

Seeds to Trees to Clean Water

Growing Native

The Challenge

Each year thousands of volunteers from schools, community groups, and neighborhood backyards across the Potomac River watershed mobilize to collect acorns, walnuts, and other hardwood tree seeds while learning the conservation value of trees. *Growing Native* provides a full-cycle message from *seeds to trees to clean water* by integrating seed identification and collection in the fall and tree plantings along streams in the spring. *Growing Native* has been a signature project of the Northeastern Area's (NA) work with the Potomac Watershed Partnership since 2001. State nurseries have consistently been the beneficiaries of the collected seed. In recent years, a number of grow-out stations at schools and elsewhere have also helped grow the nuts into seedlings. In 2007, the program has continued to expand and improve.

The Solution

This year not only did the numbers of volunteers increase significantly, but there were more tools available to participants. Highlights from this year's *Growing Native* campaign include:

- More than 7,000 volunteers collected approximately 23,000 lbs of seed.
- Informational kiosk stations established in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, have helped with the education and collection of seed by being established seed "drop-off stations."
- A new *Growing Native* Web site was designed to reflect the development of the program by including a page for Drop-off Site Coordinators and Ambassadors. An education page presents additional resources.
- The development on a middle school curriculum entitled *Growing Native* Education Guide: Experience the Potomac River Watershed.
- Two teacher trainings on how to run a successful *Growing Native* school program.
- More grow-out stations—a teacher training was held

Growing Native helps make the connection between healthy forest lands and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.



that used a 35 gallon box as a grow-out station. This is a simple and innovative approach for schools and other community groups who may not have excessive space.

Resulting Benefits

In 2007, *Growing Native* ran more efficiently than in past years. Partners helped to manage the program on the ground. *Growing Native* saves state forest agency staff and foresters' time they would otherwise be required to spend collecting native tree seeds on their own. The ultimate benefit is to water quality in the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay, and increased appreciation of the role of trees in the watershed.

Sharing Success

- *Growing Native* is expanding outside of the Potomac. There has been interest throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Annapolis and Baltimore County have established kiosks, drop-off stations and a local Ambassador.
- Perhaps the single most exciting accomplishment that will help deliver *Growing Native* anywhere, is the development and publishing of the *Growing Native Education Guide*. This is a new resource using standards of learning. Teacher workshops will follow next year.



USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
 State and Private Forestry

For more information, contact:

Kathryn P. Maloney, Area Director
 11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
 Newtown Square, PA 19073
 Phone: 610-557-4103
 E-mail: kmaloney@fs.fed.us

Sally Claggett, Ches. Bay Prg. Coord.
 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
 Annapolis, MD 21403
 Phone: 410-267-5706
 E-mail: sclaggett@fs.fed.us