



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Demand for native plant seed at an all-time high; Native Plant Trust announces Need for Seed: A Strategy for The Northeast, a free live virtual symposium, November 2-3, 2022 to establish seed network

October 29, 2022

Media Contact: Bess Paupeck, Director of Public Programs, Native Plant Trust
bpaupeck@NativePlantTrust.org; 508.877.7630 x3302

(Framingham, MA) Native Plant Trust, the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants, opens registration for *Need for Seed: A Strategy for the Northeast*, a live virtual symposium Wednesday, November 2, 2022 and Thursday, November 3, 2022, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.

This two-day symposium focuses on establishing a groundbreaking network of native seed users and producers in New England, including government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Speakers will share success factors in establishing a native seed network and discuss strategy, logistics, and tasks, from seed collection and storage to the uses of seed in restoration and nursery cultivation.

Registration is free thanks to support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; to register please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

Program highlights include:

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2022

National Efforts to meet Ecoregional Seed Needs

Dr. Patricia DeAngelis, Botanist, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Division of Scientific Authority and Chair, Plant Conservation Alliance-Federal Committee



The Plant Conservation Alliance is implementing the [National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration](#) to further genetically diverse, locally adapted plant communities on natural and managed lands. The broader national collaboration envisioned by the Seed Strategy is coordination across federal, state, and local agencies to improve efficiency, share resources, and strengthen opportunities for private-sector collaboration at ecoregional levels toward common goals to increase the commercial supply of locally adapted native seed.

Adopting a Network Approach to Strengthen Native Seed and Plant Material Supply Chains

Eve Allen, Program Director, Ecological Health Network



Eve will discuss her recent thesis research that investigated the social network structure of actors engaged in native seed and plant material supply chains in the US Northeast. She will share how insights from this research are informing an initiative to reinforce and build network connections among government agencies, tribal groups, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, botanic gardens, farmers, private companies, and citizen groups, as a first step in improving the availability genetically appropriate seed and plant materials to restore a wide range of ecosystems.

Native Plant Trust Regional Impact Award Ceremony

Debbi Edelstein, Executive Director, Native Plant Trust, will present the Regional Impact Award to Heather McCargo, Founder of Wild Seed Project. The Regional Impact Award recognizes individuals or organizations for exceptional leadership and achievement in native plant conservation, horticulture, or education with regional significance.

Heather McCargo is an educator with 35 years of expertise in native plant propagation, design, and conservation. She has contributed to many research projects including with the USAID, the National Gardening Association, and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. Heather has a B.A. in plant ecology from Hampshire College, and an M.A. from the Conway School of Landscape Design.

The Arc of Wild Seed Project: Creating a Grassroots Movement to Inspire a Wide Range of People to Grow Native Plants from Wild Type Native Seed

Heather McCargo, Founder, Wild Seed Project



In 2014, Wild Seed Project launched in Maine as a 501c3 non-profit organization. Heather will tell the story of the successes and challenges of founding the organization and the current work and future direction of Wild Seed Project.

Eco59: A Farmer-led Seed Collective



Dina Brewster is among the founding farmers of Eco59.com a seed company that she runs off her organic farm in Ridgefield, CT. She has spent much of the last four years focused on growing ecotypic seed crops - seeds that can provide another link in the supply chain for native plants in the Northeast. Dina will speak about her farming operation, the work of Eco59, and the roles that small farmers can play in fortifying regional biodiversity. She is among those who began The Ecotype Project four years ago with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut, a program to educate and promote farmers who are growing ecotypic seed for the Northeast.

DAY 2: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2022

SEED COLLECTION PANEL

The seed collection panel will focus on the importance of proper protocols in wild seed collection in order to capture genetic diversity from wild populations. The Seeds of Success program has established protocols and training that seeks to set the standard for how wildland seed is collected. Panelists have extensive experience with wild seed collection and will offer their perspectives on the challenges and rewards of this approach, and other best practices for ensuring genetic diversity within seed collections across ecoregions.

- **John Berryhill:** Landscape Curator for the Botanic Garden of Smith College, Northampton, MA
- **Dan Jaffee Wilder:** Director of Applied Ecology for the Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- **Hope Leeson:** Field Botanist
- **Heather Liljengren:** Seed Collector/Field Taxonomist for the NYC Parks Greenbelt Native Plant Center, Staten Island, New York

SEED INCREASE PANEL

The seed increase panel will emphasize the next step in the native plant materials supply chain, namely the use of agronomic techniques to increase seed production in a cultivated setting while ensuring a baseline of genetic diversity remains consistent. There are many variables to consider from germination rates, pollination systems, and harvest times and techniques that all play into a successful seed increase program. Panelists will leverage their considerable knowledge to discuss how these seed increase programs function.

- **Sefra Alexandra:** The Seed Huntress
- **Seth August:** Administrator of the Founder Seed Program at the Greenbelt Native Plant Center
- **Clara Holmes:** Plant Ecologist for NYC Parks' Division of Forestry Horticulture and Natural Resources
- **Polly Wiegand:** Science and Stewardship Program Manager for the Central Pine Barrens Commission

SEED USE PANEL

Demand for native plant seed is at an all-time high and there are several markets through which genetically diverse, regionally appropriate seed can be used, from habitat restoration on a broad scale to small-scale patchworks of home gardens or yards across developed landscapes. This panel will focus on the development of these markets in response to consumer demand and the demands from restoration practitioners, municipal entities and more.

- **Andrea Berry:** Executive Director of Wild Seed Project
- **Anna Fialkoff:** Wild Seed Project Ecological Programs Manager
- **Michael Whittemore:** Stewardship Manager, The Nature Conservancy

SEED RESEARCH PANEL

In order for best practices to be honed, seed research is an imperative especially as portions of this seed is intended to go back into wildlands. Central to this native plant materials supply chain is genetic diversity and it must be carefully studied to understand the implications on the larger landscape. Equally important is the ability of seed collectors, seed increase programs, seed markets and seed researchers to network with one another in service of the end goal of providing more appropriate seed for use in the landscape. This panel will conclude discussions of the supply chain with conversations regarding the importance of both research and networking to establish native seed supplies.

- **Dr. Jessamine Finch:** Research Botanist, Native Plant Trust
- **Dr. Kayri Havens:** Chicago Botanic Garden
- **Katie Kucera:** Chicago Botanic Garden
- **Ed Toth:** Mid Atlantic Regional Seed Bank (MARSB)

CLOSING REMARKS

Uli Lorimer, Director of Horticulture, and Michael Piantedosi, Director of Conservation, Native Plant Trust

For more information on the symposium, and to register for it and other programs, please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

Native Plant Trust is the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants. We save native plants in the wild, grow them for gardens and restorations, and educate others on their value and use. We are based at Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden that attracts visitors from all over the world. From this flagship property in Framingham, Massachusetts, 25 staff and many of our 1,500 trained volunteers work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs. Native Plant Trust also operates a nursery at Nasami Farm in western Massachusetts and manages six sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are open to the public. Native Plant Trust is among the first organizations worldwide to receive Advanced Conservation Practitioner accreditation by London-based Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which included an endorsement by an International Advisory Council representing six continents. Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

###