

## **Native Seed Development for U.S. Forest Service Restoration in East Texas**

*Tyler C. Wayland, Thomas C. Philipps, Robert A. Shadow, Keith A. Pawelek, and Forrest S. Smith*

The United States Forest Service (USFS) manages over 675,000 acres in Texas. These public lands are divided into 4 National Forests and 2 National Grasslands within 15 East Texas counties. The USFS is expecting land disturbance from oil and gas activities to reach upwards of 20,000 acres in Texas over the next 20 years. These trends highlight the need for commercial production of regionally adapted native seed sources to meet future restoration and revegetation needs in East Texas.

In 2018, *East Texas Natives* joined the cooperative effort of the USFS and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service East Texas Plant Materials Center to develop regionally adapted seed sources of native understory species. These species are needed for restoration projects on the National Forests and other public and private lands in East Texas. The focus is on native seed collections of priority native species on National Forest lands, the commercialization of previous USFS ecotype selections of 3 species, and the evaluation of seed collections to identify and select more locally adapted germplasms for commercial production.

Regionally adapted seed sources will be released to commercial producers for large scale seed production to support federal, state, and private restoration efforts. These efforts should ultimately increase quality longleaf and shortleaf pine savannas and blackland prairie habitats, and provide adapted native species for use on disturbed lands in East Texas.

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