

Invitation to seek out sweet chestnuts

From April, the public will be able to take part in a new citizen science survey to build up data on sweet chestnuts in the UK (*Castanea sativa*).

Little is now known about the distribution and health of these magnificent trees, which can live for up to 700 years.

This makes it difficult to estimate the level of threat from new invasive pests such as oriental chestnut gall wasp (*Dryosmos kuriphilus*) and sweet chestnut blight fungus (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) and to devise efficient protection measures. Both of which can cause damage or even kill trees,

The Check-a-Sweet Chestnut survey uses mobile phone apps TreeZilla and Tree Alert to help log location, trunk thickness and signs of wasp leaf gall on trees in public areas and private gardens. This will help plant health authorities to monitor outbreaks of invasive organisms and so help to protect UK trees.

Respondents will receive periodic updates and a final report when the survey closes in 2022.

Visit [rhs.org.uk/check-a-sweet chestnut](https://rhs.org.uk/check-a-sweet-chestnut) from 1 April 2021.