


6 Carry on for about 200m to the end of the grass path and, just over a drainage ditch, turn right following the line of the ditch. After 80m, at a 4-way junction, turn hard left and then, after another 80m, follow the track as it curves round to the right.

7 At the next junction, with a gate out onto Park Lane visible on your left, bear slightly right and then left, to follow a wide grassy path going downhill towards a sponsored bench (B17). Enjoy the beautiful view down to Marshal's Lake. Continue down to the bottom of the hill.

8 Turn left at the bottom of the hill, go through the gate and turn right on the road. **TAKE CARE ON THE ROAD.**

Enjoy the views of Marshal's Lake on your right, which looks beautiful throughout the year and is a popular picnic spot. Of particular note are its mass of lilies in summer and the spectacular tree colours reflected in the lake during autumn.

9 Walk along the road for about 100m and go through a gate on the right, back into the Pinetum. Follow the surfaced path alongside Marshal's Lake until reaching a very large log on the left of the path. Then bear left uphill on a grassy track (signposted 'Toilets') to the top of the hill. Turn left then bear right and go out of the Pinetum through a wide gate. Ignore the track leading back right but go forward to cross another lane (Park Lane). **TAKE CARE ON THE ROAD.**

10 On the opposite side of the road you will see a wooden gate with a large log to the side of it. Go through the gate to enter the Forest Plots area.  Follow the grassy path straight ahead, ignoring all paths to the left, right and half right, but continue straight ahead for about 400m until you reach a T-junction at point 11.

The 'Forest Plots' are an important conservation area. A large number of rare and endangered trees have been planted here to create five forest areas, each representing one of the continents where conifers live. These trees have been propagated from seed collected from natural populations and could be used in future to repopulate threatened forest areas. Bedgebury is unique in planting such numbers of conifers – it's a world first – and it is done to preserve as much genetic variety as possible.


11 At the T-junction with a shallow ditch across it, turn right. Follow the track as it curves left and then right through trees to a junction..

Ahead, on your right, you will see a large group of monkey puzzle trees (*Araucaria araucana*). These are the tall trees with dark, spikey leaves.

12 When you reach the monkey puzzle trees, continue ahead, keeping them on your right.

The monkey puzzle tree was around in the time of the dinosaurs

but is now endangered in its homelands of Chile and Argentina. The seeds of the monkey puzzle tree cannot be stored in a seedbank, so the trees must be grown to be conserved. Bedgebury is a leader in this activity.

13 Following the path around the plots to the right, you will come towards a group of eucalyptus on your right. Do go closer to see the dramatic pale, peeling bark close up if you like.  When the broad path bends round to the left, carry straight on keeping the eucalyptus on your right.


Nearly all eucalyptus species are evergreen. As with other members of the 'myrtle' family, eucalyptus leaves are covered with oil glands. The copious oils produced are widely used in perfumes and medicines.

14 After about 150m, at the 5-way path junction, turn right, then after 25m bear right. Continue across a small 4-way path junction and follow the path round to the left.

You will see some beehives on your right. In addition to honey bees, Bedgebury's flower-rich grassland and heathland supports at least 11 of Britain's 25 species of bumblebees as well as a wide variety of solitary bees.


15 When you reach another 4-way path junction, turn left towards the Met. Office weather station for Bedgebury National Pinetum. At the next path junction, turn right along the fence, and after 50m turn left to retrace your steps towards the wide gate that you came through earlier and go back into the Pinetum. **TAKE CARE ON THE ROAD.**

There are toilets just inside the gate on your right if you need them.

16 After going through the gate, with the toilets on your right, bear slightly left on a narrow, level path heading 10m towards a tall pine tree (Crimean Pine) in the middle of the path.  Go around the pine tree and follow the path downhill to a T-junction. You will see the tree nursery up on your left as you walk down the path.

The tree nursery provides a place where seeds can be propagated and different germination techniques trialled. In 2011, these facilities were upgraded thanks to a £42,500 grant from the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum. Bedgebury's nursery has been successful in germinating seeds from some of the world's most threatened trees species. Bedgebury was the first place in the world to successfully raise the Vietnamese golden cypress from seed.

