

Scots Pine - most widely distributed Conifer in the world.

From Atlantic seaboard in the west, across Europe and Asia to near the Pacific Ocean in the east. From Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean.

Adaptable to a wide range of climates.

The remaining native and natural Pine Woods are in Scotland, north of the Forth and Clyde Canal.

Woodlands are to some extent uneven aged.

The surviving native Pinewoods are the lineal descendants of early post glacial times about 9,000 years. The trees, and associated flora and fauna are of scientific interest to Foresters, Botanists, Entomologists etc.

The trees reach an age of up to 300 years. 200 - 220 years has been the oldest so far felled in the Black Wood. The Forester wants the best strains of the different tree species he uses for his planting.

In the Scottish native Pinewoods, we have distinctive strains of Scots Pine at the western extremity of its natural distribution. In these woods we have strains or types of Scots Pine which have adapted themselves to the climate, and retain their health and vigour to a mature age.

The native Pine Woods now remaining in Scotland will be an important and valuable source of tree material, which should not be contaminated with non-indigenous strains e.g. West European, Belgian strains.

Prof. Stephen of Aberdeen who studied and wrote on the Native Pine Woods, advocated that the major remnants, of which Rannoch is one, should be preserved and perpetuated for Scientific and Historical reasons.

At Rannoch therefore, it is now our policy to maintain and perpetuate the most distinctive parts of the Natural Pine Forest, i.e. Black Wood itself 840 acres in extent in its natural condition. The remaining planting land at Rannoch where there are no remaining old Pine or only scattered Pine will be used for normal productive Forestry, with one important condition which I shall mention. To achieve this the policy at Rannoch is -

The Plan is as follows:-

- Zone 1. Black Wood. An area of native Rannoch Pine only. One species only used in planting viz. Scots Pine locally collected.
- Zone 2. Only Scots Pine of Rannoch Origin to be planted in ground suitable for Pines, but in other sites other tree species, e.g. Spruces, Douglas Firs can be planted.
- Zone 3. Any species can be planted, e.g. Lodgepole Pine, but where it is intended to plant Scots Pine, it must be of Rannoch Origin.

Black Wood

Proper - The age class is irregular, mostly old trees in groups. Little middle-aged regeneration, but some young natural regeneration. The stocking, i.e. No. of trees per acre is low, and therefore the production of timber is low. Also the poor density of the trees permits a rank growth of ground vegetation, usually tall heather with a deep layer of moss at ground level - one reason for the scarcity of natural regeneration.

1. The Black Wood has been separated into a Western 200 acre section, where the stocking of trees is better than elsewhere. This is now classed as experimental reserve under the F.C. Research section, where no replanting or felling will be done, i.e. complete reserve to study natural development.
2. A larger East section 600 acres approximately, where 20 acres will be replanted annually with Rannoch Pine. To maintain a measure of irregularity, the 20 acres is planted in a different section of the block each year, over 5 sections.

Over the three zones at Rannoch about 300 - 350 thousand Rannoch Pine are planted yearly. Since planting started, something like $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 million Rannoch Pine trees have been planted at Rannoch Forest.

An annual demand of 300,000 plants, requires the sowing of about 25 lbs. of seed. We cannot collect this amount of seed each year in the Black Wood, but in good seed years we collect between 50 - 60 lbs. of seed, some of which is stored for a year or two in a cold store before sowing.

History

- Scottish Native Pinewoods began to be exploited, but not on a great scale during the late 17th Century.

After 1715 Rebellion, when the countryside was opened up by Wade's roads, there was some commercial felling by an English Company at Rannoch.

From 1749 the estate was administered by the Commissioner of the Forfeited Estates, when the Rannoch Woods were reported to be in a bad state. The woods were enclosed to exclude grazing stock and some replanting was done.

The estate was returned to the Robertsons in 1784. There was heavy exploitation during the Napoleonic Wars.

The Black Wood became an enclosed deer forest in 1895 and continued so until the recent war.

Heavy exploitation took place during the two World Wars.

There are many variations in trees in many tree characters. The most striking are the branching habit. Six types are recognised:

Horizontal branches - narrow crown - single stem.

Ascending " " "

Ascending " wide crown - "

Fastigiate Type - Fastigiate branches - single stem.

Condensate Type - Fastigiate branches - composite stem.

Pendulous Type - Pendulous branches - single stem.

Deeside Group

Glentinar
 Ballochbuie
 Mar

Great Glen Group

Glen Moriston
 Glen Loyne
 Glengarry
 Barisdale
 Loch Arkaig and Glen Maltie
 Glen Loy
 Glen Nevis
 Ardgour

Northern Group

Amat
 Rhidorroch
 Glen Einig
 Strath Vaich

Rannoch Group

Black Wood
 Mëggernie

Speyside Group

Abernethy
 Rothiemurchus
 Glenmore
 Glenfeshie
 Dulnan
 Glen Avon

Strath Glass Group

Glen Affric
 Glen Cannich
 Glen Strathfarrar
 Guisachan and Cougie

Wester Ross Group

Loch Maree
 Coulin
 Achnashellach
 Shieldaig

Southern Group

Black Mount Wood
 Glen Orochy
 Tyndrum
 Glen Falloch