

Request For Seed Collection

LEWIS FLAX

Linum lewisii Pursh

Family: Linaceae

Plant Symbol = LILE3

Project description

Lewis flax is a short-lived, semi-evergreen perennial forb, sometimes semi-woody at base with attractive flowers ranging from white to blue to yellow to red in color.

This species has potential for use in rangeland, restoration seedings and pollinator habitat throughout most of Colorado.

The Colorado Plant Materials Specialist will make wildland seed collections in the summer of 2011.

Your assistance and help is needed in locating stands, monitoring seed maturity and assisting with seed collection.

Description



Figure 1. *Linum lewisii* in habitat setting. Clarence A. Rechenthin. Courtesy of USDA NRCS Texas State Office.

Flax plants have many narrow, small, alternate (rarely opposite), simple and entire leaves that are sessile (lacking stalks) on the stems. The perfect and regular, generally showy flowers are borne in racemes or cymes. The sepals, petals, and stamens are

five, the fruit a capsule, and the seeds in most species are mucilaginous when wet.

Figure 2. *Linum lewisii* flower in late spring.

Photo by Christine Taliga.



Habitat

This species is native to the plains and upper montane communities from 4,500 to over 9,000 feet.

Time to collect

Plants begin flowering in late spring (May-June in lower elevations) to mid-summer. **Seed is ripe in late July to mid-August.** The capsule is ovoid to globose (more or less spherical to egg-shaped), splitting from the top downward into ten 1-seeded segments.

How to collect

Seed can be collected by stripping inflorescences and seed by hand into paper sacks, or by pruning inflorescences using shears. For genetic diversity, each seed collection should be made from no fewer than 50 plants.

To provide enough seed for testing, out-planting and evaluation, we recommend collecting about a half to a full paper shopping sack worth of materials depending on the amount of inert matter. More seed is always better. Please reference the **Colorado Seed and Forb Collection Guide** for more details on seed collection techniques. The Guide is available at http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/PlantMaterials/seed_collection/index.html

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Selection criteria

Select plants from large healthy stands with good overall vigor, good seed production, and leafiness. Special selection criteria might include plants found on particularly harsh sites, good seedling establishment traits (young plants found near mother plants), and good early season growth.

Things to include

Please send your collected seed along with the following information: a pressed plant sample, photos of the site, and a completed NRCS seed collection form NRCS-ECS-580 available at http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/PlantMaterials/seed_collection/index.html

Mail to:

Christine Taliga
Plant Materials Specialist
USDA NRCS Denver Federal Center
Building 56, Room 2604
PO Box 25426
Denver, CO 80225-0426

Thanks: Cooperation from landowners, NRCS field offices, and other partners is essential to produce the best plant material products possible. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Any questions or comments should be directed to Christine Taliga at the Denver NRCS office – Phone: (720) 544-2840. Email—Christine.taliga@co.usda.gov



Figure 3. Mature seed pods and flowers. Robert Potts
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Special Considerations



Watch out for the non-native European flax, which has a similar appearance. For the native flax, the stigmas (female central part of the flower, shaped like a bowling pin) are only slightly longer than they are wide. On the non-native, the stigmas are much longer than they are wide.

References:

US Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/linlew/all.html>
USDA Plants, Plant Guide: http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LILE3&photoID=lile3_005_ahp.tif



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