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Volunteers and Plant Records

The good, the bad and the unexpected

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Westonbirt Arboretum - Volunteers and Plant Records

- How do we use volunteers to help manage plant records
- How do volunteers themselves use plant records
- What do we gain from using volunteers, and what are the challenges
- Breakout sessions – how do other gardens do it, what can we learn?

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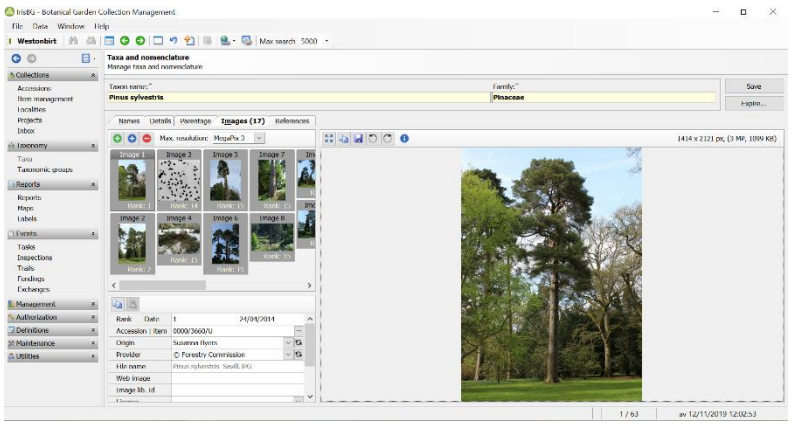
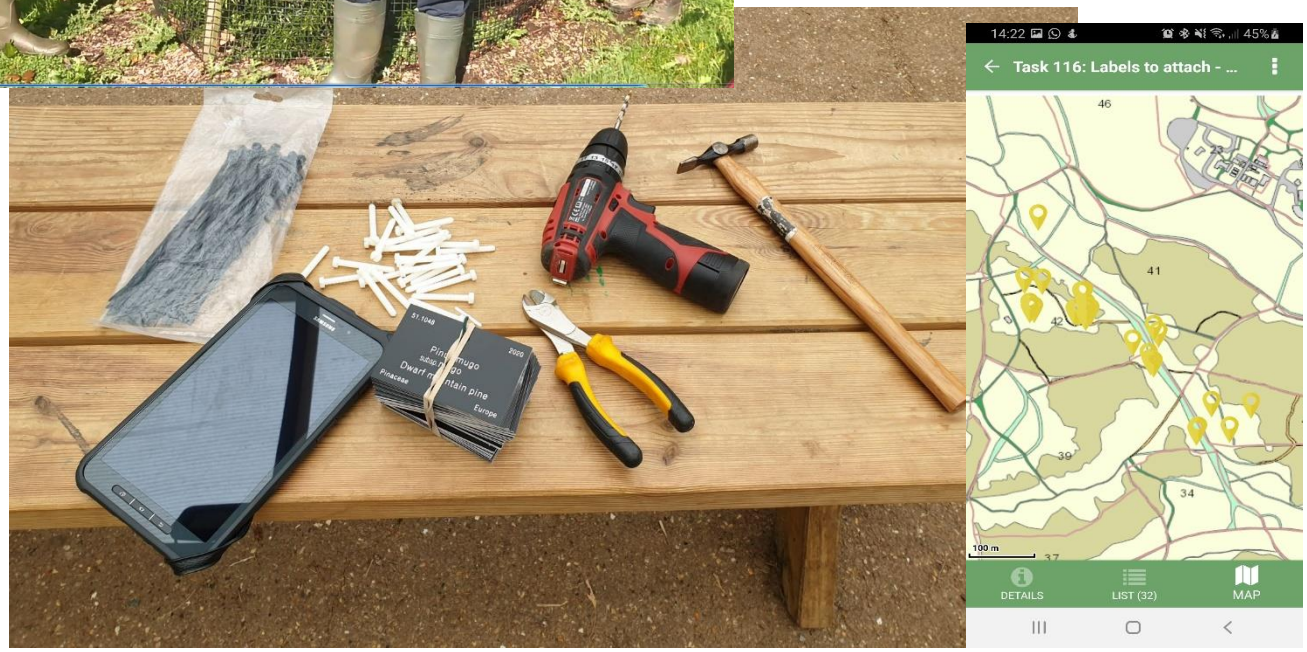
Westonbirt has 10 plant records volunteers - they label trees and do some limited data entry





