



## Check-a-sweet chestnut Health and Safety guidance

This guidance is for volunteers partaking in the Check-a-Sweet-Chestnut citizen science project and is in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work act 1974. Following this safety guidance will ensure safe working practices for our volunteers.

### Personal safety

- Volunteers must only do work for which they are physically capable.
- Younger volunteers and vulnerable adults should be accompanied by a responsible adult to ensure their safety.
- All volunteers must follow the government's coronavirus guidelines about travel and exercise and should, under no circumstances, break any of these rules to assist with this citizen science project.
- For information about latest government coronavirus guidelines including advice regarding social distancing, masks, handwash visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Covid vulnerable people should only partake (working within government coronavirus guidelines) if this does not put them into any situations which may increase their risk of catching covid19.
- Accidents while working on the project should be reported to the project email address [checkchestnut@rhs.org.uk](mailto:checkchestnut@rhs.org.uk), this is monitored daily.

### Working Hazards and risks

Volunteers may encounter the following hazards and risk and should therefore follow the recommended advice to reduce the likelihood on an accident.

<b>Hazard or Risk</b>	<b>Recommendations to reduce the likelihood of an accident.</b>
Lone working which may leave the volunteer vulnerable to having an accident or getting lost and not easily being able to get help.	Volunteers must use a buddy system that requires that they advise someone (e.g. family member) when they are going out and where they are going to, and expected return time. You are advised to always carry a fully charged mobile phone. Avoid any activities that could cause serious injury such as climbing trees, entering caves or confined spaces, working next to deep fast flowing water, or using sharp tools (note sharp tools are not a requirement for the project work). Ensure that you have plenty of water and snacks with you and take regular breaks if needed.

<p>Working in extreme weather which may expose the volunteer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very cold temperatures leading to hyperthermia</li> <li>• Sunstroke in extremely hot weather</li> <li>• Lightning strike to trees in the vicinity which may lead to electrocution or burns</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers must check the weather forecast and weather conditions before commencing any volunteer work. Avoid going out and working in difficult or dangerous weather conditions. When working outside you must ensure that you are wearing suitable clothing for the weather conditions, e.g. a warm and/or</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High winds leading to falling branches, which may cause physical harm on impact.</li> <li>• Severe rain with the risk of flooding, leading to the volunteer being trapped or washed away</li> </ul>	<p>waterproof coats, or hat and sunscreen etc. If working in very hot conditions, ensure that you have plenty of water with you and take regular breaks if needed.</p>
<p>Trips, slips and falls, which may cause physical injury to the volunteer. The likely causes of these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tripping or falling over branches or other debris on the ground or in the undergrowth</li> <li>• Slipping on wet foliage or mud</li> <li>• Difficult terrain, such as pot holes, wet, sloping ground or uneven ground</li> <li>• Falling into bodies of water (if trees are near lakes or rivers)</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers must make sure that they are wearing robust and suitable foot attire (e.g. sturdy boots). Keep a check on where you are placing your feet. Checking trees should be done when light levels are good (i.e. avoid checking at dawn or dusk if light levels are low. Avoid walking on difficult terrain e.g. attempting to go down steep slippery terrain</p>
<p>Checking by a roadside which may lead to physical injury from stepping into the path of a road traffic due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees close to the road edge</li> <li>• Poor visibility</li> <li>• Lack of pedestrian access</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers who are likely to be checking trees close to roads should wear high visibility clothing. Avoid going down roads with no pedestrian access. Avoid working by the road when visibility is poor.</p>
<p>Bodily harm from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrapes and scratches from twigs and plants</li> <li>• Bites and stings from insects or other small mammals.</li> </ul>	<p>We recommend that volunteers are up-to-date with their tetanus immunisation. Ensure that you are wearing clothing that is suitable for the work and provides adequate protection from hazards e.g. sturdy boots, long sleeves, long trousers. Do not approach small mammals. You can consider wearing insect repellent if insects are likely to be active in the area that you are working.</p>
<p>Bodily or facial injuries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks of falling branches which may cause bodily harm on impact</li> <li>• Facial injuries from walking into low hanging twigs or branches.</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers should not check trees which look dead and potentially hazardous, for example where a number of branches have already dropped onto the ground. Avoid working in windy conditions. On approaching the tree, keep a look out for low branches and twigs at face level.</p>

<p>Contact with harmful substances such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weils disease or hepatitis if working near lakes or rivers</li><li>• Lyme disease</li><li>• poisonous plants or mushrooms</li></ul>	<p>Volunteers may come into the vicinity of poisonous plants. Avoid picking or touching plants on unknown identity. Do not pick and eat mushrooms in the vicinity in case these are poisonous. Avoid bathing in bodies of water or drinking from streams, lakes or other bodies of waters. Volunteers should ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly on their return home.</p>
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<p>Risk of allergies such as Asthama, or hayfever, bee stings</p>	<p>Volunteers suffering from environmental or bee allergies should ensure have any medication required in consultation with the GP. Pollen forecasts can be checked and working in high pollen conditions should be avoided.</p>
<p>Entering a field or site with animals, which may lead to attack by animals such as butting, biting, being charged at.</p>	<p>Avoid going into fields where there are farm or other domestic animals, especially on private land where there is no public right of way. Entry to private land is by permission only. If you are crossing a field with farm or other domestic animals, only do so once you have assessed the risk and determined it to be negligible.</p>
<p>Entering private land, which may lead to verbal or physical abuse by the landowner.</p>	<p>Volunteers must not enter onto private land unless they have the permission of the landowner</p>