

Presenting The Pinetum

A trail to discover the thought and vision behind the beautiful conifer display that you see today.

Welcome to Bedgebury

At the heart of Bedgebury lies our pinetum – a unique tree collection of conifers from around the world.

Visitors to Bedgebury have been experiencing the wonder of conifers since 1836.

The pinetum has evolved in size and purpose from a private collection to an important global resource focused on conifer knowledge and conservation. Through all the changes, one thing has stayed constant: the beauty of the place.

You just need to stop and look around to realise this is no happy accident. Thanks to the thought and vision of forward-thinking gardeners and curators, their passion for trees has left a personal stamp on the landscape, creating the wonderful views, vistas and plantings we see today and that will be enjoyed by visitors of the future.

Fold out the leaflet for the map, then follow the trail that tells the story.

The trail is 2.5 km in length, taking about 1½ hours to complete at a steady pace. The trail takes you away from surfaced paths to enable you to get the full benefit of vistas. However, there are two shortcuts that can be used if needed. These bypass two of the three slopes, remain on the path and still give good views of the pinetum.

Conditions can vary and some paths can become slippery in wet weather, so take care and wear appropriate footwear.

forestryengland.uk/bedgebury

Contact us

t: 01580 879820

e: bedgebury@forestryengland.uk

Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest,
Bedgebury Road, Goudhurst, Kent, TN17 2SJ

Cafe

t: 01580 879397

bedgeburycafe.co.uk

Go Ape

t: 08456 439 215

goape.co.uk

Bike hire & shop

t: 01580 879694

quenchuk.co.uk

Bedgebury Forest Cycle Club

boarsonbikes.co.uk

Bedgebury is open all year (except Christmas day) from 8am. Check our website or on-site notices for closing times.

forestryengland.uk/bedgebury

 [bedgeburypinetum](https://www.facebook.com/bedgeburypinetum)

 [@bedgeburyP](https://twitter.com/bedgeburyP)

 [forestryengland](https://www.instagram.com/forestryengland)



the friends
of Bedgebury
Pinetum

Join as a Friends member for admission during normal opening hours all year, access to other gardens and a range of local discounts and offers. Visit bedgeburypinetum.org.uk or email membership@bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

 [Bedgeburyfriends](https://www.facebook.com/Bedgeburyfriends)  [lovebedgebury](https://www.instagram.com/lovebedgebury)



Forestry England forests and woodlands have been certified in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)



For alternative formats, please get in touch:
Call **0300 067 4000** or email
info@forestryengland.uk

Drawing you in

Wind your way through the young redwoods into the pinetum and down to the log seating to start the trail.

1. Visionary planting

Thanks to the foresight of the early curators of Bedgebury National pinetum, we are able to experience plantings like this magnificent redwood grove today.

Planted in 1935, these majestic trees give us a tiny taste of the sheer might of the redwood forests growing in the wild on the west coast of America.

2. An ideal setting

The view in front of you showcases the undulating landscape and original conifers that attracted Kew scientists looking for a new home for the National Pinetum in the early 1920s.

This backdrop gave them a lot to work with, enabling them to create a display to which we are continually adding. It is a truly dynamic and evolving collection; here you can see conifers from the original estate looking down on newer plantings along the valley.

Continue uphill on the path for 70m, until the big break in the hedge, then turn right onto the grass.

3. A considered view

The vista ahead to Bedgebury House celebrates our trees and the pinetum's origins as a private tree collection on the Bedgebury Estate.

Framed with new plantings of rare conifers, which have been grown in our nursery from wild-collected seed, it is a work in (slow-growing) progress.

As our curator Dan knows, a lot of joy and pride comes with creating new vistas, especially when such rare and beautiful trees are used.

4. A chance to mix things up

This area, acquired as empty fields in 1993, provided a blank canvas to experiment with new planting.

Traditional scientific planting, where similar species are grouped together, leaves our collection vulnerable to disease and storm damage. It can also look a bit boring! The mixed approach used here mimics natural environments, giving greater visual interest and a more resilient collection.

5. Showing off on a grand scale

The Beresford family, owners of the Bedgebury Estate, planted new exotic trees for their guests' enjoyment and to flaunt their wealth and status.

