

Gardens count the cost of the storms

Storms Isha and Jocelyn caused thousands of pounds worth of damage at Scotland's famous botanical gardens as they were hit by the highest wind speeds since recording began.

Staff at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) in the capital and its three regional sites are still assessing the full cost of repairs after the storms struck this week.

In Edinburgh, Storm Isha blew over a large birch, while around 20 glasshouse panes were smashed, polycarbonate panels were blown out and a polytunnel in a plant nursery was damaged as winds hit 70mph – the highest since recording started in 2019.

During Storm Jocelyn, a cypress tree was lost after its large footplate was lifted from the ground, while multiple branches and debris were strewn across the Garden.

Glasshouses will remain closed to horticultural and scientific staff at the Edinburgh site until repairs are completed by specialist roof access contractors next week.

The RBGE's three regional gardens at Benmore in Argyll, Dawyck in the Borders, and Logan in Dumfries and Galloway also suffered storm damage.

At Benmore, where power was lost, a clear up operation was underway after several trees fell or lost branches, while at

Logan shrubs were blown out of the ground.

Dawyck Botanic Garden, near Peebles, suffered most damage during Storm Isha, with 13 specimens affected by the gale requiring climbing inspections for aerial damage and up to four trees may have to be completely removed. Further damage was caused by Storm Jocelyn, including to an historic giant redwood, with the clear up of debris estimated to take up to six weeks.

Raoul Curtis-Machin, RBGE's Director of Horticulture and Visitor Experience, said: "We are still clearing up the mess from Storms Isha and Jocelyn, and whilst we were fortunate to avoid any catastrophic losses over the last week, there was still noteworthy damage across four sites of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

"Despite having names like naughty children, these storms have multiple impacts on our Gardens with our teams diverted from essential winter projects and maintenance work to clear dangerous debris scattered across our sites.

"We also lost valuable revenue from the closure of the Edinburgh Garden – revenue that goes towards ongoing research into conservation and biodiversity loss, garden maintenance and upgrades.

"Our Gardens at Benmore, Logan and Dawyck escaped this fate as they have not yet reopened for the new season.

"Although there are always storms in Scotland in winter, it does feel like they are happening more frequently. The rainfall is definitely getting more extreme, and the teams on the ground feel like they're barely getting a breather between one storm and the next.

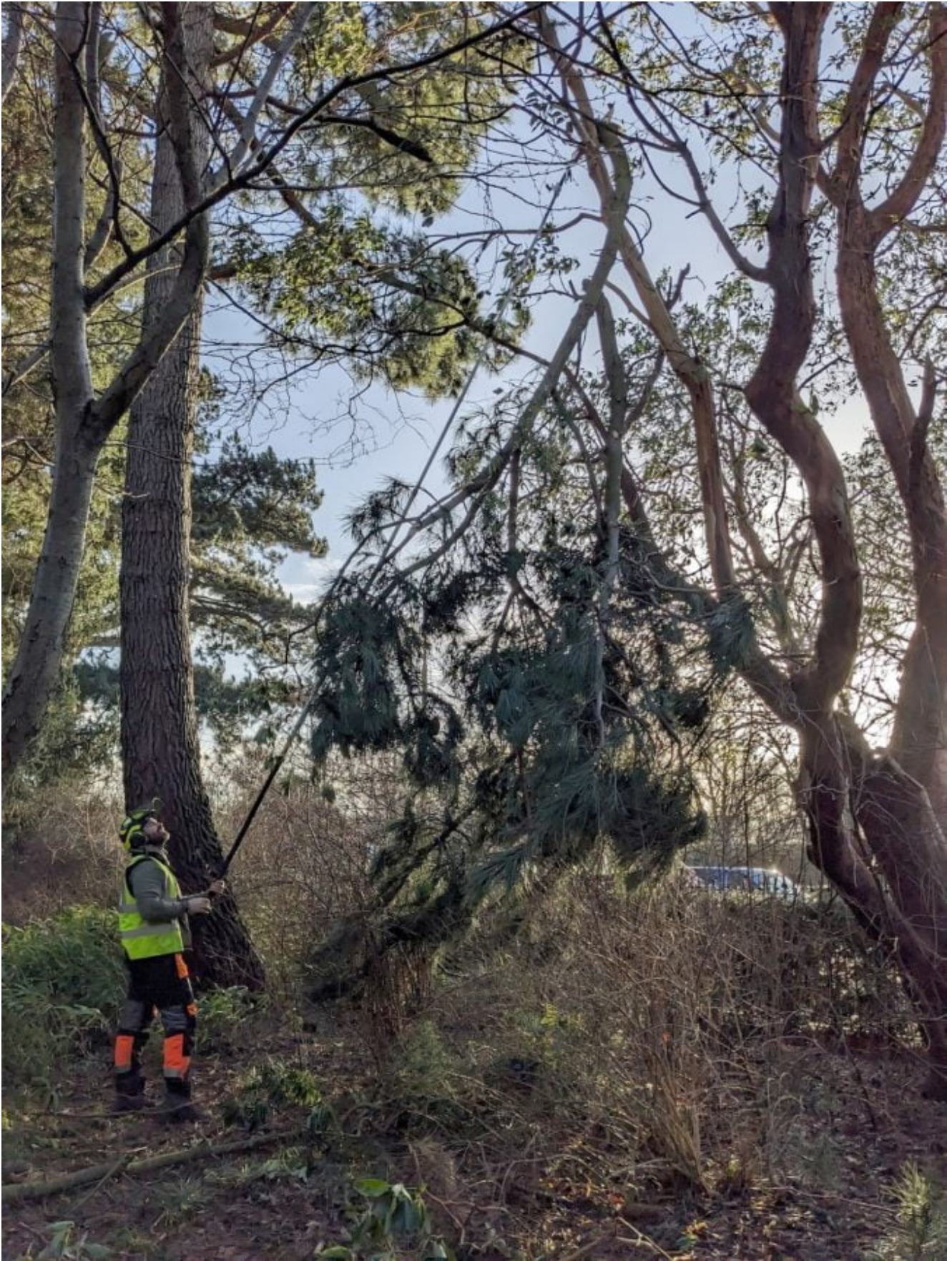
"As the climate emergency deepens, we expect to experience storms such as Isha and Jocelyn more often and in different seasons."



HORTICULTURALIST PETER WILSON IN A NEWP VEHICLE SAFELY DISMANTLES A FALLEN CYPRESS AFTER ITS LARGE ROOT PLATE WAS LIFTED FROM THE GROUND IN STORM JOCELYN.



A CYPRESS TREE'S LARGE ROOT PLATE WAS LIFTED FROM THE GROUND IN STORM JOCELYN.



AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH (RBGE), HORTICULTURALIST TOM BROK REMOVES A PINE HANGING BRANCH FROM A NEIGHBOURING ARBUTUS TREE FOLLOWING STORMS ISHA AND JOCELYN.



AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH (RBGE), A FALLEN SILVER BIRCH IS REMOVED FOLLOWING STORMS ISHA AND JOCELYN.



AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH (RBGE), A FALLEN SILVER BIRCH IS REMOVED FROM THE JOHN HOPE GATEWAY SERVICE YARD BY HORTICULTURALIST ROWEEN SUESS FOLLOWING STORMS ISHA AND

JOCELYN.

The photos below are from Dawyck and Benmore where there was also some damage after the storms.







