

Guidance for running urban botany walks and other events for beginner botanists

This guidance is to help walk organisers and leaders offer urban botany walks which are broadly accessible for a diverse group and to help make sure beginners have an enjoyable experience. It should be read alongside [Guidance on leading & organising BSBI meetings](#). Additional guidance is appended to increase accessibility for specific groups.

Planning stage

- Consider recruiting one or more co-leaders for the walk.
- Use an online ticket registration system like Eventbrite or BSBI equivalent and limit the group size to 8 per co-leader, not including carers.
- Plan an event of maximum 90 mins to start & finish at a transport hub, eg. a rail station and approx. 1.5km circular route, primarily on hard surfaces. Do a risk assessment.
- Identify where there are public toilets including an accessible toilet near the start/finish.

Marketing and registration stage

- Advertise your walk through a variety of channels including social media and in partnership with local groups, for example through the local Wildlife Trust, allotment societies, local community groups and local support groups.
- Emphasise that it's aimed at beginners and will celebrate the benefits of urban botany.
- Ask participants to flag accessibility needs at registration.

At the start of the walk

- Explain the plan for the walk, the objectives, and give a safety briefing.
- Share plant spotter sheets including digital versions with pictures and descriptions of 8-10 urban plants which participants are likely to find on the walk or nearby.
- Include your contact details and the web address for the BSBI.

During the walk

- Try not to overwhelm participants with too many plant names or too much information.
- Aim to tell participants something snappy, interesting and memorable about the plants you focus on. Include brief plant stories, where names came from and/or ethnobotany uses. Encourage participants to share their plant knowledge and stories.
- Include how participants can experience plants using all senses.

At the end of the walk

- Involve participants in recapping the plants you've seen.
- Mention that the BSBI web address is on the spotter sheet and what the Society has to offer beginners.
- Ask for feedback from participants by email after the event.

Appendix How to make your walk or event even more accessible

The following additional guidance has been suggested by accessibility stakeholders and may increase the accessibility of your walk or other event for specific groups. It may be a good idea to badge the first one of these specialist walks as a pilot, from which you can gain useful feedback.

Increasing accessibility for beginner botanists who have mobility issues or are wheelchair users

- Limit the distance of the walk to between 1 km or centre the event in one area, for example in a council-managed site where accessibility has already been addressed.
- Check where disabled parking bays are available and that accessible toilets are open and functional.
- Check for accessibility in advance, in discussion with the site owner if it's an event centred in one area.
- If the event is a walk, make sure there are smooth tarmacked paths wide enough for a wheelchair and there are benches on route, at least at midpoint, for non-wheelchair users.

Increasing accessibility for beginner botanists who are visually impaired

- Use email for booking as tools like Eventbrite can be challenging for visually impaired people.
- Share the email address and mobile number of the leader in advance.
- Provide a sighted guide for each visually impaired participant.
- Ask participants in advance what their needs would be in relation to handouts. Large print and alt-text for any pictures are likely to be needed.
- Focus on plants which have a strong scent and/or a noticeable texture.

Further accessibility guidance will be added in future versions.