

January

The New Year began where we left off, continuing the thinning of the pines to the left of the walled garden. The area certainly feels more like an arboretum now as the established specimens have been given more space and an airier atmosphere has been created.

Thursday's volunteers maintained their sterling work in the yew collection with the grand old trees looking fresh and invigorated through de-brambling.



The Wednesday crew polished off the rhododendrons and yews behind the yard and have now moved to the bank running up from Dallimore Valley towards the Cathedral. The specimens here are looking spruced up with a weeding and framing of mulch.

My first training course was for brushcutters and clearing saws; this was held in Thetford towards the end of the month. It was great to catch up with the other Forestry England apprentices and hear how they were all getting on. I also achieved my first certificate. The powerful purr of the new Husqvarna machine we used was definitely a pleasure when compared to the old ropey ones I had used in past jobs. Consolidation followed on return to Bedgebury as we cleared the waterways between Leaky and Reflection Lake as well as by the roadside on Lady Oak Lane.

The capacity in the Nursery has now been increased with extra scaffolding and mypex creating a whole new bay to house trees before being planted.



As part of the Commission's centenary the Florilegium have been painting the tree collection, with the results being installed as an outdoor art exhibition. These images have been framed by beautiful ash, yews and cypresses from the Pinetum cut by Phil and Emma last year and milled by [Summer Hill](#) woodwork. The full life cycle of a tree is certainly something to appreciate, and being used in a celebration of conifers seems a fitting end for a Bedgebury tree.



February

The first phase of 2019 planting was exciting to be part of, with a combination of European larch and Japanese cedar being installed around the new pine-cone play apparatus. The hard ground coupled with numerous roots earned a sit down!



Carnage caused by the one-weekend-winter we had provided a week of tidying up for the tree team as we dashed around the Pinetum and forest to make the area safe. Pines, Douglas firs and hemlocks were particularly badly hit with snappy timber falling prey to

the large surface area created by their needles, as if their arms were too weak for their big hands.

Matt and Richard, from Forest Research, visited to measure ponderosa pine in the Plots. Using a mixture of sight and physical measurement they gather data to analyse how the trees are performing. This is entered into a national database where trends can be extrapolated and decisions made on future forest planning.

Before half term it changed from icy to ice-cream weather as we pruned the dog-woods and willows and cut the grasses around the visitor centre. The volunteers also made a healthy dent in the alders around the lake.

