



## NEWS RELEASE



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### Foraging tales from the hedgerow wanted for oral history project

What did you do in the War? Were you a young hedgerow forager at a time when food was scarce or rationed, or do you know someone with tales to tell of harvesting wild food – now or in the past?

If so The Tree Council would like to hear from you for its new Hedgerow Harvest History project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

This oral history project is capturing the personal stories of people in **Hampshire, West Sussex** and the **Isle of Wight** who have gathered food from British hedgerows in the past, as well as the experiences of others, such as European migrant communities, who forage similarly today.

Backed by an HLF grant, The Tree Council's Hedgerow Harvest History project will continue until June 2015.

Margaret Lipscombe from The Tree Council explained: "The Hedgerow Harvest History project celebrates our heritage of hedgerow foraging and we've already come across some fascinating memories. However, we're very keen for other people across Hampshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight to come forward with their stories. We want to capture this knowledge before it's lost.

"Our aim is to create a living archive which will also demonstrate to a new generation the value of wild hedgerow food, so we're hoping that we can get stories from a wide range of people.

"We're also working with school pupils and others in local communities in the three counties to promote traditional conservation skills through local training events, including rejuvenating hedges and harvesting fruit. These, too, are opportunities for new generations to learn from experienced foragers."

Tree Council Tree Wardens and other volunteers throughout the area have now been trained by Matthew Paskins of University College London to collect these oral histories and are on standby to talk to people about their memories and experiences of hedgerow harvesting.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: "This project is a fascinating mix of handing down skills not only from one generation to the next but also from one culture to another. And in shedding light on an all-but forgotten practice it is also providing a valuable introduction to our shared natural heritage."

To find out more about the project visit the website [www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/oralhistory](http://www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/oralhistory). To volunteer your foraging stories, email [hedgerowharvest@treecouncil.org.uk](mailto:hedgerowharvest@treecouncil.org.uk) or phone The Tree Council on 020 7407 9992.

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## **Notes to editors**

### **The Heritage Lottery Fund**

The project Hedgerow Harvest History was awarded a grant of £97,300 in April 2013. 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 36,000 projects with more than £5.9bn across the UK. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://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](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

### **Hedgerow Harvest**

The Hedgerow Harvest History project is part of The Tree Council's Hedgerow Harvest initiative. This 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](http://www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk)