



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Plant Trust Confirms 10M Seeds Now Banked; Announces \$1.5M Bequest to Save, Preserve, and Share Native Plants in New England

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Wayland, MA – Native Plant Trust, the nation’s first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England’s native plants, announced it has received a generous \$1.5M bequest from an anonymous donor for endowment funds supporting its ongoing work in conservation, including banking the seed of rare and endangered native plants in New England and preservation of its herbarium, and for creating a new endowment for communications and visual resources. Native Plant Trust confirmed that as of November 2025 over ten million seeds have been banked in their facilities, supporting the organization’s continued work to protect biodiversity.

“This extraordinary bequest strengthens the very foundation of our mission,” said Tim Johnson, CEO of Native Plant Trust. “In 2025, our seed bank surpassed ten million seeds—a testament to the power of science, persistence, and community in safeguarding the natural world. This gift allows us to deepen that commitment, ensuring that New England’s rarest plants, and the ecosystems they sustain, endure for generations to come.”

Seed banking plays a crucial role in native plant conservation by preserving genetic material. Native Plant Trust is at the forefront of safeguarding New England’s rare species against the environmental threats to their survival, equipped with the scientific knowledge, staff, trained volunteers, partnerships, and physical facilities in place to carry out this important work.

“Seed banking involves so much more than storing seeds,” said Director of Conservation Lea Johnson. “This bequest will support the ongoing effort and care that this long-term work requires, from monitoring rare plants in remote locations to collecting seed at peak ripeness, and from learning the best ways to clean seeds to careful maintenance of long-term records.”

All of these actions - and more - are essential to maintaining these rare species in perpetuity. A staggering seventeen percent of the region's native plants are teetering on the brink of extinction, with an additional five percent already lost. While great strides are being made, the task to save them is monumental. Invasive species, pollution, development, and climate change are among the factors taking a toll on rare plants. The seed bank holds the potential to safeguard New England's rarest plants for the future. Current statistics for the Seed Bank include 2,190 accessions, 489 taxa (groups of plants that are classified together based on shared characteristics) and approximately 10,300,990 seeds.

Banking the seeds of rare plants to preserve genetic diversity and to ensure their survival in the face of multiple threats is only one part of its work. Alongside the seed bank, Native Plant Trust strives through its conservation work to preserve and restore functioning ecosystems where these species can survive and evolve naturally in the wild. The organization also works to restore populations of the most at-risk species, monitors populations of rare plants in every county in New England, and continues to document the health of the 3,300 populations of the region's 389 globally and regionally rare plants. Its other resources include the Native Plant Trust digital herbarium. Native Plant Trust has recently completed the project to digitize and image the 5,795 accessioned specimens in its herbarium collection. The specimens were collected from the New England landscape between the early nineteenth century and the late twentieth century by more than 400 individual collectors, and represent thousands of hours of work. Botanical groups represented include ferns, clubmosses, grasses, conifers, and flowering plants, and collection localities include shorelines, mountain tops, bogs, meadows, forests and roadsides. Acquired in 1999 from Harvard University when the Concord Field Station Herbarium was dispersed to other institutions, the collection has been used primarily for in-house educational programs since that time. Hoping to increase visibility of this collection to the research community and beyond, planning for a digitization project began in 2022, and the project commenced in early 2025. As of mid-September, specimen data and images are now available on the Consortium of Northeastern Herbaria portal, a website that allows researchers to access biodiversity data on specimens from herbaria across the northeastern U.S.

Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org for more information on its work to conserve native plants.

ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

For over a century, Native Plant Trust has been leading the movement to conserve native plants in the wild and use them in designed spaces. We do this to increase the beauty and resilience of New England and the planet. From our base in Massachusetts, staff and trained volunteers work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs. We welcome visitors from all over the world to Garden in the Woods, our renowned native plant botanic garden in Framingham, MA. We also operate a nursery at Nasami Farm in western Massachusetts and manage six sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are open to the public. Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.