

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE
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Finding a champion conker

The season is upon us and the hunt officially on to find your champion conker.

Every autumn, children all over the country are on the lookout for monster horse chestnuts, one big enough to conquer in every playground battle.

The rules of playing conkers are simple. You need two players, each with a conker on a string. They then take turns to hit each other's conker, until there is one left intact.

The competition can be fierce and every October even adults take part, in the World Conker Championships in Northamptonshire, England.

But how do you find a conker that's truly unconquerable?

Ann Steele is Head of Heritage Gardening at the National Trust for Scotland and has a few tips: "You are looking for as large a conker if possible, they are likely to be found in the largest of the prickly seed pods, but the best will be the ones that are hard too.

"If your conker makes it through its first season of play it will likely dry out over the year and that will make it a bit harder and stronger for next year – but remember where you put it!"

National Trust for Scotland parks and gardens are the perfect places to hunt for conkers.

Greenbank Gardens near Glasgow, the grounds of Crathes Castle, Banchory and the estate woodlands around Brodie Castle, Forres are among Ann's top spots for finding them.

But, she added: "Horse chestnuts have been declared vulnerable to extinction with small and declining populations, partly due to increased pests and diseases.

"If you are lucky enough to find a tree with some conkers, don't take too many – leave some to fall among the leaves and maybe grow into new trees for the future."

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Editor's Notes:

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.

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