Although the nursery is out of bounds to the public, periodically the Friends offer nursery tour events. Please join us at one of these if you want to know more about Bedgebury's ground-breaking propagation work.

17 You will join a main surfaced path by the yew collection.  Turn left. Follow the surfaced path for about 80m past the fenced-in dwarf conifer collection on your left, below the nursery, and past a brick building on your right.

The common yew is one of only three conifers native to the UK, the

others being juniper and Scots pine. Yew is a source of the anti-cancer drug Taxol. Bedgebury is home to the national yew collection; a comprehensive 'living gene bank' of many of the garden varieties.

The brick building you are passing was originally the dog kennels for Bedgebury House when it was privately owned by the Beresford family.




18 Shortly after the brick building, bear right and follow the grass path up a hill towards two benches. Pass them on your right and continue uphill. You are now in the 'Glory Hole' area of the Pinetum. Almost immediately take the path to the right and, shortly after the Gruffalo Owl on your left, go up a few steps. Turn right towards a bench (B30) under a large sponsored tree with exposed roots, called *Pinus radiata* (Monterey pine).

This area displays glorious colour in springtime due to the many azaleas and rhododendrons. This area was once an old quarry and tip!

The large Monterey Pine is a sponsored tree... take a look at the dedication on the label. Many people sponsor trees or benches around the Pinetum, and all the donations received support the conservation work undertaken on site.

19 Walk up and over the rooted incline to the left of the sponsored tree. From here you will see a grassy path straight across on the other side of the valley - the wide valley is called Hill's Avenue. Go down the slope in front of you and cross the valley to join the grassy path that you saw from the other side. Walk uphill to where the path divides. Take the left fork.

Hill's Avenue is named after Sir Arthur Hill, who was the director at Kew Gardens in 1919 when Kew was seeking a new home for its conifer collection. Hill was a keen botanist and taxonomist. Along with William Dallimore, the curator at Kew during that time, he was instrumental in seeking a partnership with Bedgebury.

20 After a short distance you emerge from the trees into a clearing with lots of heather (with the Gruffalo Snake on your left). Keep to the path across the clearing for about 50m and turn right  on to a grassy path going downhill. Ignore all minor tracks to the left. As the path curves round to the right, with a stand of Scots Pine on your right, follow it and continue on a level, grassy path . After about 90m you reach an open clearing and path junction. Turn left  to follow this grassy path downhill (this path is fairly steep and can be slippery at times). At the bottom of the hill, cross over a stream and you will reach a main surfaced path. This path is Lady Mildred's Carriage Drive.

Lady Mildred's Carriage Drive was originally the carriage drive entrance to Bedgebury House, stretching all the way from the A21 at Flimwell. It is an avenue of Lawson cypress named after Mildred, wife of Sir Alexander Beresford-Hope, in 1883.

21 Go straight across Lady Mildred's Carriage Drive and walk uphill on the mown grass path. As you walk uphill, stop at the sponsored bench (B56) in front of you and turn around to look at the old, dead tree. Continue uphill.

This old oak tree has reached the end of its life, however, as standing dead-wood it is an extremely important habitat for wildlife. The Pinetum is a glorious landscape containing several BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) designated landscapes where Bedgebury is doing much more to promote biodiversity and conservation than the work with conifers alone suggests. When Bedgebury makes decisions about how to look after the Pinetum, they're always balancing three things: the wildlife, the visitors and, of course, the trees themselves.

22 At the top of the hill turn right onto a hard surfaced path. After 70m, turn left onto another hard surfaced path, and follow it all the way downhill back towards the Visitor Centre.

We hope that you enjoyed our Hidden secrets of the Pinetum walking trail. Why not return to the Visitor Centre now and enjoy a hot drink and a slice of cake in the Bedgebury Café!

This leaflet has been created by the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum to share the wonders of the Pinetum and its extraordinary flora and fauna with our members and visitors to the site.

As a charity, the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum takes your membership subscriptions, donations and gifts and makes them available to Forestry England as grants for projects and activities across the site. We support Forestry England in its management of Bedgebury as a world-class centre of conifer research, conservation and education, as a landscape of rare and endangered flora and fauna, and as a site for high quality, healthy recreation.

