



## Seed Collection Guidelines

To ensure a successful and fun *Growing Native* event—and that the seeds you collect grow into healthy trees—please follow these simple steps.

### Have All Supplies On-Hand

Make sure that you have the following supplies at your collection event:

- “Volunteer Collection Guidelines”
- Seed collection bags
- “Field Guide to Desired Native Trees” (downloadable from [www.growingnative.org](http://www.growingnative.org)): Consider multiple copies for student use
- Seed bag identification tags
- *Growing Native* sign to identify your collection site (optional)
- Flagging tape to show students where to collect seeds (you may choose to use different colored flagging tape for different tree species)
- Gloves for students, particularly if collecting black walnuts (optional)
- Water (to keep students hydrated)
- First aid kit; sunscreen; bug spray; Tecnu for poison ivy; etc.
- Lunches or snacks (optional)

### Collect Only from Healthy Trees

- Avoid trees that have odd bulges, are infested with insects, look diseased, or are strangely twisted.

### Sort Species 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 to reduce the chances of mixing different species in the same bag.
- 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.
- 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 healthy and you should deliver them to a seed drop-off site. But if the majority of the acorns float, they may be unhealthy due to pests, decay, or dryness. Float test some more seeds and if they all float again, try collecting from another tree or location. Do not take acorns that you know are unhealthy to the drop-off site.

### Tag Your Bags and Deliver Them to a Seed 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 do not have tags, you can find them at a local drop-off site.
- Deliver your seeds promptly after collection. If you let too much time lapse, they may dry out.

*Thank you for following these simple guidelines to help ensure that the seeds you collect become the trees of healthy streamside forests!*