

Safety Procedures for Kingston Edible Forest Garden

Introduction

This procedure is intended to help keep everyone safe and avoid injuries at Kingston Edible Forest Garden (KEF.) The advice and rules need to be followed because they are based on avoiding accidents and near-misses which have happened.

Responsibility

Visitors and participants at Kingston Edible Forest Garden are responsible for their safety and for their actions in ensuring the safety of others. Minors and vulnerable adults must be with an adult who is responsible for them.

Rules

1. Preventing cuts

Gardening gloves are to be worn. There has been the occasional cut finger from picking up broken glass. Despite efforts to remove it, there remain pieces of broken glass from the past in the soil. Any found are to be collected and taken off site.

Wear gloves when using tools and refer to the fruitwise.net YouTube video below to understand how you are at risk from saw cuts: if your hand holding the saw slips forward it can be cut; if you cut through the branch to your other hand you can be cut. One of the tree surgeons of the Urban Orchard Project was in plaster for months from a pruning saw cut. Gloves also protect against oak processionary moth (see below)

Sharp knives will not be used without permission of a lead participant. Grafts will normally be limited to easier cleft grafts. Brian cut his finger with a grafting knife. The difficulty with knives is not that one cannot cut away from oneself or hold wrists together to prevent one hand cutting the other, but that after a time it is inevitable that one loses attention and focus.

Nails are to be removed from any wood brought onto site.

Glass and objects with sharp edges are not to be brought onto site or are to be removed when found.

Thick clothing will give better protection against brambles and nettles.

Spiny branches are to be disposed of to a dedicated hazardous wood pile

Tree such as blackthorn, plum and hawthorn have spiny needles. These have punctured the soles of Brian's running shoes.

2. Preventing falls

Ladders must be securely tied before working when it is reasonable to do so and follow the HSE guide on working from ladders. Cutting branches or trunks more than 3" thick need agreement and assessment of a lead participant.

Pete tied the top of his ladder securely to a tree branch before starting to saw the branch off further from the trunk; when the cut was through the branch, it un-weighted the branch so that the branch lifted such that the ladder no longer touched the ground. Pete was OK but if he had not secured the ladder with rope he would have fallen.

Always maintain three points of contact when climbing. Beware of the difference in strength between sturdy hardwood trees and less sturdy or softwood trees. Tristan fell from a willow tree and cracked a rib. A healthy, fit Worcester Park man died a few years ago after falling from a ladder in his garden.

3. **Work at an appropriate distance from others.** Graham threw a log over his shoulder and hit Brian on the head.
4. **Safety spectacles are to be worn.** We find this difficult to enforce and you need to be responsible for your decision if you do not comply. Brian was poked in the eye by a stick. It is easy for branches or bramble to whip into the eye when working.
5. **Manual handling:** use correct technique with a straight back, not twisting and using the legs to lift. Refer to the HSE link below.
6. **Lone workers or at least one of a group must have a working mobile phone** with them so they can call for help if needed.
7. **Insect risks**

We have oak processionary moth. Dominic got a very itchy hand for a week after picking up branches affected. Wear gloves when handling oak. Do not allow children to climb the trees. Sorry. Their hairs are irritants which cause an itchy rash or in extreme cases nausea and toxic shock. The hairs are left in the nest after they leave, and the irritant remains active long after, as Dominic found. Virginia told us that on Wimbledon Common the hairs can fall from the trees and cause irritation. The moth is in its caterpillar stage from March to July.

Lyme disease may be present locally. Follow precautions such as: wearing long trousers to prevent tick bites and checking for ticks on your body. We have not yet been aware of ticks at KEF. To prevent transfer to KEF, do not bring biomass to site.

Weil disease is present in the Hogsmill valley. Avoid contact with water if you have broken skin.

8. **Chain saws shall only be used by those trained in their use and with the agreement of the lead participants.** We have had no accidents involving chain saws but Brian did have a youngster come into CAB for advice who was on crutches, unable to work, and possibly

would not regain proper use of his leg after he cut into his thigh with a chainsaw.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FRKU4RmeDO> gives an introduction to hazards

9. **Keep the site and the shed tidy**

A rope holding a hammock gave way and Shafiq was briefly knocked unconscious by hitting his head when he fell. Why did this happen? An inadequate rope was used to tie the hammock because the shed was so full and untidy that appropriate strength rope wasn't found, although it was in the shed. An instruction to double up the poor rope was followed on one end but not the other. The end with the single piece of rope failed.

10. **The site should be clear of people other than beekeepers when their work requires suits. Work on the hives should be done out of school hours and when there are no games on the university playing fields.**

Brian was photographing suited beekeepers and a single bee landed on his eye lid. One of the beekeepers in suits came over to brush it off but brought bees with him on his suit. These stung Brian around the eyes.

11. **Poisonous plants**

We have some weeds of the nightshade family, yew (which may have poisonous berries), potatoes which have poisonous fruit if they arise and no doubt others. Be aware and especially look after children.

Note that there can be some risk if seeds are saved and used, for example any of the curcubit family (squash, pumpkin, courgette/marrow, melon) could have crossed with gourd and the resulting fruit would be poisonous. If it tastes bitter or does not look right, don't eat it.

Giant Hogweed is present in the Hogsmill valley and is an extremely dangerous plant which can cause blindness if in contact with the eyes, blistering and sensitivity to sun if in contact with the skin. Tomak may have been affected.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=458> gives information. There is native hogweed at kef and it can cause rashes and other skin complaints but reactions tend not be as severe as with Giant Hogweed.

12. **Any injuries or near miss events must be reported to a lead participant** so that action can be taken to avoid a recurrence.

Further information:

HSE guide on working from ladders: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>

HSE guide on manual handling: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

www.fruitwise.net youtube video on saw safety: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxRy9ugLWIU>

<http://www.rospa.com/homesafety/adviceandinformation/general/home-garden-checklist.aspx>

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tick-bite-risks-and-prevention-of-lyme-disease?utm_source=GDPR+CIEEM+List&utm_campaign=21cd75b2b4-

[CIEEM+eNews+2019.05.2121%2F5%2F19+3%3A50+PM&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6b23f028b5-21cd75b2b4-148737053&fbclid=IwAR2HV4-gEVAa-9m0HMP0vHQLij6zOuj-1DF0a88chxcnzsKYwxaMfVGTKQ](https://www.cieem.com/news/2019/05/21/21%2F5%2F19+3%3A50+PM&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6b23f028b5-21cd75b2b4-148737053&fbclid=IwAR2HV4-gEVAa-9m0HMP0vHQLij6zOuj-1DF0a88chxcnzsKYwxaMfVGTKQ) Lyme disease information