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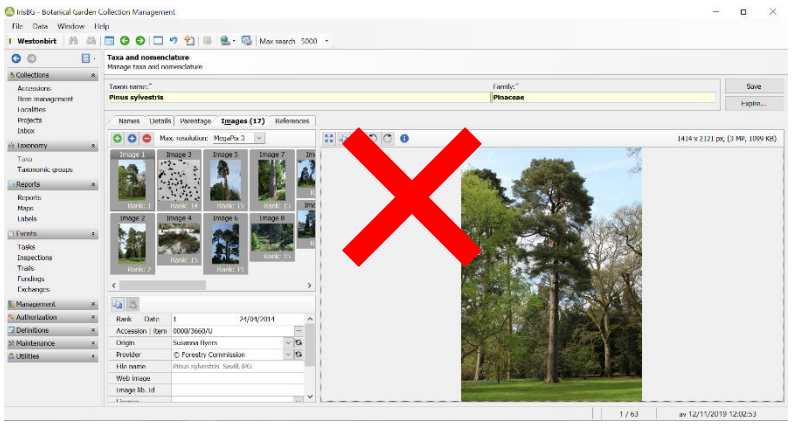
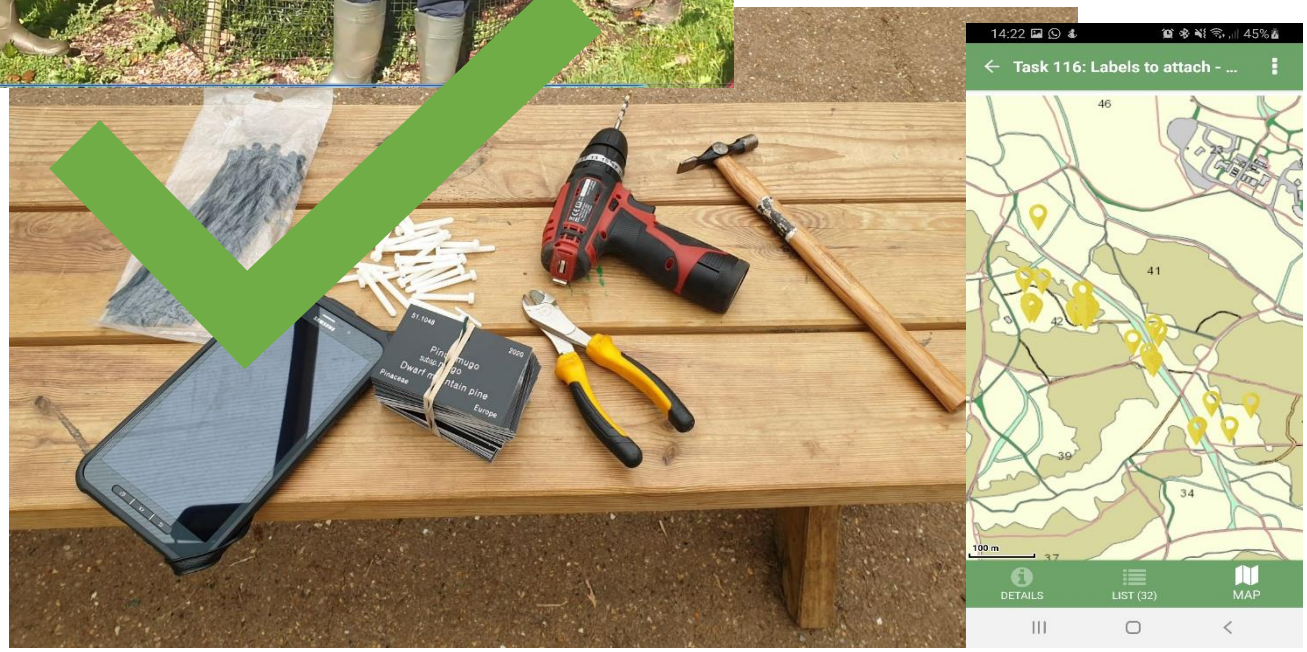
Covid has obviously restricted some of our activities





