

The Land Capability for Forestry

Scale

1:250,000 scale

System of Land Capability for Forestry Classification

The classification is based on seven types of limitations, these being climate, windthrow, nutrients, topography, droughtiness, wetness and soil.

The more important field properties of each division and major soil group are given below.

Class F1. Land with excellent flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops.

The soils are deep and well supplied with moisture, and neither climate nor site factors seriously restrict the growth of the main tree species used in Britain. A wide range of broadleaved and coniferous species can be planted.

Class F2. Land with very good flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops

The soils have no or only limited periods of seasonal waterlogging, but some mineral gleys may be included if, with drainage, the water-table can be controlled at depths which prevent serious waterlogging of the root system. Minor areas of shallower or wetter soils are acceptable but should not exceed 10% in total. Minor restrictions on cultivation and harvesting due to slopes or minor climatic restraints are also acceptable. Both broadleaved and coniferous species may be planted but choice is more restricted than in Class F1. In areas where available water is limited, those species with high water demand are unsuitable; in areas with water surplus soil drainage may be necessary.

Class F3. Land with good flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops

The soil range extends to include mineral gleys with sandy or loamy textures and flushed gleys with humose topsoils. Drainage is necessary on gley soils. Wind throw risk is not high and land management is primarily concerned with limitations imposed by drainage, sloping land or patterns of variable soils. The land is suitable for a wide range of conifers and for a restricted range of broadleaved species.

Class F4. Land with moderate flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops

The soils include the more fertile peaty soils and the problem mineral soils, e.g. gleys with clayey textures or soils with calcareous horizons. Ploughing difficulty may be encountered due to stony or shallow soils but this should not be more than 20% of the area. There is a risk of small areas of windthrow which should not be sufficiently severe to reduce rotation lengths or influence management practices. The land is suitable for many coniferous species and in places for the less demanding broadleaves.

Class F5. Land with limited flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops

The soils are primarily podzols, peaty gleys and peat, but where limitations are sufficiently severe to limit species selection, other soils may be included. Ploughing is possible but may be more difficult than in the previous classes. Sites in which the risk of windthrow affects management by modifying the thinning practice fall within this class. In the uplands species choice is limited to conifers, such as spruces, larches and pines, and to birch, alder or other hardy broadleaves.

Class F6. Land with very limited flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops

The principal limitations are adverse climate and poor soil conditions. The soils include podzols, peaty gleys and peats, and soils affected by toxicities. Sites on which the risk of wind throw effectively prevents thinning and seriously curtails the rotation length, and sites with very severe surface terrain which imposes great difficulty in ploughing or extraction, fall within this class. Species choice is limited to lodgepole pine and Sitka spruce and to amenity broadleaves such as birch and alder.

Class F7. Land unsuitable for producing tree crops

Land is considered unplantable if its physical characteristics preclude the growth or establishment of tree crops by normal methods. These characters include extremes of climate (orohemiarctic and oroarctic climate zones over extremely exposed sites), wetness (flow-bog or flood sites), rockiness and extreme slopes.

Data Attributes

The dataset contains 3 main attributes:

- landcap**-----The alpha-numeric codes as listed above
- land_class**-----The text description of landcap
- LCF**-----The numerical classification code

Further Information

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