Please keep dogs on a lead throughout this walking trail.

Please inform Visitor Services of any hazards/obstructions on this trail. 01580 879820. We value your feedback.

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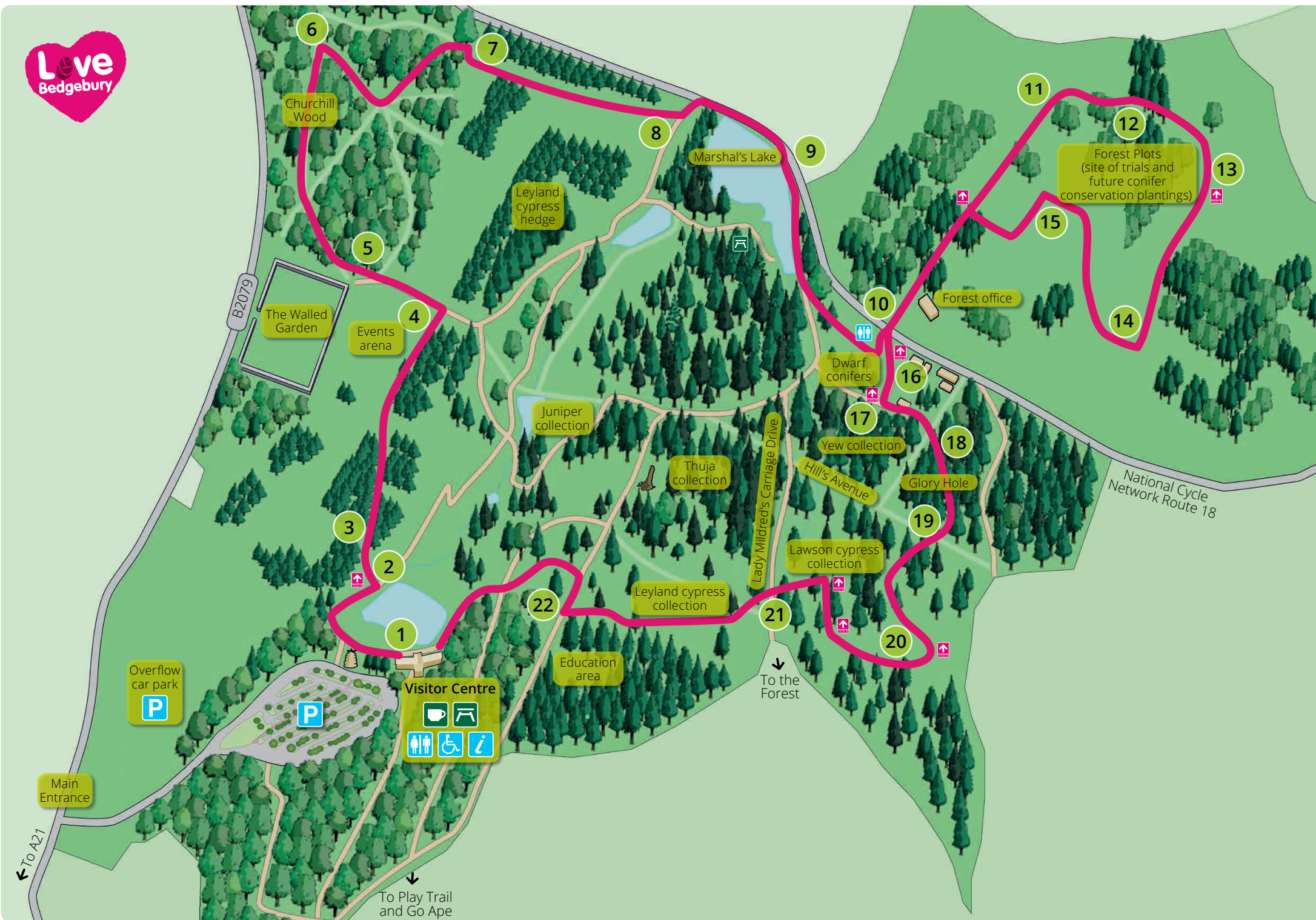

the friends
of Bedgebury
Pinetum

Hidden Secrets of the Pinetum Walking Trail

Approximately
3.25 miles and
1½ – 2 hours
to complete



www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk



This walk takes you off the beaten track to discover areas of the Pinetum that are hidden from the main visitor route. The route follows a mix of paths, mainly mown grass, with some moderately steep inclines and downward slopes, and one section of road. Conditions can be slippery underfoot in winter and bad weather, so please take care and make sure that you are wearing appropriate footwear.

