

2026 Seed Collector's Newsletter

Please contact Reforestation Program staff prior to any seed collecting.

All seeds purchased must be of natural origin. If a tree is large, old and well-established, it is probably of natural origin. Landscaping trees originating from a private nursery or landscaping company are not appropriate for seed harvest. Failure to adhere to this requirement may put a vendor's ability to sell seed to the nursery in jeopardy.

Conifers

Cones must be closed and mature. Do not pick conifer cones earlier than the approximate purchase date (see Species, Goals & Purchasing Dates table on page 2). Some species are known to open and close quickly in response to humidity changes. After opening the first time, cones disperse most of their seeds.



Maturing red pine cones

Red Pine: Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) plantations are found throughout the state, especially the sandy soils of central, northwest and northeast Wisconsin. The cones are mature when they have turned from green to purplish with red-brown tips. Use clippers to snip

cones from branches. Store in a cool, dry place to limit mold growth or cone opening. Do not mistake Austrian or Scotch pine for red pine. Scotch pine bark is flaky, especially toward the upper part of the stem, and orange. Cones appear twisted, pointy and green, even at maturity. Austrian pine tends to be found in urban environments, has a stocky appearance, darker bark and larger, more triangular cones in comparison to red pine.

Tamarack: Tamarack (*Larix laricina*) is mostly found in low, wet areas of the northern two-thirds of the state. The cones mature in one year, starting reddish purple, then becoming



Mature tamarack cones

green until they ripen into a light brown by late July or early August. They open quickly in warm conditions. Cones are found all over the tree. Do not mistake European larch for tamarack. Larch tend to grow much larger and the cones over double the size of tamarack.

Hardwoods

Hardwood seeds and nuts must be fully mature. Do not pick seed from the trees – wait until it has dropped to the ground. Seed must be clean, without grass clippings, twigs, empty caps, rocks, etc.

Sugar Maple: Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) is found on rich, well-drained soils throughout the state. The “helicopters” have a green, round



Immature Norway maple

seed with a light brown wing attached. Seed ripens and drops in September and October, prior to leaf fall. Do not mistake

Norway maple, a non-native with similar characteristics. Norway seed is flat with elongated, broad wings. The leaves are dark green and heavy.

Species, Goals & Purchasing Dates

Species	Estimated Purchasing Goal	Units	2026 Purchase Prices	Approximate Purchase Date
Butternut	40	Bu	\$15.00	Sept. 17
Cherry, Choke	105	Lbs	\$10.00	Aug. 1
Hawthorn	12	Bu	\$175.00	Sept. 15
Hazelnut, American	90	Bu	\$40.00	Aug. 21
Hickory, Bitternut	15	Bu	\$50.00	Sept. 15
Maple, Sugar	60	Bu	\$100.00	Sept. 17
Oak, Bur	55	Bu	\$40.00	Sept. 1
Oak, Red	70	Bu	\$50.00	Sept. 17
Oak, Swamp White	155	Bu	\$120.00	Sept. 6
Oak, White	130	Bu	\$70.00	Sept. 1
Pine, Jack	800	Bu	\$70.00	--
Pine, Red	600	Bu	\$125.00	Sept. 1
Plum, American	90	Bu	\$50.00	Sept. 1
Spruce, Black	15	Bu	\$300.00	Aug. 20
Tamarack	40	Bu	\$750.00	Aug. 1
Walnut, Black	920	Bu	\$4.00	Sept. 21

Call The Nursery Before Collecting

Reforestation program staff can answer any seed related questions. As the seed quantity goals are reached, it is possible that we will abruptly stop purchasing some seed. Contact Reforestation staff before you begin collecting to ensure purchasing is still open for the species you intend to collect.

Reforestation Program Nurseries

Griffith State Nursery
473 Griffith Avenue
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
715-424-3700

Hayward State Nursery
16133 W Nursery Rd
Hayward, WI 54843
715-492-1204

Wilson State Nursery
5350 Hwy 133
Boscobel, WI 53805
608-375-4123

[Check our webpage for additional information.](#)

Get Permission

Checking regulations and following safe practices is important and will protect a vendor's ability to harvest seeds from these properties into the future. Property managers have the right to refuse permission for collection activities.

- **State Parks/Forests/Other state-owned lands** – All state properties have a property manager. Contact them to obtain any required permission or permits. Contact the DNR Call Center at 888-WDNRINFO (888-936-7463) or use the [DNR staff directory to find a state property manager](#).
- **County forests** – Contact the [county forest administrator](#).
- **Federal lands** – Contact the [USFS forest superintendent](#) or property manager.
- **Private lands** – Obtain permission from the landowner prior to picking.

All purchased seeds must be separated by county of origin.

Buying Stations And Contacts (All Hours Are By Appointment Only)

Griffith State Nursery	Jeremiah Auer	715-459-1999
Eau Claire DNR Office	Kyle Coopman	715-894-6636
Appleton DNR Office	Tim James	715-701-8018
Baldwin DNR Office	Andy Ciarro	715-271-5228
Neillsville DNR Office	Chris Schmitz	715-937-0160

Hayward State Nursery	Richard Nessler	715-492-1204
Barnes Ranger Station	Christopher Sutherland	715-979-1166
Rhineland Ranger Station	Joshua Kunzman	715-499-5042
Washburn Ranger Station*	Joseph LeBouton	715-209-2149
Florence DNR Service Center	Andy Nault	715-889-0164

Wilson State Nursery	Jackie Knoble	608-485-0303
	Roger Bohringer	608-485-1425
Baraboo DNR Office	Paul Kloppenburg	608-604-4846
Fitchburg DNR Service Center	Becky Gray	608-220-3022
Horicon DNR Office	Randy Stampfl	920-382-0657

*Washburn Ranger Station is under construction in 2026 – please contact forester for drop off information

Payment

The Reforestation Program reserves the right to refuse to purchase any seed if it does not meet our specifications. Payment is made using a tree/shrub seed order form (9300-083 R 05/25). The vendor receives a copy of the form when seeds are delivered to a buying station. A check is mailed within 4 to 6 weeks.

Seed Cleaning

All red, white and swamp white oak acorns must be floated in water. Acorns that sink are generally considered viable; discard any that float. Rocks, sticks, leaves and rotten or immature acorns must be removed.

Bur oak, butternut, bitternut hickory, hazelnut and black walnut are purchased with their husks or caps attached. Choke cherry and American plum should still be enclosed in fruit. Dirty, moldy, unclean seeds or seeds of uncertain origin will be rejected or have a price reduction applied.

Seed Storage

Store seed in a cool, dry location and deliver it to a buying station as soon as possible to prevent heating or molding. Storage should be in breathable containers.

