

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Area Residents Urged to “Get Nuts for Clean Water”

Get nuts for clean water. That’s the message from a conservation partnership looking for thousands of volunteers to spend a little time gathering hardwood nuts and seeds. These seeds will grow into millions of trees, which will help restore forests that filter pollution and run-off before it enters our streams. It’s all part of *Growing Native*, an annual program to help restore the Potomac River and its tributary streams. Everyone can help by gathering acorns, walnuts, and other tree seeds—whether at organized events at local parks or informally in their own backyards.

“This is such a fun way to get kids involved in restoring our rivers,” said Colleen Langan, of the Potomac Conservancy, which coordinates the program. Since 2001, *Growing Native* has helped restore hardwood forests along nearly 800 miles of streamside land, according to Langan.

There are dozens of seed collection events at area parks and forests, but for the majority of collectors there is no better place to gather than their yard—or a neighbor’s. “You can learn all you need to know about collecting from the *Growing Native* website,” adds Langan.

People who collect seeds are asked to deliver them to one of dozens of drop-off locations throughout the watershed. The seeds are then transported to state nurseries, where they are grown into seedlings. In spring, volunteers plant these seedlings along streams and rivers in their communities.

“People are often surprised to learn just how important trees are to clean water and clean air,” said Matthew Logan, president of Potomac Conservancy. “In addition to filtering water,” said Logan, “trees filter air, provide habitat for wildlife, produce oxygen, and help cool urban areas in summer.” The effort focuses on native tree species because they are adapted to local soil, rainfall, and temperature conditions. They have also developed natural defenses to withstand many types of insects and diseases.

Says Colleen Langan: “Anyone of any age can help by volunteering for *Growing Native*. You don’t have to go to an organized event. You can collect them any time that is convenient. Getting nuts for clean water is as easy as going outside.”

A complete list of drop-off locations, along with a calendar of *Growing Native* collection events and information on how to organize your own collection event, is available online at www.growingnative.org.

Potomac Conservancy coordinates *Growing Native* on behalf of the Potomac Watershed Partnership. Since 1993, Potomac Conservancy has been protecting the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries. The Potomac Watershed Partnership is a large-scale restoration project to protect and restore the forests of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.

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