

GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL HARVEST OF PLANT MATERIALS

Based on various Federal, State, and local protocols, Synergy Ecological Restoration (Synergy) has developed these guidelines for the ethical harvest of plant materials associated with the Southern Rockies Seed Network.

Our native ecotypic plants, relative to native cultivars, have evolved over long periods of time in the soils and harsh climate that characterize the Rocky Mountain region, tested by cycles of drought, fire, floods, insect outbreaks, disease, herbivory, and combinations of these natural disturbance agents. It is integral to our mission to develop plant materials for ecological restoration that are adapted to these long-term environmental stressors. However, to ensure the native plant populations from which we collect germplasm are not adversely impacted during collection activities, the following guidelines are followed:

1. Collections will be conducted under the supervision of individuals who are knowledgeable of the species being collected, are trained in the proper collection methods, and who have authority to collect the species in question (i.e., permits, land owner agreements, etc.).
2. Collect only seeds or take cuttings. Collecting whole plants is not allowed unless salvage recommendations have been made by the land management agency, or in order to obtain a voucher specimen representing the target species being collected.
3. Follow Colorado Seed Growers Association requirements to document location, habitat and the geography of the environment in which a collection is made. This information will be made a permanent record of SRSN.
4. Prepare a specimen to provide absolute identification of the plants collected.
5. Avoid collecting more than 30% of the stems and/or seeds from the target population. If collecting cuttings, never harvest more than 30% of any one plant, and collect cuttings uniformly throughout a plant and a stand to avoid the creation of lopsided plants.
6. Avoid sensitive habitats, and be sensitive to any area in which you collect plant materials. Use good judgment if only a few plants are available. The standard rule is to leave no trace of your visit, which may require passing up a plant for seed or cuttings if it is not abundant or if the stand is not in good health.
7. Collect seeds or cuttings only from large healthy populations.
8. Never collect threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, unless at the direction of the land management agency.



Native flora is one of our most valuable natural resources. We have the technology and knowledge to use it wisely...and the ethical responsibility to protect it!

REFERENCES

Colorado Native Plant Society Statement: Ethics of Collecting Native Plants, 2001

National Park Service: *Planning a Native Plant Project*,
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/restore/pubs/intronatplant/planning.htm>

San Juan National Forest Service, *Guidelines for the Ethical and Sustainable Harvest of Wild Plants*,
http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3822046.pdf