



# Raising Native Plants in Nurseries: Basic Concepts

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The USDA Forest Service Report *Raising Native Plants in Nurseries: Basic Concepts* published in June 2012 is a primer for hobbyists interested in propagating and outplanting their own plants as well as for professionals with limited horticultural background. The introductory chapter describes the key differences in bareroot versus container native plant production and considerations related to crop scheduling. The second chapter covers collection or purchase of native plant seeds, handling and cleaning of seed, and seed treatments to overcome seed dormancy. The succeeding chapter addresses propagation of seedlings in bareroot nurseries including site preparation, fertilizers, sowing, watering, root pruning, lifting, and storage of seedlings. This chapter also covers container nursery production including growing media, containers, sowing, irrigation, and fertilizers as well as other important horticultural factors including light, hardening, pest management, and beneficial organisms. The chapter on growing plants from cuttings addresses types of cuttings (for example, hardwood versus softwood), collection of cuttings, rooting environment, and other types of vegetative propagules. The final chapter presents an overview of outplanting including tools and techniques and after care. The appendix contains a useful list of seed characteristics of trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses and presents information on seeds per pound and seed treatments to break dormancy.

For the layman, this report contains a wealth of practical information on the propagation of native plants in simple lan-

guage and with informative figures. The chapter on “Obtaining and Preparing Seeds” is especially useful; this information will be very helpful to novice native plant growers. For professionals in natural resource management with little education or experience in plant propagation and outplanting, *Raising Native Plants in Nurseries: Basic Concepts* provides the type of background information needed to aid in developing reforestation or restoration projects requiring native plant production and planting. The discussions on crop scheduling and outplanting should be very helpful to those responsible for the long-term planning required for restoration plantings. If the reader requires more in-depth technical information or scientific background, the report refers them to the excellent 7-volume series *The Container Tree Nursery Manual*, USDA Forest Service, Agricultural Handbook 674 (1990–2010). Because of the nationwide audience, the seed lists in the appendix may not contain the most sought-after species for all regions, but the sources listed will help the user find seed treatment information for additional species. I found *Raising Native Plants in Nurseries: Basic Concepts* to be the most comprehensive yet concise introduction to native plant production that I have encountered.

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