

Collection, Development, and Release of Native Seed Resources for Texas

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Commercial native seed sources are an important resource for restoration of native plant communities in Texas. Interest in rangeland restoration through federal conservation programs using ecotypic native seeds is growing. This has resulted in high demand for seed sources. The *Texas Native Seeds Program* (TNS) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Materials Centers (PMC) in Kingsville, Nacogdoches, and Knox City are cooperating to address these needs through a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Grant.

Objectives include identifying species for NRCS conservation programs in each region of the state, making seed collections, and cooperating with the PMCs to select, increase, and release germplasm for large scale production by commercial seed companies. TNS and PMC personnel are also collaborating on establishing research and demonstration seedings. This will help us learn more about establishment dynamics and management requirements associated with rangeland restoration. Providing science-based guidance to NRCS staff, field offices, and landowners on the selection of suitable native plant seed mixes for restoration projects is also a function of the project.

In 2018, 734 native seed collections were made across Texas and placed in the PMC Program inventory because of this collaboration. In spring 2019, we began evaluations of 7 native plant species for future commercial release. In partnership with PMC staff, we hope to finalize release of 6 native seed releases for Texas by the end of 2019.

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