

AllergeNS Mission Statement

While the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor activity are well known, so are the potential hazards to people enjoying these activities. Three common concerns for hikers are insect stings, poison ivy, and bear encounters. AllergeNS is a tool to bring awareness to the potential hazards and accessibility to emergency services when out and about in Nova Scotia by integrating citizen scientist observations and hospital information.

Main objectives:

Inform greenspace users in Nova Scotia of potential presence of allergens and encounters using archived citizen scientist observations.

Provide information about minor reaction treatment for insect stings and toxicodendron reactions.

Provide information about avoiding bear encounters.

Help user find the nearest hospital to their location, showing contact and navigational information.

App Description and Features

Show occurrence data of stinging insects, toxicodendron (irritating plants such as poison ivy), and bears.

Users can opt to view the distribution of any of these three hazards throughout Nova Scotia. This helps the users to be more well informed of potential hazards in natural spaces they choose to visit. In addition to observed occurrences, we also provide summary fact sheets of ways to mitigate risk and treatment for minor reactions.

Find the nearest hospital to a user-defined point and show navigation directions and facility information. Being aware of access to emergency services in the case of an extreme allergic reaction, or other incident while enjoying Nova Scotia's natural space.

A note about our species observations: AllergeNS uses open data from publicly-sourced observations of our target organisms. Observations were retrieved from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and were primarily collected via iNaturalist, and are the product of citizen science. Users might notice large concentrations of points around towns and other areas where people frequent, while there are few points in areas where there are few people. This doesn't mean that bees necessarily don't exist in the areas where there are no observations, but that there have not been any observations in these areas (either because there are no bees, or because there are no people to observe them)