



NEWS RELEASE



24 September 2013

The search is on to gather Hedgerow Harvest History

Volunteers drawn from Hampshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight signed up this weekend to The Tree Council's new Hedgerow Harvest History project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) – and the call has gone out for others to join them.

This oral history project, backed by an HLF grant of £97,300, will capture the personal stories of people who gathered food from British hedgerows during World War II and compare these with the experiences of European migrant communities who forage similarly today.

Launched on 22 September at The Tree Council's South East Tree Warden Forum at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey, Hampshire – which brought together volunteer tree champions from communities across the region – the Hedgerow Harvest History project will continue until June 2015.

Margaret Lipscombe from The Tree Council explained: "The project celebrates our heritage of hedgerow foraging and our initial call is for volunteers to train to be 'story takers'. We will then ask people to come forward with their stories. We want to capture this knowledge before it's lost – a living archive which will also demonstrate to a new generation the value of wild hedgerow food.

"We'll also work with communities to promote traditional conservation skills through local training events, including rejuvenating hedges and harvesting fruit. These, too, will be opportunities for new generations to learn from experienced foragers."

Some of what's involved in being a 'story taker' was outlined at the forum by Matthew Paskins of University College London who will be leading one-day training courses in oral history recording. Tree Wardens at the forum were asked to volunteer to be trained to collect oral histories using digital recorders and video cameras. They were also asked to come forward if they had foraged through the war, or knew someone who had foraged then or anyone from mainland Europe who actively forages today.

"We're very interested, too, in hearing from people in the wider communities across Hampshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight if they feel they can help with any aspects of our project," said Margaret.

Find out more from the website www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/oralhistory, or phone The Tree Council on 020 7407 9992.

ENDS

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:
Barbara Hall: 020 8858 4154, bmh.treecouncil@mycenae.co.uk
Margaret Lipscombe: 020 7407 9992, ml@treecouncil.org.uk
Jon Stokes: 07850 389862, jon.stokes@treecouncil.org.uk

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 35,000 projects with more than £5.5bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk

The Tree Council and its Tree Warden Scheme

The Tree Council is the UK's lead charity for trees, promoting their importance in a changing environment. It works in partnership with communities, organisations and government to make trees matter to everyone, and is responsible for the annual community action programme that includes Seed Gathering Season, National Tree Week and Walk in the Woods month.

Fundamental to community action is the UK-wide volunteer Tree Warden Scheme which The Tree Council co-ordinates and manages. The 8,000 Tree Wardens form a national force of volunteers in local networks, dedicated to their communities' trees – in town, city and countryside. They organise activities, fundraise, research and advise on trees and related topics.

To find out more go to www.treecouncil.org.uk

Hedgerow Harvest

The Tree Council's Hedgerow Harvest initiative encourages people to gather and grow the free, healthy food on their doorstep and offers advice about what to grow and how to plant and maintain a productive hedge. It aims to build a network of hedgerow foragers who can inspire their neighbours, share their favourite recipes and carry out projects to plant productive hedges in their communities. www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk