

IS TREE MINERAL NUTRITION DETERIORATING IN EUROPE?

Mathieu Jonard (1), Alfred Fürst (2), Arne Verstraeten (3), Anne Thimonier (4), Volkmar Timmermann (5), Nenad Potočić (6), Peter Waldner (4), Sue Benham (7), Karin Hansen (8), Päivi Merilä (9), Quentin Ponette (1), Ana C de la Cruz (10), Peter Roskams (3), Manuel Nicolas (11), Luc Croisé (11), Morten Ingerslev (12), Giorgio Matteucci (13), Bruno Decinti (14), Marco Bascietto (14) and Pasi Rautio (9).

(1) UCL-ELI, Université catholique de Louvain, Earth and Life Institute, Croix du Sud 2, L7.05.09, BE-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium,

(2) BFW, Federal Research Centre for Forests, A-1131 Vienna, Austria

(3) Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Gaverstraat 35, B-9500 Geraardsbergen, Belgium

(4) WSL, Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland

(5) Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute, Pb 115, NO-1431 Aas, Norway

(6) Croatian Forest Research Institute, Department of Ecology, Cvjetno naselje 41, HR-10450 Jastrebarsko, Croatia

(7) Forest Research, Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, UK-Surrey GU10 4LH, United Kingdom

(8) IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute, SE-100 31 Stockholm, Sweden

(9) METLA, Finnish Forest Research Institute, PL 18, FI-01301 Vantaa, Finland

(10) INIA, Centro de Investigación Forestal, Ctra. de la Coruña km. 7,5 ES-28040 Madrid, Spain

(11) ONF, Office National des Forêts, Département Recherche et Développement, Bâtiment B, Boulevard de Constance, F-77300 Fontainebleau, France

(12) University of Copenhagen, Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, Rolighedsvej 23, DK-1958 Frederiksberg, Denmark

(13) Istituto per i Sistemi Agricoli e Forestali del Mediterraneo - U.O.S. Rende, Via Cavour 4-6, I-87030 Rende, Italy

(14) CNR, Istituto di Biologia Agroambientale e Forestale - U.O.S. Montelibretti, Via Salaria km 29.300, I-00016 Monterotondo Scalo, Italy

mathieu.jonard@uclouvain.be

The objectives of this study were to describe the nutritional status of the main European tree species, to identify growth limiting nutrients and to assess changes in tree nutrition during the past two decades. We analysed the foliar nutrition data collected during 1992-2009 on the intensive forest monitoring plots of the ICP Forests programme. This dataset is unique in its scope and size, and has the further advantage of being harmonized among all participating countries. Of the 22 significant temporal trends that were observed in foliar nutrient concentrations, 20 were decreasing and 2 were increasing. Altogether our results show a clear deterioration in P nutrition during the past two decades in some of the main tree species. Our study also highlights some downward trends that should be monitored closely in the future since they could become alarming: e.g. decrease in foliar S concentration in *P. abies* and *P. sylvestris*. Increased tree productivity, possibly resulting from high N deposition and from the global increase in atmospheric CO₂, has led to higher nutrient demand by trees. Soil nutrient supply was however not always sufficient to meet the demand of faster growing trees. As tree nutrient status exerts a tight control on net ecosystem productivity, this deterioration in tree nutrition could have a strong impact on the response of forest ecosystems to climate change.