



Forestry England

# Bedgebury Apprentice Blog

July 2021  
By Ella

This month's work has consisted mainly of dealing with the larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*), which predominantly affects Norway Spruce. In December 2018, an outbreak was discovered in a woodland in Kent. Since then, Forestry England have been conducting enhanced surveillance across the Southeast of England. This has included the use of a network of traps. Beetles are routinely caught in these traps, likely because of the beetles being blown into the area from mainland Europe.



This year several further outbreaks of *Ips typographus* have been found in Kent and East Sussex, with one of the areas at Bedgebury. I have been helping to fell a block of spruce behind Bedgebury's forest office car park, which has been great chainsaw consolidation and good practise dealing with chainsaw trousers and hot weather!

Most of the wood was taken off to chip, whilst some was burnt on site. The logs must be carefully transported and milled due to the risk of the bark beetles potentially spreading to woodland where it does not yet effect. I look forward to seeing what this area will be turned into.



Several of the volunteers and I were lucky enough to spend the day with Matt Parratt, a Research Scientist for Forest Research who works with Forestry England. We focused on his specialist subjects - tree identification and wildflowers. We spent the time learning all about the positive and negative indicators of a dry acid grassland, which much of Bedgebury is.

An example of a positive indicator is common heather, whereas an example of a negative indicator is ragwort. On this occasion we were focusing on section 9 in the pinetum. We found a far larger amount of positive over negative indicators, which was great to see.

[forestryengland.uk/bedgebury](https://forestryengland.uk/bedgebury)

Mid-July the tree team and I were lucky enough to spend the day exploring the famous Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. We began the day with a tour around the herbarium, which is not a collection of herbs, my first thought...

An herbarium is a collection of preserved plant specimens and associated data used for scientific study. The first purpose-built wing of the herbarium was built back in 1877. Plant collections are mounted on paper and housed in wooden cabinets on three floors. There are now another four wings and a quadrangle basement, it is said that they must build a new building for storage every 30 years!



The rest of the day was spent in the stunning gardens where we explored areas such as the arboretum and incredible glass houses. I have already been back since as there is just so much to see and take in!

I occasionally get the chance to spend the day in our nursery with Emma, the nursery supervisor. This is always insightful being surrounded by such a variety of saplings. It's a good opportunity to improve both my tree ID and learn more about what goes into looking after the specimens before they are ready to be planted into the pinetum. On this occasion, I was given the task to pot on several specimens, this was a very satisfying job.



This month I also experienced my first controlled fire in the pinetum, unfortunately one of the eldest trees, a Serbian spruce of around a hundred years old had to be felled, due to disease. This tree was known to have been one of the first trees to be planted in the pinetum, it was a beautiful tree that stood prominent in Dallimore Valley. The vast size of the tree meant there was a large amount to process and burn.