



CHAPTER 4

ORGANIZING FOR LOCAL COLLECTION

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter is developed to assist the local direct seeding coordinator in organizing the collection of nuts and seeds. With careful, early preparations there will be a cadre of individuals identified who will expertly identify seed trees by genus, species, and location. Another equally important step is to identify a cadre of individuals or groups who can be called upon to collect the species and amounts needed according to quality criteria established for purchase.

Additional information may be found in the following chapters: Chapter 5, Seed Collection and Chapter 6, Buying, Handling, Storage and Distribution. The important thing to keep in mind is **QUALITY SEED**. As you organize for future collection, think of quality not quantity.

POTENTIAL LOCAL COLLECTORS

The goal in organizing for local seed collection is to be able to purchase quality seed in a timely manner. Develop a list of reliable individuals or groups of collectors. Consider some of the following groups when assembling a cadre of potential collectors:

Girl or Boy Scout Troops (Leaders)	Lawn and Ground Maintenance Companies
4-H Groups (Leaders)	Senior Citizen Groups
FFA Chapters (Leaders)	Various Outdoor or Sportsmen Clubs
Science Clubs (Through Teachers)	(eg. Bird Watchers, Sportsmen, Gardeners, etc.)
Isaac Walton League	College Groups
Park District Employees	Farm Families
Forest Preserve District	Wild Turkey Federation
Landscapers and Nursery Employees	Whitetails Unlimited
Pheasants Forever	

It is important to identify collectors in all important seed source locales in the county. Recognize that mowed or grassed areas (parks, cemeteries, schools, church lots, urban areas, yards, pastures, etc.) are key potential collection sites. Try to get a scattering of collectors in all parts of the county. Have seed collector guidelines and requirements clearly established before making contacts so collectors will know what to expect. Put this information in writing and distribute to collectors.

LOCAL TREE EXPERTS

This section is important for identification and location of trees and shrubs for future seed collection.

Record in the space below those individuals who are:

- 1) technically capable;
- 2) willing to help;
- 3) able to verify genus, species, and location; and
- 4) capable of determining seed quality.

These persons may work in more than one county. Often they will be employees of local, state or federal agencies. They may be private consultants or contractors, or they may work in other fields but have sound forestry or botany knowledge and skills. These persons are needed to assure quality seed collection.

Name (individual or group)	Address	Telephone, E-mail
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COLLECTORS OUTSIDE THE COUNTY

This section stresses the need to “cover your bases” for collection of seeds not available every year, but needed for planting in your county.

One of the key features of this handbook is that it provides an outreach opportunity described in Chapter 1. The list of Direct Seeding Coordinators on page 1-6 is a first level of contact outside the county. Coordinators should have established a parallel procedure for collecting and may be fully able to supply needs at a reasonable cost. (A website, www.directseeding.org, has been developed, as described in Chapter 9 of this Handbook, to facilitate seed information exchange.)

Many individuals, other than the district contacts listed in Chapter 1, are interested in tree seed collection and are issued seed collection permits by IDNR. IDNR District Foresters can help acquire needed seeds and nuts from individuals on an “as needed” and “if available” basis after the state quota of seeds and nuts is met for the State Forest Nurseries. The purchase price will be negotiated on a case by case basis.

Finally, another avenue is to purchase the needed seeds or nuts from commercial vendors. This cost would normally be the highest of any source, but quality should also be high.

SEED NEEDS

This section is the “driver” for the collection of seeds and nuts. Many direct seeding projects will be planted in the fall since this is the season to harvest most nuts and seeds. Also, seed quality will be highest at this time. Some species, particularly the white oak group, are difficult to store since initial sprouting begins in the fall.

In order to be prepared to plant the species needed, one must know well in advance the number of pounds of seed that will be needed. Reforestation plans MUST be completed before collection starts (see Appendix page A-21 for Example Direct Seeding Plan). Properly completed and signed plans document the species and amount of seed needed for the area to be planted. It is then possible to plan seed collection for fall planting and seed storage for spring planting. The following form headed “Seed Needs” can be used to determine needs.

FORECASTING THE POTENTIAL SEED CROP

This section explains what to look for when forecasting local seed crops and determining whether the local crop will meet local needs. Spring weather sets the tone of what might be expected relative to seed set and normal development.

Most tree species do not develop and drop abundant seed crops each year. Most species produce good seed crops every other or every third year, some less often if temperature and moisture conditions are not favorable.

Early in the spring, look for the flower set on the desired tree species. If there are few flowers, do not expect much seed. If weather conditions are cold and dry at flower set, poor seed set due to freezing or poor pollination will reduce seed production.

Continue to observe throughout the growing period to note development and abundance of nuts or seeds. Expect to see a potential seed crop on trees by August. Rely on feedback of technical experts working throughout the county to verify estimated local seed crops and seed crops from other parts of the state that may have had better growing conditions. Keep in mind that a very few counties may have the only source for a particular species to be collected statewide in a particular year.

REFERENCES

- Conservation Trees and Shrubs.** Pocket ID Guide. National Association of Conservation Districts. Available at (800) 825-5547 x 32 or www.nacdnet.org.
- Forest Trees of Illinois.** Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forest Resources.
- Missouri's Oaks and Hickories.** Reprint 994. Edgar Denison and Bruce Palmer. Missouri Department of Conservation. Images reprinted with permission, Missouri Conservation Commission. Available on the Web at: www.conservation.state.mo.us/forest/landE/oak_hickory.
- Summer Tree Finder.** May Watts. Available from the Nature Study Guild, Box 10849, Rochester, NY 14610 or phone 1-800-954-2984. Cost is \$3.00 Order from the Tree Farm Committee by sending an email to: mseiernert@dnrmail.state.il.us. Also available on the Web at: <http://home.att.net/~naturebooks/index.html>.
- University of Illinois Tree ID website.** <http://ilvirtualforest.nres.uiuc.edu>.
- USDA PLANTS Database.** USDA, NRCS 1999. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490, USA. Available on the Web at: <http://plants.usda.gov>.
- What Tree is That?** A guide to the more common trees found in the Eastern and Central U.S. The National Arbor Day Foundation. Available on the Web at: www.arborday.org.

NOTE: *Copies of all of the above are available for up to a 2-week loan from the NRCS State Agroforester. Some references may also be available from IDNR District Foresters, the IDNR Forest Management Staff Forester, and the State Cooperative Extension Forester.*