



# Seed Collection Guidelines

To ensure that the seeds you collect grow into healthy trees, please follow these simple steps:

## Find Trees From Which to Collect

- Good sites to collect from include your own yard, churches, cemeteries, parking lots, historical monuments, and parks. If you wish to collect from a property other than your own—even if it is public land—be sure to obtain permission first. *Due to restrictions against removing any material from National Park Service (NPS) land, you cannot collect on NPS property.*
- Identify preferred trees from which to collect using the “Field Guide to Desired Native Trees,” which may be downloaded from [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org). This document is easy to print off and take into the field with you.
- Collect from healthy trees. Avoid trees that have odd bulges, are infested with insects, look diseased, or are strangely twisted.

## Sort and Bag Your Seeds

*If you do not follow these steps, the nurseries may have to dispose of your seeds.*

- Separate seeds of different species into different bags. It is easiest to collect seeds under and around the same variety of trees so that they will not be mixed up with other types.
- Be sure to use dry, aerated bags to avoid rotting. Paper, dry weave, or burlap bags work well. Do *not* use plastic bags. You can get free bags from your nearest seed drop-off location.
- When collecting fruit such as paw paw or walnuts, discard the outer flesh and collect only the inner seed. Flesh will decompose in bags and cause seeds to spoil.
- Keep sticks, leaves, and other debris out of bags. If you are uncertain of the species, include one—*but only one*—leaf and stem in the bag to help the nurserymen identify the seeds.
- If collecting acorns, take a small sample of nuts and place them in a container of water. If the majority sink, your seeds are good to go to the nursery. If the majority float, your seeds may be unhealthy due to pests, decay, or dryness. Float test some more seeds, and if they all float, try collecting from another tree or location.

## Tag Your Bags and Deliver Them to a Drop-Off Site

- After bagging seeds, make sure to fill out and attach a tag identifying your collection site, the tree species, and the seeds’ weight. This information is very important for the nurserymen. If you don’t have tags, you can find them at a local drop-off site.
- Visit [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org) to find the nearest drop-off location where you can deliver your bags. Here, you’ll find tags, and you can also share with us your *Growing Native* experience by submitting a testimonial and survey, both found at [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org).
- Deliver your seeds promptly after collection. If you let too much time lapse, they may dry out.

*Thanks for following these guidelines to help ensure that the seeds you collect become the trees of streamside forests for healthy streams and rivers!*