Seed Collecting Guidelines

Be sure that you have the necessary permits and/or permissions to collect seeds on the property.

Take the time to assess the distribution of the target plant species and estimate the number of individuals in the population. Are there enough individuals and seeds to allow for seed collection?

Label bags with these four items:
1. Name of plant species
2. Date collected
3. Location
4. Name of collector

Seeds are ripe when they shake in the pod, are easily removed from the plant and/or are turning dark in color. Seeds should come away easily or they are not ripe. Come back in a week or two. Dry fruits should be harvested into paper envelopes or bags. Moist fruits can be placed into plastic bags or containers.

Preserve Genetic Diversity

- Collect fewer seed from several different plants as opposed to collecting many seeds from one to a few plants.
- If practical, sampling should be done randomly and evenly from throughout the population.
- Collect a similar quantity of seed from each sampled plant. Do not collect more seeds from plants that produce many seeds than you do from plants that produce fewer seeds.
- Leave plenty of seed behind. Most state and federal guidelines limit sampling to no more than 5% of the current season seed either on a population or on a per-plant basis.

Seed Cleaning and Storage

Be sure to store the seeds you collect under proper storage conditions. Wet fruits should be refrigerated for a short period if they cannot be cleaned and dried immediately. See CNPS Native Plant Propagation for more instructions on how to clean seeds.

Keep seeds loosely in bags or newspaper until well-dried. Air-dry wet seeds on paper towels or newspaper. Store cleaned, dried seeds in paper bags or paper envelopes in a cool, dry place.

For more information:
http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/propagation/seed_collect_clean.php
http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/Native_Plant_Materials/developing/collecting.shtml

Dedicated to the preservation of California’s native flora

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