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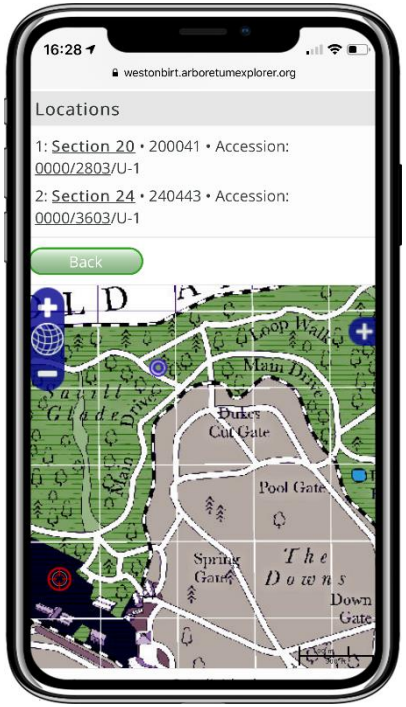
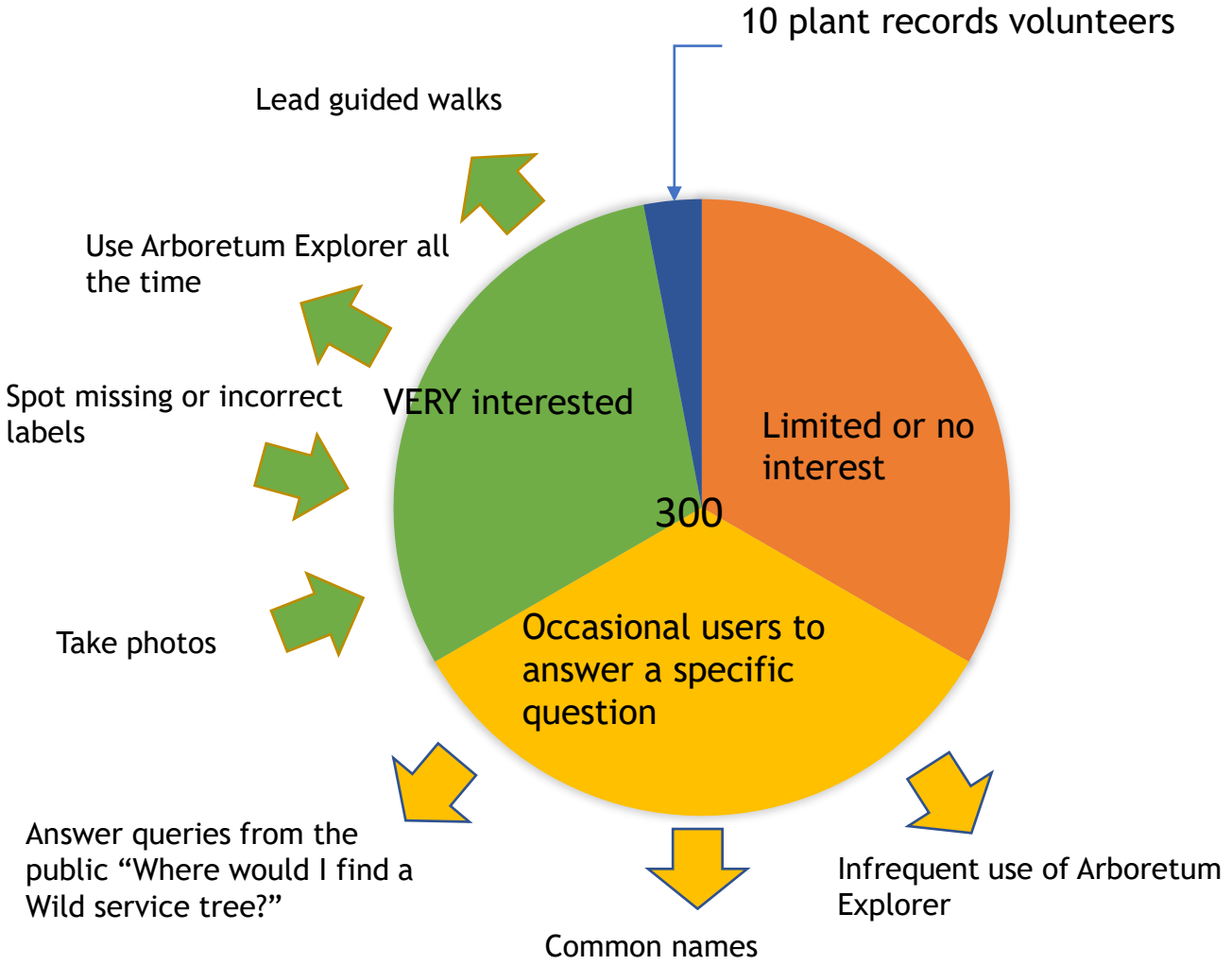
On top of this our site has 300 volunteers, and plant records are of interest to many of them





Arboretum Explorer is a crucial tool for volunteers and enables them to access basic plant data directly

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What do we gain from using volunteers, what are the challenges?

Are all 15,000 trees in the Arboretum correctly labelled?

Volunteers have time to focus on the little details

Can make mistakes (but then so can staff….)

When volunteers are established they can lighten the load significantly

Can take time to manage, some weeks far more than others

Wouldn't it be quicker to do it myself?

Volunteers can give good insight into how the collection is viewed by the public

Shouldn't those pink bulbs outside the office be labelled?

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Breakout questions - How do other gardens do it?

Which tasks are quicker to do myself & why?

Which tasks are better to be done by volunteers & how?

What level of access should volunteers have to the data?

How to make best use of volunteer insight, how to make them feel heard