

## WHY LOCAL ECOTYPE?

Louisiana plant species have evolved over tens of thousands of years in response to environmental influences including grazing, fire, drought, and flooding. Native plants are well adapted to our growing conditions and thrive with little input. Restoration experts agree that plant materials native to an area should be used in conservation projects to achieve long term sustainability.

There is a growing interest in the public and private sectors to utilize locally adapted native plant materials for restoration and revegetation projects in Louisiana. Ensuring ecosystem stability and ensuring genetic integrity is a major concern for restoration and habitat creation projects.

Despite a strong demand for native plant material for conservation, restoration, and habitat creation, it is not available. Louisiana consumers must purchase less adapted plant material from Texas and the Midwest. Many restoration projects in Louisiana have failed or been unable to proceed because of the lack of commercially available sources of plant material that are adapted to the state.

# LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT INITIATIVE

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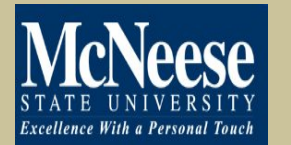
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# Louisiana Native Plant Initiative



**COLLECT, CONSERVE,  
INCREASE, AND STUDY  
NATIVE GRASSES,  
FORBS AND LEGUMES  
OF LOUISIANA**

# LOUISIANA NATIVE PLANT INITIATIVE

The collection, assembly, selection and release of new plant material are the goals of the Louisiana Native Plant Initiative (LNPI). The LNPI uses observational and/or quantitative evaluations along with plant breeding methods to isolate and/or select improved local ecotypes. The LNPI uses the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) Service Plant Materials Program model for seed collection, increase, and release of adapted native grasses, forbs and legumes for commercial production.

The LNPI will collect, preserve, increase, and study native grasses, forbs and legumes of Louisiana, conserving a vanishing natural resource and providing an essential step in the development of a native plant industry.



Two integral parts to the LNPI are seed collection and the increase and production of seed. Candidate species are selected by the LNPI Technical Committee based on resource concern, wildlife value, range of distribution and physical characteristics for commercial production. Local native seeds are then collected from sources on private and public lands in the specific ecosystem as identified by the technical committee. Seeds are collected by hand or by mechanical means, and labeled based on location and other relevant scientific information.

Seed collection is an ongoing process throughout the growing season, typically April to November. This includes seed collection on remnant grasslands and seed harvest from the breeder and foundation seed blocks. Seed processing, cleaning and greenhouse grow out occurs November to March at the NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center in Galliano, LA. Using the year round grow out process, a local ecotype release will take 3 to 5 years from initial collection to release to the commercial market.



## Partnerships

To address the lack of local ecotypes, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed April 22, 2004 between the Coastal Plain Conservancy, McNeese State University, USGS Wetlands Research Center, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In March 2006 another MOU was signed between Nichols State University, Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

These MOU's formalized a partnership to develop a comprehensive plant materials program to collect, increase and release locally adapted ecotypes of native grasses, forbs and legumes. Commercially available sources of locally adapted plant materials have the potential to provide substantial ecological and economic benefits.