Many of the trees around the lake are original showpiece plantings from the 1870s. Following the fashion of the time, the Beresfords chose exotic and impressive species recently introduced to the UK by Victorian explorers and plant hunters.



6. Enjoy the little things...

Dwarf and slow-growing conifers can make beautiful garden plants. Who wouldn't want their own mini pinetum?

Conifers often get a bad press from their reputation of obscuring views and blocking light in gardens, but it's all about choosing the right ones. This 50-year-old collection, set amongst the towering Scots pines, showcases the variety of form, texture and colour that's available in miniature size.

Follow the stony path uphill to the left for 130m. Go past the brick building on your right. Bear round to the right and continue uphill to reach 2 benches. Head to your right, and continue downhill until you come out into a wide grass avenue (Hill's Avenue). Turn right.

7. Into the distance

It's not just about the trees. Space and views are also important reasons why people love the pinetum.

The National Pinetum was the brainchild of the Kew scientist William Dallimore. For him, Bedgebury was not only a site of scientific interest but also a great canvas for inspired landscape planning. He created beautiful avenues and vistas, such as this one running right through the pinetum.

8. Travelling back in time

Many of the trees bordering this path are the remains of a Lawson cypress avenue planted in the 1850s.

These trees lined the route to Bedgebury House from Flimwell. A rather grand statement planting, this would have given a pretty impressive view to any visitors to the estate as they were transported along the driveway in their horse-drawn carriage.

9. Not to be forgotten

The English oaks scattered around the pinetum are the oldest trees at Bedgebury.

These were part of the original forest that was cleared to make way for the National Pinetum. Dallimore regarded old trees as essential in preserving the character of the landscape, so kept a few to give structure and shelter to the new plantings. This oak on the corner is one of the lucky survivors.

Turn right and head down the path to the visitor centre and on to new adventures.

Leading you on

Our curator has carefully planned the plantings around you, to entice and guide you on to the next step of your journey.

Where will you go? The cherry tree avenue guides you to the play area, the display of dwarf conifers lures you to the visitor centre offering refreshment. Or even if it's time to go, the planting in the carpark – arranged in continents to reflect the global nature of the collection – gives you a final glimpse of the beauty of our trees.

Follow our trail to discover how Bedgebury's conifers have been presented through time for people's enjoyment, creating the look and feel of the pinetum today.

A Sense of Purpose

Bedgebury National Pinetum is cared for by Forestry England for people, wildlife and trees. It offers a sanctuary where scientists can study and visitors can enjoy diverse and beautiful conifers.

It is:

