

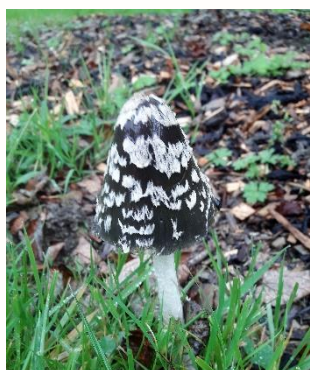


Forestry England

Bedgebury Apprentice Blog

October 2021

By Sarah



Hello again! It's coming up to a birthday month here at Bedgebury, November will mark a year since Ella, and I started our Forest Craftsperson apprenticeship. So much has happened I wanted to take a few paragraphs to recap on what's been both an exciting and challenging year!

The first thing I want to mention is all the amazing people I've met and the work they carry out here. Before starting I didn't appreciate how much more the team does outside making the

pinetum look beautiful. I got to assist Emma in the nursery, helping her propagate some rare tree species that Dan, our curator has collected from around the world to help keep them safe. Cat was a huge help sharing her love of wildlife and nature, and assisting with tree ID. Harry has helped me get a much broader appreciation of the forestry plantings at Bedgebury and how different species are chosen to safeguard the British timbers future in the face of uncertain climate change. I could go on but mostly I would like to thank Dan for giving me this fabulous opportunity and the whole team who have encouraged and supported me throughout this year.

The second thing I've taken from the last year is the different courses I've been on and skills I've learnt. If you've read my blogs before you will already know how much I love driving the big tractor, the smile is still on my face every time I get to use her on some of the heavier jobs in around the pinetum. Getting trained to use a chainsaw was a huge personal challenge, I'm slowly gaining in my skills and confidence as I become more experienced. The classroom skills have



expanded my knowledge about the forestry industry in general, learning about silviculture, tariffing, timber production & harvesting just to name a few. We have a couple more courses ahead, but this year will mainly be consolidating all that we've learnt to strengthen our new skills.



Back to this month, as we come into winter although the weather is sometimes a challenge it's the perfect time for tree planting and the whole team gets ready. Dan, our curator here at Bedgebury works closely with Emma, our nursery supervisor, to select the trees and the best position in the pinetum to plant them. It was also the perfect chance to revisit the first tree I planted at Bedgebury back in May 2020.

It was a Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) I was very pleased to see that she was still alive and growing well! The last image below is a year later, she may not have grown a great deal, but she's definitely gained some new foliage.



It's exciting to think that visitors will (hopefully) be enjoying the tree I planted for many years to come. It's reasons like this that make the apprenticeship here at Bedgebury much more than a job.

October is the time where the whole team gets involved in carrying out a comprehensive tidy in preparation for the Christmas at Bedgebury trail. This consists of making the main path the route follows look even better than usual and preparing the site so the thousands of visitors stay safe and don't damage any of the tree specimens. It's a good time to go round repairing and replacing cages, checking, and adding mulch around trees and pruning any branches that might be dangerous. To the right is a Yew (*Taxus baccata*) up by the main entrance that was in much need of a re-cage.





With so many contractors coming to setup Christmas at Bedgebury, it's especially important that boots and vehicles are disinfected as they arrive and leave the site. We setup track mats that are regularly cleaned and filled with a safe wash.

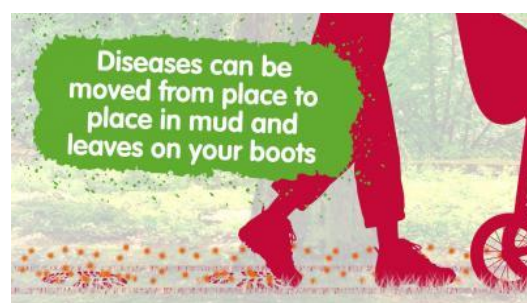


In a previous blog post we talked about the IPS bark beetle that has such potential to damage the spruce trees in the pinetum. This is just one of the pests and diseases that can affect the trees here. Following biosecurity guidelines is an important part of our day-to-day operations. Boots and tools are cleaned, chainsaw blades sprayed all to ensure diseases cannot be spread from tree to tree.

We had a training course explaining the increasing threat from organisms introduced to the UK from all over the world, including pest, diseases, parasites and invasive non-native species, examples include Asian hornet, Ash dieback, grey squirrels, foot and mouth just to name a few. These can be introduced by many different means, naturally by air, water and vector and of course by human assisted routes to which there are many examples, importing being one of the largest.

I highly recommend you visit <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/> to find out more information and tips on how you can personally help reduce the risks. Everyone has a role in biosecurity and keeping our forests safe.

We would encourage everyone who visits Bedgebury to keep a brush and hoof pick in their car. Simply brushing the mud off your boots before you leave the forest is a great way to keep all our trees safe for the future.



Thanks for reading, and for those of you that visit I hope you enjoy Christmas at Bedgebury!

forestryengland.uk/about-bedgebury-the-national-pinetum