

Over four million gardeners putting their hearing at risk

Tuesday 16 May, 2023

In the run up to the Chelsea Flower Show (22-27 May) marking the start of the peak gardening season, Tinnitus UK is calling for gardeners to protect their ears when mowing the lawn, trimming hedges or using power tools in their patch, as new data shows only a quarter (26%) “regularly” or “sometimes” use hearing protection. This means that over 4 million gardeners in the UK are putting themselves at risk of hearing loss and tinnitus, both of which can be permanent.

One in seven adults are affected by tinnitus - which is a condition that causes the perception of noise when there is no external source. There is currently no cure for the condition.

Noise becomes a risk to hearing health at levels of 80dB or above. Lawn mower sound levels vary, but they can be as high as 95dB for petrol driven models, and even higher for ride-on models. Pressure washers – a popular way of cleaning paths and patios – can reach 94dB. Hedge trimmers are even more problematic as they can be as loud as 103dB. At this level, hearing damage can occur in under 8 minutes.

Caroline Savage, CEO of Tinnitus UK said: “Noise exposure is the single biggest preventable cause of tinnitus, and it is clear from our research that people appear to be unaware of the risks. Even if you’re only giving your hedge a quick trim or the patio a spruce up, use hearing protection. When it’s loud... [Plug'em](#) is our very clear message.”

She added “We want to make sure that people are able to enjoy their garden to the fullest, and to be able to revel in the bird song and natural sounds in their outdoor space. We know gardening to be beneficial for people’s physical and mental wellbeing, and we’d hate for people to put that at risk. People protect their cherished plants from frost and slugs - we want protecting your ears to be second nature. There should be no stigma around using ear plugs – we only have one pair of ears, and damage to our hearing is irreversible.”

More information about noise exposure and hearing protection can be found at tinnitus.org.uk/join-the-cause/plugem. Tinnitus UK’s team of trained advisers are able to offer help and support on 0800 018 0527 or via live webchat at tinnitus.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing a sound when there is no external source for that sound. Someone with tinnitus may hear ringing, buzzing, hissing, whistling or other noises. Tinnitus can be there all the time or come and go. The volume of someone’s tinnitus can vary from one episode to the next.

Tinnitus comes in many types, but Tinnitus UK is here for everyone living with tinnitus.

We are striving for a world where no one suffers with tinnitus.

That’s why we provide free support to anyone with tinnitus or caring for someone with tinnitus.

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That's why we are leading the charge for more investment in tinnitus research.

That's why we are connecting the research community to people living with tinnitus to ensure those searching for new treatments and a cure understand the impact of tinnitus on everyday lives.

That's why we work with healthcare professionals to ensure you receive the right information to manage your tinnitus.

For every seven adults in the UK, one will have tinnitus. Think about that the next time you're in the supermarket, on the bus, or walking down the street. Tinnitus affects 7.6 million people in the UK – with 1.5 million of them having severe tinnitus.

To everyone living with tinnitus our message is clear – your struggle is our cause.

tinnitus.org.uk

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