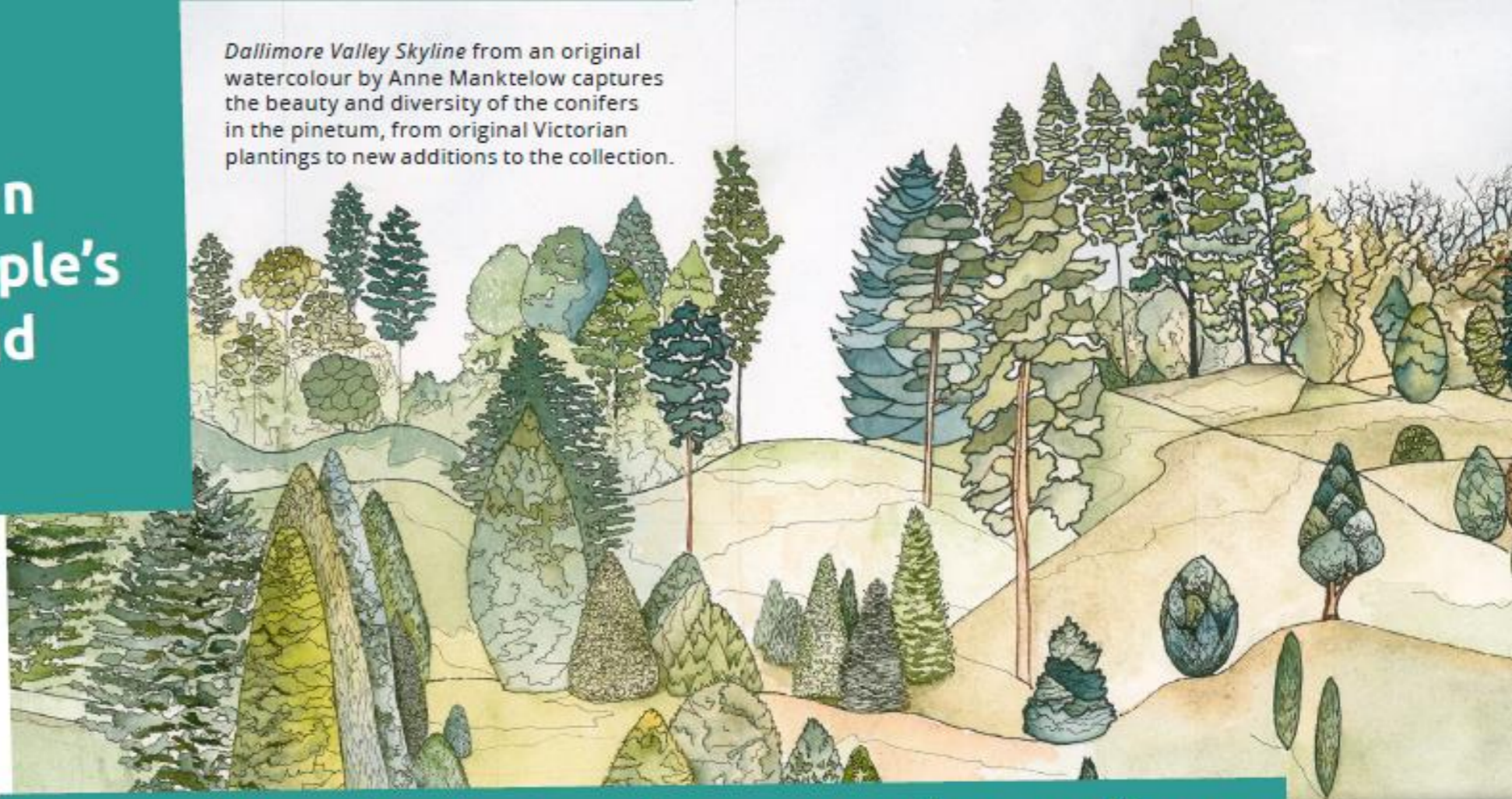
- A place to showcase the diversity of conifers that can be grown in our climate
- A reference collection for foresters, botanists, horticulturalists and members of the public
- A place of scientific research for future forestry species
- A place to help conserve the diversity of tree species in our collection and in the wild

What is a pinetum?

A **pinetum** is an arboretum (tree collection grown for science, educational and ornamental purposes) which consists mainly of conifers (but not just pines).

A **conifer** is a cone-bearing tree that is usually (but not always) evergreen with needle-like leaves.

Dallimore Valley Skyline from an original watercolour by Anne Manktelow captures the beauty and diversity of the conifers in the pinetum, from original Victorian plantings to new additions to the collection.



An evolving landscape for a growing audience

1. Conifers to impress:

The pinetum was created by the Beresford family, owners of the **Bedgebury Estate**. The first conifers were planted in 1836 as part of new landscaping for their **guests** to admire and enjoy.

2. Conifers to educate:

In 1925, a partnership between the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the Forestry Commission established the National Pinetum at Bedgebury. Foremost, it was a place for **scientists, foresters and students of horticulture** to collect, grow and learn about conifers.

3. Conifers to captivate:

William Dallimore, the first curator, also wanted to make the pinetum look good for people to enjoy. He planted ornamental trees and plants alongside the conifers to create attractive plantings, enhanced by the natural features of the landscape. He encouraged **visitors who were genuinely interested in trees**, but was reluctant to welcome daytrippers for fear of damage to the collection.

4. Conifers to inspire:

Since 1965 the Pinetum has been cared for solely by the Forestry Commission (now Forestry England). Growing the collection with a focus on conservation work, we now encourage **everyone** to come and experience our pinetum, inspiring them **to connect with our trees and care for their future**.

Today, Bedgebury National Pinetum is probably the largest collection of conifers on one site in the world.

