



Forestry England

Bedgebury

Apprentice Blog

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By Ella

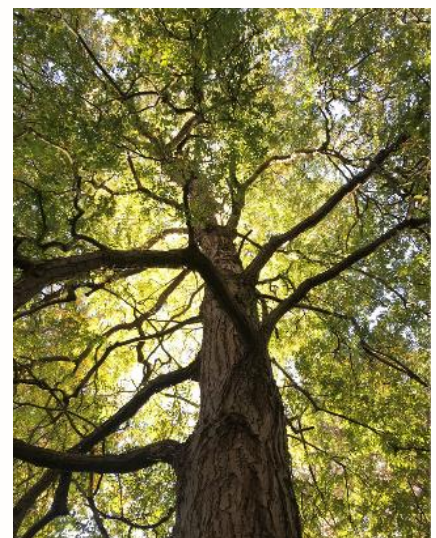


This month marks a year since Sarah and I started our apprenticeship. What an incredible year it has been, with so many new experiences. I can't believe it has been a year since I started working at Bedgebury, but also feel I have achieved a great deal this year.

The beginning of November marks the start of the Christmas at Bedgebury set up. Whilst the Christmas crew are busy at work, Sarah and I spent the week in Thetford on our tariffing

course. Tariffing is the measurement of trees, to work out the amount of timber in an area or individual tree. There are several pieces of technology making this task relatively simple. The vertex is a very impressive piece of kit, that through trigonometry works out the height of the tree. This then allows you with the DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) measurement of the stem which is measuring the diameter of the tree at 1.3m, to work out how much timber a tree can produce.

During this week I managed to visit Lynford Arboretum, which was a beautiful site, completely run by volunteers! The mixture of grassland and water really makes the arboretum a lovely environment to explore. One of my favourite trees, that I came across during this visit was the Roble beech (*Nothofagus obliqua*) with its delicate leaves and deeply furrowed bark. This species originates from Chile and Argentina, growing to a height of 50 metres and 2 metres in diameter. The tree was introduced to the British isles in 1849. In Chile, young specimens, which have soft, yellowish wood, are known as *roble hualle*, while old trees, which have developed the reddish heartwood characteristic of mature specimens are known as *roble pellín*. The trees timber is valued for its durability, being used for furniture making and in construction.



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In the middle of the month Dan invited the tree team to an International Dendrology Society study day taking place at Bedgebury. The topic of study was the Cupressaceae family, led by Tom Christian, a consulting dendrologist. This was such a fascinating day spend learning amongst such a knowledgeable group of individuals. Learning to identify species within the Cupressaceae is said to be the hardest group of conifers to learn and differentiate. The way in which Tom taught us through a collection of cuttings, placed next to one another, just looking for what differences each cutting had, showed when comparing, that there are in fact many ways to tell each species apart looking at characteristics of the foliage.

Planting season has begun, I have been really looking forward to this time as when I began the apprenticeship, most specimens had already been planted for the year, so I haven't had much planting experience. I think it is one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of the job, if the specimens are successful of course!



The tree team and Wednesday volunteers were given the exciting task of transforming the area just behind the visitor centre. This previously was an area where stalls of birch and chestnut stood, the decision was made to fell and mulch this area to give an area to expand the Pinetums collection. We planted a varied 46 specimens to ensure the area gave all year-round interest. One of my favourite trees planted in this section was the bigleaf magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*), due to its impressive leaves throughout the spring and summer, as well as its distinctive large white winter buds.