



APGA-USFS Tree Gene Conservation Partnership

2025 Scouting/Collecting Project Guidelines

About:

American Public Gardens Association is partnering with the United States Forest Service's Forest Health Protection to establish living gene banks of US tree species at risk, by collecting plant propagation material (seeds, cuttings, as appropriate) from across its native range to capture broad genetic diversity then distributing propagules to public gardens for safeguarding in *ex situ* collections. The partnership began in 2015 and includes funds to support monitoring/scouting and collecting trips, propagation and distribution of propagules.

Goal:

Collect and safeguard representative sampling of a targeted taxon across its range in *ex situ* collections at ideally 6 or more public gardens. Efforts will focus on at-risk taxa native to US forests which cannot be conserved through traditional seedbanking methods.

Who is eligible:

Any institutional member of the American Public Gardens Association with an active *ex situ* collections program. Nationally Accredited Plant Collection™ holders will be prioritized. Collaboration between institutions is strongly encouraged. Contact Pam Allenstein at the Association if you are considering applying to learn if anyone else is also planning a trip focused on the same taxon or collecting region: pallenstein@publicgardens.org

When to apply:

Deadline for proposals is **November 1, 2024**, for trips to be completed by the end of 2025.

Funding:

Total funds for support of scouting/collecting trips including travel, supplies, and distribution not to exceed \$6,000.

Budgets should demonstrate a 1:1 cost share.

Participating institutions may include salaries/benefits, land/facilities as in-kind support if these aren't covered by Federal funds or used as cost share for another Federal grant. Please note funds are not intended to support research activities or ongoing maintenance of an existing collection.



How to apply –Carefully read all guidelines, then please provide the following information:

1. **Targeted taxon/taxa with image(s)**
 2. **Why is this taxon or these taxa being targeted?**
 3. **List locations of known populations and specify targeted locations for this project**
 4. **Describe proposed activities, e.g. monitoring or collecting trip, propagation, distribution of propagules**
 5. **Describe your field-sampling strategy and rationale**
 6. **List lead institution which will coordinate activities and administer project**
 7. **List primary contact at project’s lead institution – name, job title, email, phone number, mail address**
 8. **List other individuals involved, their job title, institution, address, relevant experience, project role**
 9. **List public gardens and their city/state/province which have agreed to receive propagules**
 10. **List references consulted (include citations, correspondences, weblinks)**
 11. **Provide dates of travel, timeline of field activities**
 12. **Provide itemized budget.** Overhead expenses or indirect costs will not be covered. Include transportation, supplies/equipment, lodging, meals, permits & shipping costs. Clearly identify staff time, salary/benefits, land/facilities use which can be included as institutional 1:1 cost-share. These can be in-kind or cash matches, but ensure these are not already being used to match another Federal grant.
 13. **Submitted by name/institution/address/contact information**
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Guidelines - review carefully before applying:

- For guidance in selecting at-risk species, consult *Data Sharing for Conservation: a Standardized Checklist of US Native Tree Species and Threat Assessments to Prioritize and Coordinate Action*, Carrero et al, Plants People Planet, Sept 2022, vol 4, num 5.
<https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/share/HT5HQVC3IIG5NRZEPWMN?target=10.1002/ppp3.10305>
- Trips supported through this partnership must abide by all federal, state, and local regulations governing legally protected species and access to property. Permission is required from property owner or responsible agency for collecting. Permitting regulations vary between states, so check with the agency: <http://www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html>.
- If collecting on US Forest Service land, a Memorandum of Understanding between American Public Gardens Association and USFS is intended to streamline the process of obtaining permits:
publicgardens.org/our-partners/
- A US Fish & Wildlife Service permit is needed for collecting Federally endangered species, and for international trade of species regulated through CITES:
<https://fwsepermits.servicenowservices.com/fws>
- A set of voucher specimens are to be prepared for each population and deposited at the United States National Arboretum. Contact [Curator of the Herbarium](#), Harlan Svoboda, before sending.
- Document each collection. Key data includes locality, plant characteristics, habitat description. Use ID system utilizing unique qualifiers to distinguish between individuals within a population.



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- For populations exceeding 50 individuals, seed/cuttings can be collected from 50 unrelated individuals. For populations with 50 or fewer individuals, seed or cuttings should be collected from all known individuals. Do no harm. Collect no more than 10% of seeds per tree and/or population. Wild collecting should be made from as many populations as resources allow. (For more specific guidelines, consult [CPC Best Plant Conservation Practices to Support Species Survival in the Wild](#))
- To ensure adequate safeguarding, propagules should be distributed to and established at ideally 6 or more sites for ex situ conservation.
- We recommend that a conservation specialist be consulted to review collecting and distribution protocols for obtaining a genetically representative sampling of wild populations.
- We encourage teams to include representation from smaller gardens and emerging professionals.
- Additional reference recommended by Botanic Gardens Conservation International: [Collecting Seed From Non-Domesticated Plants for Long-Term Conservation](#) by Michael J. Way in *Seed Conservation: Turning Science Into Practice*, pages 163-201.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Mid-Year Progress Report Due June 13:

- **1 page Narrative** detailing progress to date and any adjustments to proposed plans.
- **Financial Report** comparing breakdown of actual vs budgeted expenses to date.

Final Reports Due within 60 days of final collecting trip:

- **3-5 page Narrative** detailing trip and its accomplishments. Include participants/institutions, dates, objectives, daily field log, contacts/addresses and their contributions. **Supply two versions:** a public version with sensitive data withheld for posting on our website, and a complete version detailing collecting locations.
- **Financial Report** comparing breakdown of actual vs budgeted expenses.
- Completed **APGA Cost Share Form** documenting a minimum 1:1 match.
- Copies of **collecting permits**, correspondence with property owners.
- List of collections made from each site, collecting data, and observations on any threats to populations.
- Map(s) identifying collecting sites. ***NOT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS VERSION**
- Photos documenting collecting trip. Electronic images with captions suitable for publication preferred.
- Set of collecting vouchers sent to US National Arboretum Herbarium. [Contact Curator Harlan Svoboda.](#)
- In subsequent years, provide status of project's distributed collections to Association upon request.

Requests for further information, plant collecting proposals, and reports should be directed to:

Pam Allenstein
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American Public Gardens Association
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