

# Nimbus: a Ruby gem to implement Random Forest algorithms in a genomic selection context

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## Summary

Nimbus is a Ruby gem implementing Random Forest in a genomic selection context, meaning every input file is expected to contain genotype and/or phenotype data from a sample of individuals. Other than the ids of the individuals, Nimbus handle the data as genotype values for single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), so the variables in the classifier must have values of 0, 1 or 2, corresponding with SNPs classes of AA, AB and BB.

Nimbus provides a novel dataframe of random forest under ruby, and implements a modified algorithm that can separate all genotypes for a single marker, which can accommodate both additivity and dominance. Further, it allows the user to specify a loss function and provide full information of the trees in a .yml file.

Nimbus can be used to:

- Create a random forest using a training sample of individuals with phenotype data.
- Use an existent random forest to get predictions for a testing sample.

## Random Forest

The random forest algorithm is a classifier consisting in many random decision trees, it was first proposed as a massively non-parametric machine-learning algorithm by Leo Breiman ([Breiman, 2001](#)). It is based on choosing random subsets of variables for each tree and using the most frequent, or the averaged tree output as the overall classification. Random forest makes use of bagging and randomization, constructing many decision trees ([Kamiński et al., 2017](#)) on bootstrapped samples of a given data set. The prediction from the trees are averaged to make final predictions.

In machine learning terms, it is an ensemble classifier, so it uses multiple models to obtain better predictive performance than could be obtained from any of the constituent models.

The forest outputs the class that is the mean or the mode (in regression problems) or the majority class (in classification problems) of the node's output by individual trees.

The algorithm is robust to over-fitting and able to capture complex interaction structures in the data, which may alleviate the problems of analyzing genome-wide data.

## Learning algorithm

**Training:** Each tree in the forest is constructed using the following algorithm:

- Let the number of training cases be  $N$ , and the number of variables (SNPs) in the classifier be  $M$ .

- 37     ▪ The mtry number of input variables is told to the algorithm to be used in determining  
38     the decision at a node of the tree; m should be much less than M (usually 1/3), and the  
39     optimal value should be tuned for methods like grid search.
- 40     ▪ Choose a training set for this tree by drawing n samples with replacement from all N  
41     available training cases (i.e. bootstrap sampling). The rest of the cases (Out Of Bag  
42     sample) will be used to estimate the error of the tree at predicting the classes of this  
43     out of Bag samples.
- 44     ▪ For each node of the tree, randomly choose m SNPs on which to base the decision at  
45     that node. Calculate the best split based on these m SNPs in the training set.
- 46     ▪ Each tree is fully grown and not pruned (as may be done in constructing a normal tree  
47     classifier).
- 48     ▪ When in a node there is not any SNP split that minimizes the general loss function of  
49     the node, or the number of individuals in the node is less than the minimum node size  
50     then label the node with the average phenotype value of the individuals in the node.

51     **Testing:** An independent sample can be pushed down the tree to predict the most probable  
52     phenotype given the SNP genotypes. It is assigned the label of the training sample in the  
53     terminal node it ends up in. This procedure is iterated over all trees in the ensemble, and the  
54     average vote of all trees is reported as the random forest prediction.

## 55     Nimbus

56     Nimbus trains the algorithm based on an input file (learning sample) containing the phenotypes  
57     of the individuals and their respective list of genotype markers (i.e. SNPs). A random forest is  
58     created and stored in a .yaml file for future use.

59     Nimbus can also be run to make prediction in a validation set or in a set of data containing  
60     yet to be observed response variable. In this case, the predictions can be obtained using the  
61     random forest created with a learning sample or using a previously stored random forest.

62     If a learning sample is provided, the gem will create a file with the variable importance of each  
63     feature (marker) in the data. The higher the importance is, the more relevant the marker is to  
64     correctly predict the response variable in new data.

65     Nimbus can be used for both classification or regression problems, and the user may provide  
66     different parameter values in a configuration file to tune the performance of the algorithm.

### PREDICTIONS IN TRAINING SAMPLE



### PREDICTION IN TESTING SAMPLE



## References

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