



National Tree Seed Centre

Indigenous Seed Collection Program



“The program will develop a seed collection strategy with and for Indigenous communities based on existing Indigenous knowledge, to support sustainable use and enable restoration of those species of interest.”

Purpose

As the original ecosystem architects of Turtle Island (North America), Indigenous peoples are the earliest seed collectors, processors, and distributors on this great landscape we all now call home.

As part of the 2 Billion Tree initiative (2BT), the National Tree Seed Centre (NTSC) will promote seed collection capacity and development within Indigenous communities across Canada.

It will support community-specific paths in the storage of their genetic legacy through the co-development of an Indigenous Seed Collection program that includes knowledge sharing, training, and short and long-term seed collection and storage.

This program will maintain Indigenous intellectual property rights and access to seed collections, while creating opportunities for small-to-medium size enterprises. This will empower communities to preserve Indigenous knowledge, conserve tree species of cultural, spiritual, and economic importance, and play a critical role ensuring that the right seed from the right species is available for future planting and use under the 2 Billion Trees program.



Program Overview

The program will establish an Indigenous-led seed collection program focused on species that are of cultural, medicinal, spiritual and economic importance to Indigenous communities. Indigenous forest values will be at the centre of the National Tree Seed Centers efforts to preserve and protect forest resources for the future: particularly as climate change threatens those values.

Indigenous communities have been the stewards of forests for generations: relying on the natural resources for food, shelter, medicine, spirituality, and culture. The Indigenous Seed Collection Program will examine, record (where appropriate), and incorporate Indigenous knowledge into seed collection and conservation.

Role of The National Tree Seed Centre

- Engage an Indigenous Coordinator to explore Indigenous seed collection and storage capacity and the equipment and training needs across Canada.
- Collaborate with communities and Indigenous led Small and Medium Enterprises to identify technical and training needs.
- Develop a strategy with Indigenous communities to support collection of their species of interest for habitat creation, restoration, school-yard programs and community forestry management lands.
- Develop a network of community participants to assist seed collection and processing.
- Host community workshops and meetings to identify species of interest and potential sources of native species seed (as an example, for assisted migration to mitigate climate change impacts) for planting on traditional territories.
- Have discussions with provincial seed centres and regional forest genetics programs to acquire current training materials or identify those that can be updated with existing Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.
- Help to identify low-tech equipment needs for seed collection, cleaning and banking to kickstart seed supply solutions in Indigenous communities.
- Identify local seed supply issues and if the National Tree Seed Centre has sufficient seed in storage, provide Indigenous communities and Small and Medium Enterprises with a diversity of appropriate and climate-resilient seed.

How Can My Community Get Involved?

For more information, contact **Mary Knockwood**, Regional Indigenous Programs Coordinator at (506) 282-1710 or via email at mary.knockwood@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca Or one of our Indigenous Technicians **Naomi Millier** at naomi.millier@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca or **Martina Albert** at martina.albert@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

