

**THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE SEED BANK
PROJECT: CONSERVING GENETIC DIVERSITY FOR HABITAT
RESTORATION**

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Abstract: The National Tallgrass Prairie Seed Bank (NTPSB) at the Chicago Botanic Garden in association with Seeds of Success is embarking on a project to collect and preserve, in long-term cold storage, native seeds of the tallgrass prairie region. *Ex-situ* conservation of regional germplasm will ensure the preservation of the genetic diversity of our native flora against habitat degradation and destruction incurred by anthropogenic activities. Collection protocols developed by the Millennium Seed Bank Project will be employed to recover the maximum genetic variation of a plant population without compromising its sustainability. Lists of important species used for habitat restoration are currently being developed for each ecoregion in the tallgrass prairie region. Approximately 11 ecoregions occur in the region. Of the species represented on all or most of the 11 lists, approximately 100 will be selected to develop a target list of species. Twenty accessions for each of the species on the target list will be collected across the region and preserved in the bank. If resources become available to make seed collections from the lists developed for individual ecoregions, then those accessions will be included in the bank also. The bank will grow as participation in the project grows. Individuals or organizations who participate in the project will have priority access to this genetically rich resource that they helped to create. A portion of the seeds banked will be stored indefinitely. The “working” allotment will only be available for non-profit purposes at the discretion of NTPSB staff.