

Safety in data collecting, and the law on land access and plant collecting

Safety

Please note, anyone attending BSS field meetings, or otherwise conducting field recording does so at their own risk.

Never put yourself at risk. Beware of traffic, and be especially careful near water and cliffs. Follow local safety guidance and byelaws, and behave responsibly. Tell people where you are going, dress appropriately, take a phone and be sensible about working on your own.

Access to land

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/> explains your rights and responsibilities with respect to land access, which are also summarised here <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/access/full%20code.pdf>.

Plant collecting

Wild plants are part of our enjoyment of the natural world. All wild plant species are protected by law, and the law in Scotland is explained here <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-species/which-and-how/plants-fungi/>.

Briefly, **uprooting** of any plant¹ without permission from the owner or occupier of the land is against the law, but **picking** small pieces of wild plants with care is usually permitted for your personal use unless you are in a nature reserve or other protected area – check local regulations. However, there are a number of rare species which you must NEVER pick. They are listed in the SNH Protected Plants document, stored in our 'Resources'.

Identification of plant species often requires a detailed examination of many plant features. Take field guides and a camera with you, and take photographs rather than samples.

Do not collect anything if collecting is prohibited, or if the plant population is very small or if you suspect the plant is rare. Otherwise, if a sample really is needed, remove a minimum quantity of material, such as a single leaf or flower, a few stems from a moss cushion, a small piece of a lichen or a single fungus fruiting body. If you find an uncommon plant which is difficult to identify take a photograph and record the location and ask an expert.

¹ 'Uproot' is defined as 'to dig up or otherwise remove the plant from the land on which it is growing, whether or not it actually has roots'. For the purposes of this legislation, the term plant includes mosses, liverworts, algae, lichens and fungi as well as vascular plants.