



Cheshire Seed Collection Champions Sought

The Woodland Trust is offering local people who love trees and being outside a fantastic opportunity to support its work and Kew's Millennium Seed Bank in collecting and securing tree seed from across the UK's native seed zones. These Seed Champion roles are available nationwide, but in Cheshire the work is focusing on four woods and a number of specific species:

Snidley Moor, near Frodsham – downy birch, midland hawthorn and honeysuckle

Longacre Wood, Dutton Park – downy birch and midland hawthorn

Lumb Brook Valley, Warrington – downy birch, midland hawthorn and field maple

Murdishaw Wood, Runcorn – downy birch, midland hawthorn and field maple

Volunteers' knowledge of trees will help to identify key areas and species for seed collection in line with the information set out in the seed collecting guide provided. The seed collection requires some technical understanding and the completion of checklists and field sheets to go along with the seeds and herbarium samples posted to Kew. During seed collection days, and perhaps individually, volunteers will collect seeds to add to Kew's important and growing collection.

These important seed collections will be used by various organisations to ensure long-term research into and conservation of the nation's trees, helping to safeguard their future, and establishing the country's first comprehensive collection of national tree seeds across the different native seed zones.

The risks to the UK's woods from changing phenology, drought, fire, invasive species and increasing numbers of pests and diseases have increased the need to ensure the long-term survival of our tree heritage. Everyone can play a part in guaranteeing future generations of trees survive for the benefit of both wildlife and people.

Kylie Knight, Volunteer Manager at the Trust, adds: "There are many threats facing our native trees and shrubs, and we need to do all we can to safeguard their future. These seed collections will support research and conservation work to better protect and understand our trees. We need keen tree lovers to help us succeed and Cheshire locals could be perfect for the role."

Anyone who can tell an ash from an oak and wants to make a valuable contribution to the UK's precious trees can apply to become a **Seed Collection Champion**. All the details of the roles and how to apply are in the volunteering section of the Woodland Trust website: woodlandtrust.org.uk/volunteer. Training is available for all aspects of this important role, and volunteers will be supported throughout by the Volunteer Manager.

Background Information

The UK National Tree Seed Project launched in May 2013 with a list of priority native trees and shrubs targeted for collection. This priority list gave ranking to individual species according to their conservation ratings, prevalence in the landscape, and vulnerability to pests and diseases. Species on the list include ash, common juniper, Scots pine, common alder, common beech, silver birch and yew.

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Press enquiries

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Notes to editors

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading charity championing native woods and trees. It has over 400,000 supporters.

The Trust has three key aims: i) plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife ii) protect ancient woodland which is rare, unique and irreplaceable iii) restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). Access to its woods is free.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. Kew Gardens is a major international and a top London visitor attraction. Kew's 132 hectares of landscaped gardens, and Kew's country estate, Wakehurst Place, attract over 1.5 million visits every year. Kew was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2003 and celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2009. Wakehurst Place is home to Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world. Kew receives approximately just under half of its funding from Government through the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Further funding needed to support Kew's vital work comes from donors, membership and commercial activity including ticket sales.

More about Kew's Millennium Seed Bank <http://www.kew.org/science-conservation/save-seed-prosper/millennium-seed-bank/>