



PRESS RELEASE

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'Growing Native' supports a decade of environmental kinship *Native seed collections connect communities to their local environment*

This fall marks the tenth season of Growing Native—the largest volunteer seed collection program in the Potomac River region. For a decade, individuals of all ages and backgrounds, from communities across the Potomac River watershed, have participated in Growing Native and collected native hardwood seeds like acorns and walnuts for their local environment.

Growing Native is a volunteer project, run by Potomac Conservancy, that has engaged more than 50,000 volunteers since its conception in 2001. State nurseries use the seeds to restore streamside forests along Potomac waterways. In addition to providing native tree stock, Growing Native builds public awareness of the important connection between healthy, forested lands and clean waters, and what individuals can do to protect them.



Three enthusiastic volunteers have fun while gathering seeds at last year's public collection at Michaux State Forest

Participants can collect seeds from their own backyard, or organize a group collection. There are over 35 seed drop-off sites through the watershed, and Potomac Conservancy provides resources including bags, labels, and seed identification manuals. From Boy and Girl Scout troops, schools programs and civic clubs, to corporate volunteer days, Growing Native has found a variety of outlets in local area communities.

"This year, we've taken great measures to make it easier to participate with a new online registration tool, and updated seed lists that target specific regions of the watershed," says Potomac Conservancy's Outreach Coordinator, Deanna Tricarico. "We're also seeing a stronger showing of foresters and site coordinators who want to get involved."

In 2009, nearly 10,000 people volunteered their time to collect more than 21,000 pounds of seeds. This year, individuals can participate in one of six public seed collections in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia (see schedule below), or register online to arrange a private collection at www.growingnative.org.

Tricarico notes, "This program is a fantastic way for friends, neighbors, children, and coworkers to help protect the lands and waterways of the Potomac. They are rewarded with a better understanding of the complex issues affecting the ecosystem along the Potomac River and how they can help."

Collections open to the general public include:

- **September 25: Blue Ridge Center, Purcellville, VA, 9 am**
- **October 9: Yankauer Nature Preserve, Martinsburg, WV, 10 am**
- **October 10: Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA, 1 pm**
- **October 16: Cub Run RECenter, Chantilly, VA, 10 am**
- **October 24: Bear Branch Nature Center, Westminster, MD, 1 pm**
- **October 30: Michaux State Forest, Purcellville, PA, 9 am**

If you would like to receive more information about Growing Native, please contact Deanna Tricarico at (301) 608-1188, x204, or tricarico@potomac.org. To stay updated on Conservancy news and activities, follow us on Facebook and Twitter @TheNationsRiver.

About Growing Native

Growing Native was started in 2001 as a project of the Potomac Watershed Partnership and is managed by Potomac Conservancy. Growing Native evolved out of a need for native hardwood seedlings to support expanding reforestation and restoration efforts in the Potomac River watershed. In addition to providing native tree stock, Growing Native builds public awareness of the important connection between healthy, forested lands and clean waters, and what individuals can do to protect them. Since Growing Native's inception in 2001, nearly 40,000 volunteers have collected more than 100,000 pounds of acorns, walnuts, and other hardwood tree seeds. These seeds have generated seedlings that will be used to restore sensitive streamside lands.

About Potomac Conservancy

Since 1993, the Potomac Conservancy has protected the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries. Its conservation programs address the goals of improving water quality, protecting the river's scenic integrity, enhancing recreational resources, and building an informed and engaged constituency, using a range of tools, including restoration, permanent protection, advocacy, and citizen education and engagement.

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