Please note that the numbers on the plan refer to the numbered paragraphs in the text and are NOT marked on the ground. However, you will see markers at a few key points along the route to assist you. The markers look like this:



You will enjoy some fine views and may discover a few secrets about Bedgebury along the way.

Hidden Secrets of the Pinetum

Where to start the trail...

- 1 From the Visitor Centre, turn left and walk back up the main surfaced path towards the car park. Take the first turning right, pausing to look at the view of the lake.

Bedgebury is owned and looked after by Forestry England, which is the government department for woods and forests. Bedgebury is a unique mixture of two different elements:

- a. A commercial timber forest (which also has facilities for people getting active outdoors, such as mountain bike tracks and Go Ape), and
- b. a globally-important conifer collection: the National Pinetum, which you can see in front of you. Bedgebury National Pinetum has over 10,000 trees of which approximately 70% are conifers.

No other Forestry England site, or anywhere else that we know of, has this combination of activities. This makes Bedgebury very special!

So, what is a pinetum? A pinetum is a tree collection that focuses on conifers, although Bedgebury's Pinetum has more than just conifers. The National Pinetum at Bedgebury started life as Kew Gardens' collection of conifers, which was moved here in 1925 because they couldn't cope with the smog in London. Bedgebury still has a close working relationship with Kew. Before that, the Pinetum was the pleasure garden for a big private house.

- 2 With the lake on your right, follow the surfaced path downhill and round to the right. 50m after the bend, leave the main path and walk uphill across the grass to the bench that you see above you. From the bench look across the lake to the Visitor Centre.

Forestry England want the Pinetum to be an attractive place to visit, so they choose many of Bedgebury's trees to provide interest for visitors all year round. They think about not just what the plants look like close up, but about longer views too. This bank is particularly important because it is the main view from the Visitor Centre opposite and is the most recently planted area of the Pinetum.

- 3 Walk up behind the bench (B4), bear slightly right to walk on a mown grass path through an avenue of trees. As you come out of the trees you will enter a wide-open field with a high wall away to the left. Continue walking ahead, bearing slightly right to keep along the tree line on your right.

Ahead, and in the distance, you will see Bedgebury House, the original private house of Bedgebury estate. The house and land surrounding it was sold and separated from Bedgebury National Pinetum many years ago. The house became a private girls' school until it was closed in 2006. It is now a private residence.

The high wall you can see on your left is the Walled Garden, built between 1840 and 1870, and was the old fruit garden for Bedgebury House. It is now closed to the public but is used to host events in the summer.

- 4 When you reach a surfaced path in front of you (***) turn left and follow it straight ahead uphill towards Churchill Wood

Sir Winston Churchill's grandson unveiled a plaque at Bedgebury in 1969 naming Churchill Wood, honouring his family's great name and celebrating the Forestry Commission's jubilee.

*** At this point, you can choose to take a short detour to see the Leyland cypress hedge.

Walking into the Leyland cypress hedge, planted in the 1970's as a wind break, is like entering another world! The Leyland cypress is a lovely conifer, planted in the right place... but let this hedge be a warning to those who plant it in their garden!

- 5 Where the surfaced path bears slightly left towards the Walled Garden, cross a grassy strip and carry straight on into Churchill Wood, following a broad track. Where the track bends sharply round to the left, after 150m, go half-right on a mown grassy path.

This is a good area for butterflies and insects in the summer. This area was badly affected by the 1987 'Great Storm'. As a result, Forestry England know that this area gets battered by south westerly winds. So, when they re-planted this formerly agricultural land they included big spruces to act as a windbreak to protect the rest of the trees.