

Community gardening-Health and safety checklist

In community gardening, the health and safety of all gardeners and the public is paramount.

To prepare for safe community gardening, your group should:

- Identify a small number of 'lead gardeners' (volunteers who will take a lead role in gardening activities) and first aiders.
- Ensure lead gardeners have access to contact numbers or e-mail of all members.
- Carry out regular inspections of the garden and address any major problems (hazardous waste, unstable structures).
- Provide first aid kits for gardeners.
- All lead gardeners should read and sign the risk assessment and ensure volunteers adhere to it.
- Provide appropriate, safe equipment and resources for gardening activities.
- Establish safe procedures for using and storing tools, removing garden waste, storing compost and plants, watering etc. Ensure lead gardeners are familiar with these.
- Keep an accident book, investigate and record any accidents.
- Have procedures for the safe use, handling, storage and transportation of tools, plants, soil etc
- Have a schedule of activities for the session taking into account weather, planting schedules, lighting etc. Groups should keep a record of activities – what is done and by whom.

To ensure the safety of gardeners when going on site, the lead gardener should:

- Make sure everyone knows who the 'lead gardener' and (if present) the first aider is.
- Have a first aid kit and information about the nearest A&E department
- Have a plan for the session and the tasks to be carried out.
- Ensure that the necessary tools, plants and resources are provided.
- Provide comprehensive health and safety information, training and supervision to those who may need it, particularly inexperienced or vulnerable people and children.
- Lead gardener to ensure that everybody is wearing appropriate shoes and gloves.
- If working near roads, please wear hi- vis jackets.
- Children must be paired with a responsible adult
- It is the responsibility of gardeners to ensure that they have the correct immunisations.
- All gardeners to wash hands after each gardening session

Be aware of potential hazards including:

- Poisonous and harmful plants.
- Pathways and walkways-keep them clear of tools and obstructions. Be aware of slippery and uneven surfaces.
- Tools and wheelbarrows, ensure they are in good working order
- Power and electrical tools, only use if you are trained and experienced in using them and take responsibility for their safe operation.

Further advice and guidance can be found at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/outreach>