

THE COMMUNITY TREE TRUST AND UK NATIONAL TREE SEED PROJECT, MILLENNIUM SEED BANK KEW 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Community Tree Trust has just formed a collaboration with the Millennium Seed Bank based at Wakehurst Place in Sussex, which is part of the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew. The purpose of the project is to provide a national repository of plant material and associated knowledge of native tree species, in order to facilitate research and conservation, and to better understand the management and ecology of tree and shrub species in the UK landscape.

The overall aim is to ensure that suitable plant material and information is available to support conservation, research and other activities aimed at achieving national goals of increasing woodland cover in the UK, and to also provide resources and resilience against climate change and to manage woodland ecosystems more effectively.

The Community Tree Trust specialises in collecting tree, shrub and wild flower species from semi-natural ancient woodlands and other habitats throughout Bedfordshire, and it is ideally placed to help with the seed collections of native tree and shrub species for the MSB Kew. The Trust has built up a substantial database of members and volunteers over the years, working with all the local authorities and conservation organisations in Bedfordshire.

The Community Tree Trust is now FRM Registered with the Forestry Commission, and during the project will be collecting tree and shrub seed from Zone 402 Region of Provenance which includes Bedfordshire.

SEED COLLECTIONS AND TARGETS ACHIEVED

The Community Tree Trust organised a total of 12 seed collections, 4 of which were with local schools and 16 Shuttleworth College students. Maulden Lower School children collected Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Field Maple seed from Maulden Church Meadows, and Marston Vale School children from Stewartby collected Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dogrose, Crab Apple and Field Maple seed from Glebe Meadows and King's Wood Houghton Conquest.

The Trust has also involved other volunteers and training has been given for the project, mainly based at the MSB at Wakehurst Place and at the Community Tree Nursery.

During the period from 20th September to 26th October 2014 a total of 10 species of the 45 species listed in the Seed Collection Manual were collected from semi-natural ancient woodlands, ancient hedgerows and meadows.

The target was to collect at least 10,000 seed from each species and all trees and shrubs were tagged and locations recorded with a GPS.

A tree climber was employed to collect all of the seed from the Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*).

The approximate total number of seeds of each species of tree and shrub collected so far for the project are outlined below:

Wild Service Tree (<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>)	15,000
Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	12,000
Crab Apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>)	16,000
Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>)	10,700
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	25,000
Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)	11,125
Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>)	13,300
Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>)	7,700
Wild Privet (<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>)	5,000
Guelder rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	1,000

It is hoped that the Community tree Trust will be working with the MSB at Wakehurst Place for the next few years on the UK National Tree Seed project.

FUTURE SEED COLLECTIONS

It is hoped that further seed collections from other species can be carried out successfully next year, and that Dogwood, (*Cornus sanguinea*), Wild Privet, (*Ligustrum vulgare*) and Guelder rose, (*Viburnum opulus*) can still be collected in greater amounts than this year.

Other known sites of Semi-natural ancient woodlands in Bedfordshire which were not used this year will be surveyed and collections carried out where possible.

In 2015, the Trust would like to collect Alder, (*Alnus glutinosa*), Silver Birch, (*Betula pendula*), Downy Birch, (*Betula pubescens*), Elder, (*Sambucus nigra*), Gorse, (*Ulex europaeus*) and possibly Small-leaved Lime, (*Tilia cordata*) if adequate populations can be found with enough seed present.

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Community Tree Trust & CTT Sales