

## 2. From trees to paper

What is paper made from? Tear a thick piece and look at the torn edge with a magnifying glass. The many long, thin threads you see are called **cellulose fibres**.

Most plants have cellulose fibres, but there are lots of these fibres in wood. So we usually use wood instead of other plants to make paper.



British forests cannot provide enough trees to make all the paper we need so most of them are bought from Scandinavia and North America. The trees are cut down and made into **wood pulp**. Then the pulp is transported to Britain.

### Which wood?

There are two types of wood - softwood and hardwood. **Softwood** comes from evergreen trees which usually bear cones. They grow quickly and can be cut down easily to make paper. **Hardwood** in this country comes from trees which grow slowly and lose their leaves in winter. Softwood trees produce strong, long fibres and hardwood trees produce short, coarse fibres.



**Why do you think very few hardwoods are used for paper-making?**

### Managing the forests

Most of the wood grown for paper-making comes from carefully managed **plantations**. For every tree that is cut down, two or three young trees are planted to replace it.

Softwoods are planted in neat rows so that the trees are easy to manage and fell. They will grow on poor quality land and mountain slopes, and in places where the winters are very cold. Other crops and cattle cannot live in these conditions.

The foresters remove weaker trees to give more space and light for the strong ones. They are not wasted, but are used to make low quality paper and card.

