

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT THE FIELD

Your health and safety and that of other volunteers at the Field are really important.

Gardening is increasingly recognised as being a positive influence on our physical, emotional and social well being. Being outside, in nature observing the seasons and wildlife is life enhancing. The benefits of working with our hands and following the growing process from seed to fork are countless.!

However working with tools/machinery (manual and powered), lifting items, climbing ladders, insect bites/stings, weather conditions, back or other muscle strain, lone working etc are just some examples of risks that may be encountered at the Field.

Please take the time to consider the following:

Selecting appropriate tasks and pacing yourself

1. Please do not take on too much – it is fine to say if you feel a particular task is not appropriate for you or if you are becoming tired or have any concerns about being able to carry out a task safely.
2. Make sure you warm up before any heavier tasks (especially any lifting)
3. Pace yourself/vary the tasks and take regular breaks (we have facilities for making a cup of tea/coffee etc.!).

Tools, clothing etc

4. Try to select tools from the shed that are an appropriate size for you – and let us know if you have suggestions as to tools which might make work easier/less of a strain.
5. Sturdy footwear with a good grip is recommended – wellies if conditions are particularly wet.
6. We encourage you to wear gloves when working, handling compost, dung etc (thicker/thorn-proof gloves are available for heavier jobs or working with spiky plants etc). A supply of gloves is kept in the shed – please return them here after use.
7. Other PPE such as eye protection is also available and may be necessary /advised for certain jobs.
8. Take care when working with dung and compost that this does not get into contact with your eyes/face. Wear gloves. When working with compost do so in a well-ventilated space.
9. We have some extra over-trousers, wellies and jackets which you can use.
10. Put tools away carefully eg. Forked ends facing inwards.

Use of power tools/specialist equipment

You are not expected to use nor should you attempt to use any power tools or other more specialist tools without prior training/agreement of a trustee. If carrying out any work with this sort of equipment you must wear appropriate clothing, footwear, PPE etc and you should not work alone.

Hygiene

We encourage you to use the handwashing facilities – there is a sink and soap and sanitiser behind the main shed.

There is a composting toilet in a wooden hut to the rear of the smaller polytunnel. There is hand sanitiser in the toilet hut and there are two outside sinks where you can wash your hands.

First aid

There is a first aid kit and emergency instructions in the main shed. The nearest defibrillator is outside the chemists shop on Bridge Street. There are very accessible resources on First Aid online eg British Red Cross short free videos.

We encourage you to let us know of any medical issues of which you feel we should be aware. An emergency contact number for you can be entered in the notebook in the shed.

Weather

1. Extremes of weather can be challenging when working outside – hot/sunny weather can lead to heat exhaustion, sun burn and dehydration, whilst cold, wet and windy conditions can lead to hypothermia. Please come prepared for the weather (which can change suddenly!). Sun hats/sun cream or warm/waterproof clothing may be needed, depending on the forecast and season.
2. The ground can become slippery and waterlogged so please ensure your footwear has good grip and, ideally, will protect your feet in the event of you or someone dropping something on your foot.
3. We aim to let you know in advance if the weather is such that work in the Field is not possible or is not advisable due to weather conditions but you should also keep an eye on conditions during your session and make a decision yourself or in consultation with others about whether it is safe or sensible to carry on.

Lone working

It is possible that you may sometimes find yourself first up at the Field on a work day, or the last out – and, occasionally, the only one working there. If this is the case you must take extra care not to undertake any tasks which might present a risk and ideally someone should know that you are at the Field and when you expect to be home. We recommend you always carry a mobile phone with you for use in an emergency.

Bees

Please be aware that there is a beehive at the east side of the field near the road beyond the plots. Do not walk directly in front of the hive as this may activate the guard bees who protect the entrance to the hive.

Ticks

As in most of the outdoors now, it is possible to pick up ticks (small insects which latch on to your skin and can transmit disease such as Lyme) Tick extractor tools are in the first aid kit. You may wish to wear insect repellent. It is good practice to check yourself (or get someone else to check you) after being outdoors especially in long grass.

If you spot a hazard or have concerns that someone may be at risk

If you see anything that could present a hazard or which might become a hazard please tell others working at the Field with you straightaway and/or a trustee. If safe to do so, take steps to rectify the situation, for example, picking up a tool that has been left where someone might fall onto or over it.

Keep an eye on each other -you might also notice that someone has taken on too much or may be suffering due to heat exhaustion or as a result of cold weather, in which case have a friendly word with them or, if necessary, alert a trustee/another volunteer.

Concerns, accidents and near-misses

If you have any concerns about health and safety at any point, or if you have or witness an accident or “near miss” please let a trustee know as soon as possible.

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