Inventory Data

Knowing what is growing in your woodland is of critical importance for sustainable woodland management.

For the uninitiated, the multitude of technical terms for the different sorts of data that can be recorded, and the different ways in which individual trees and stands can be measured, may seem daunting. It may be helpful to bear the following in mind:

- An inventory is simply a record of the trees growing in a woodland.
    - What you choose to record will depend on your management objectives, and, to a degree, how mature your trees are.
- An inventory is not intended to record every tree in a woodland.
    - With even small woodlands containing thousands of trees, it would be impractical to do so.
- Rather, an inventory represents an overall picture of the trees in a woodland.
    - It does not need to be highly detailed or accurate - just representative.

If we think about a woodland divided by permanent features such as rides, tracks or watercourses, each of these divisions, or *compartments*, will often have visibly distinct areas within them, where the composition of tree species and size / age is broadly homogenous, and different from other areas. There may also be other factors to consider, such as management history or objectives, ground conditions, exposure, and so on, all of which creates a lot of variability.

- If you attempted to carry out an inventory of the whole woodland as a single entity, it would be difficult to capture all this variability.
- Instead, you should first identify these distinct areas and use them to divide the compartment into smaller units called *sub-compartments*.
- Dividing a woodland up in this way is useful on many levels, which is why it is standard practice in woodland management.

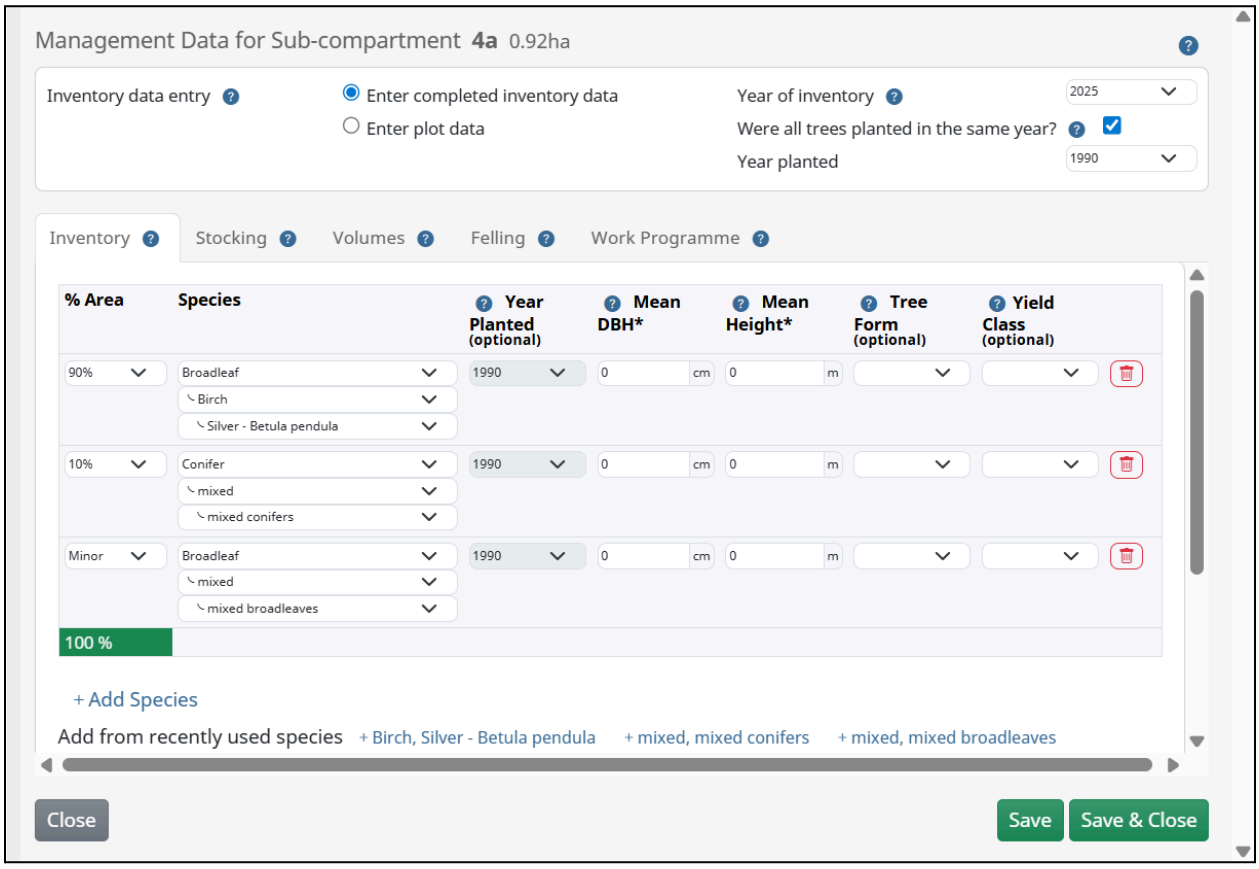
Watch the video below for a visualisation of how this works:

<!--ARCADE EMBED START--> <iframe src="https://demo.arcade.software/rZZoCnwUtifkUSshKhLN?embed&embed_mobile=tab&embed_desktop=inline&show_copy_link=true" title="Animation - How to Map a Woodland" frameborder="0" loading="lazy" webkitallowfullscreen mozallowfullscreen allowfullscreen allow="clipboard-write" style="position: absolute; top: 0; left: 0; width: 100%; height: 100%; color-scheme: light;" ></iframe> <!--ARCADE EMBED END-->

Once you have identified your sub-compartments, create an inventory of the trees growing in each one.

- *myForest* allows you to record a large range of inventory data at the sub-compartment level.
- To start with, you only need to record the tree species present and, preferably, their age.

You may find it helpful to first add your compartments and sub-compartments to your woodland record in *myForest*, and to map them. For more guidance visit [Introduction to Woodland Management with myForest]. Click on the tippies ? in the *Sub-compartment Management Data* form *Inventory* tab for more information on what to record (see below):



- Walk through the sub-compartment to get a "feel" for the trees; the variation in species and size.
- Note down the rough proportions of each tree species.
    - It doesn't matter if your species areas don't add up to 100% - there might be glades or other open areas that account for this.
    - Refer to records of tree species that have been planted if you have them.
    - If you are unsure, just record trees as broadleaf or conifer, or if you can't identify individual species, or if it isn't very important to you at this stage, put "mixed".
- Optionally, measure or estimate the average diameter at breast height (*DBH*) tree *height*, *year planted* and *form* for each species.
    - Records of when the trees were planted, or when the area was last felled, old aerial photos, and counting growth rings, can all be used to estimate age.
    - If there are more than one population of the same species, that are clearly of different ages, you can record them separately.
- In *myForest*, enter your data in the Sub-compartment Management Data form *Inventory* tab.
    - Unless you have used sample plots, select the "Enter completed inventory data" option.

For more technical detail, refer to myForest Inventory.