



GROWING FORESTS  
GROWING A FUTURE

## Growing Forests – Growing a Future Factsheet

The conservation of forests for future generations is an affair of the heart, according to Martin Stöhr, Managing Director of Mercer Holz. “While concerns for the future of our forests are not recent—already, for a few decades, foresters and forest owners in Germany have been working to replace the predominantly single variety forests with mixed variety—climate change is catching us at our heels. We are now at tipping point of being too late to preserve the longevity and health of our forests for future generations. The time for action is now. It is a joint responsibility and a shared joy for all who benefit: so we need to work together to shape our forests for our tomorrows. Future generations will determine how forests will ultimately be used, but we must provide them with forests that offers them sustainable, comprehensive and diverse benefits, protection and recreation.” says Martin.

*Growing Forests – Growing a Future* (GFGF) is a programme, launched by Mercer Holz, that will run over the next few years to support—and be in alliance with—forest owners in sustaining their forests to keep forestry alive.

Over the next few years, in a concrete step of solidarity, Mercer will provide participating forest owners across Germany with a careful selection of seedlings to help replenish their forests.

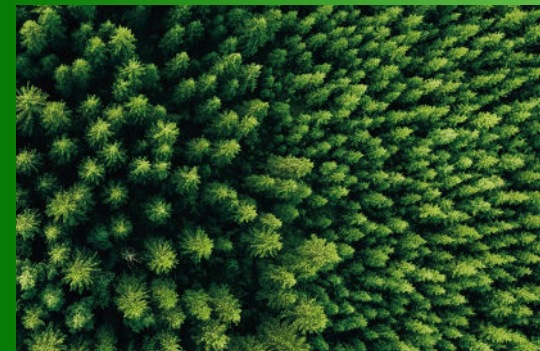
### Damaged?

#### Why are German forests damaged?

In Northern Europe, the 2018-2020 drought triggered some long-term threats to the forest scape—compounding the global warming effect. The lack of water caused the German forests—majority of which are spruce—to become susceptible to the bark beetle (the spruce bark beetle is one of the most damaging in the region) and forests have yet to bounce back. Fast forward to 2023, Euro News Green reports that 1 in 4 spruce are now dead, both from being eaten inside out by the bark beetle and climate change, causing floods, wildfires, soil degradation and more. In Germany more than 300,000 hectares of trees have died since 2018, due to bark beetles and drought fuelled by a warming climate.

### How will GFGF help with addressing the damage?

These threats pose a serious risk to the future of German forests as well as forestry. And it is a future that affects us all. Germans enjoy exploring their forests and are very proud of its beauty. The forest is a source of recreation, relaxation and comfort to the German public. It is also the source of livelihood for more than 1.1 million Germans—including forest owners and their families.



GFGF is a step towards replacing and regenerating that which has been lost from the bark beetle and other natural disasters that have affected our forests. Through this programme, we are collaborating with forest owners—as they have expertise and experience with growing their forests—and other stakeholders, such as policy makers, the media and the German public, to sustain—and improve—the health of German forests for our tomorrows.



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## Sustainability and the German forest

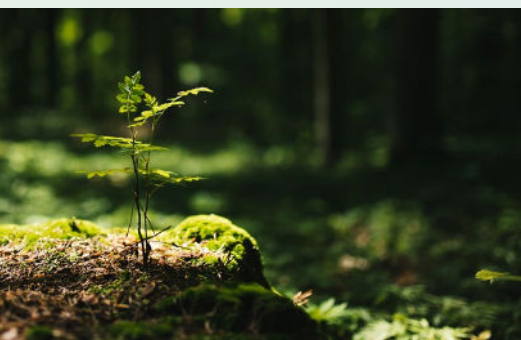
In 1713, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, Head of the Saxon Mining Office in Freiberg, requested a 'sustainable use' of forests in which the amount of wood cleared in a forest could only be equal to the amount that was planted. Thus, the term 'sustainability' was born! It is now used in all areas of life and industry, but has its roots in forestry: 'Forest sustainability', meaning 'not to use more wood than it grows', is a 300-year-old idea.

*One of our forest owners, holding his original version of Hans Carl von Carlowitz's 300-year-old book on sustainability!*



### What does GFGF hope to achieve?

**Address perceptions of forestry at a larger scale:** Many accepted 'facts' and 'truths' surrounding forestry and the industry need to be fixed. For example, there is a need to re-educate the public that when areas within the forests are clear-cut, it is not necessarily for profit, but a recognised way to mitigate the threat of the bark beetle.



**Stand side by side with forest owners**  
The burden of battling the effects of climate change and infestations is often felt squarely on the shoulders of the German forest owners and that battle can often feel lonely, overwhelming, without a light at the end of the tunnel. Mercer, through GFGF, seeks to sink their proverbial shovel into the ground right next to the forest owner, roll up their sleeves and work alongside them to replenish and restore their forests—to ensure the future generations have forests to call theirs.

**Secure tomorrow's forest**  
Social media and coffee table books are rife with images of iconic German castles surrounded by German forests in their flaming fall glory or the verdant green of summer. But apart from these stunning visuals, we rely on the forests for much more. Forests are important carbon capture sites and watersheds. German forests protect a rich biodiverse world and prevent soil erosion. The forests are a source of recreation and rest for the German public as well as livelihood for foresters.

### Can I find out more?

Do visit GFGF on [growingourforests.com](http://growingourforests.com) (English) & [unserewaelder.com](http://unserewaelder.com) for more information on Mercer's programme. As the programme progresses, we will be adding interviews from the participating forest owners as well as thoughtful insights from the Mercer team.

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#### About Mercer Holz

Mercer Holz is the wood purchasing arm for Mercer International's operations in Germany, providing optimal networking across Europe allowing suppliers and customers to benefit from the economies of scale.

We are one of the first within the German wood industry with such a large-scale tree-planting endeavour. We hope this programme sparks similar projects with others within the supply chain, as the future of forests belongs to all of us.