53 seed collections banked by individual maternal trees many of which are georeferenced. This broad suite of species covers many facing particular plant health threats in the UK and elsewhere such as *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Juniperus communis*, and *Ulmus glabra*. This unique resource offers the potential to study natural variability in pest and pathogen resistance, pest-host relationships, as well as the possibility to test control mechanisms. This resource is ready and available for research via the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) Seed List along with accompanying field data and herbarium specimens.

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