



What permit do you need to collect local seed?

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This note explains how to seek authorisation to collect native seed. It is relevant statewide in Victoria.

Indigenous plants, that is vegetation native to the local area, are regarded as the best choice when revegetating our environment given their adaptation to the local conditions. Apart from being well adapted to the local climate and soils, they provide the best habitat for local native animals – from insects to birds. The use of indigenous plants is also favoured because this minimises the risk of genetic pollution from non-local species and reduces the potential for invasion of non-indigenous native plants.

Sustainable harvesting

If unsure of methods of harvesting seed or propagation material to grow indigenous plants, Landcare Note LC0107: *How to collect seed from native trees and shrubs?* offers useful advice.

It is important to avoid over-collection of seed (or other propagation material) from indigenous flora. National guidelines recommend that no more than 20% of the seed material produced by an individual plant in any one year should be collected. Permits and licences required to collect on public land are primarily to ensure protection of source plants and their particular habitats.

Collections on private land

The steps required when planning to collect seed from private land can be summarised as follows:

- Obtain landowners permission
- If there is to be commercial collection of sphagnum moss, tree-ferns or grasstrees apply for a FFG protected flora permit from your local DSE office.
- Check with local government regarding planning permit requirements for your collecting program.
- Proceed with collection ensuring protection of the source plants and their habitat. National guidelines for collection methods are available at www.florabank.org.au. Any permits issued will also include particular conditions that must be met.

Collections on public land

The steps required when planning to collect seed from public land can be summarised as follows:

- Obtain land managers permission, as described below. This may require obtaining relevant licences or permits, depending on tenure and if the collection is for commercial purposes.
- If there is commercial or non-commercial collection of protected flora obtain a FFG protected flora permit from your local DSE office.
- Check with local government regarding planning permit requirements for your collecting program.
- Proceed with collection ensuring protection of the source plants and their habitat. National guidelines for collection methods are available at www.florabank.org.au. Any permits issued will also include particular conditions that must be met.

Obtain permission

Always get permission from the land owner or land manager before collecting seed or propagation material. This applies to both private and public land. For example: on State Forests land, a Forestry Victoria licence is required, on land managed by Parks Victoria an additional permit is required, and on private land the land owner and if relevant land manager must give permission.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

Many native plant species are protected under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG). The list of protected flora does not only include threatened species. For example most wattles and all daisies are protected under the FFG Act. The DSE website contains the list of [protected flora](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au), (www.dse.vic.gov.au).

If you intend to take flora deemed 'protected' by the State from any public land, you will need a FFG protected flora permit issued by DSE. On private land, a FFG protected flora permit is only required for the commercial harvesting of sphagnum moss, tree-ferns and grasstrees. The FFG



protected flora permit will include conditions which will assist in making the collection activities more ecologically sustainable.

Victoria Planning Provisions

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* underpins the Victoria Planning Provisions in which there are particular requirements for native vegetation. A planning permit is required for **the removal, destruction or lopping** of native vegetation on **any** land in a holding of 0.4 hectare or greater in size. This includes the collection of native seed. Local Government is the responsible authority for issuing planning permits for the removal of native vegetation. Exemptions apply in some situations.

Public Land

In addition to the FFG Act and Victoria Planning Provisions requirements, additional licences, permits or permissions will be required in different land tenures.

Seed collection from State Forests

For a permit to collect in State Forests contact the Senior Forester or Forester in Charge at the local DSE Office or for more information contact Forestry Victoria, DSE via the DSE/DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186. Royalties will apply for the commercial collection of seed.

Seed collection from Parks Victoria land

Parks Victoria manages the state's parks and reserve system including National, State, Regional, Coastal, and Wilderness Parks, Reference areas, flora, fauna, bushland reserves, and historic sites.

As a general rule, collection of plant material from a park or conservation reserve managed by Parks Victoria is discouraged. Permission may be granted provided the taking is not for commercial gain and there is demonstrable public benefit.

Where collection of plant material is approved, collection and subsequent propagation should aim to establish an external source (such as a "seed orchard"), so that there will not be a continuing need to use the park or reserve as a source of seed or propagating material in the future.

Seed collection from rail reserves

For safety and insurance reasons, permission must be obtained for entry onto any rail reserve. In metropolitan areas contact M-Trains (9619 5075) or Connex (9610 6927). In rural areas contact Freight Australia (9619 4945) or the Australian Rail and Track Corporation (9619 4983).

Seed collection from roadsides

Again, for safety and insurance reasons, permission should be obtained for entry onto any road reserve managed by VicRoads or Local Government. Further information may be obtained from the Regional VicRoads Environment Officer or relevant Local Government Authority. For any

activity on VicRoads roadsides a Roadside Safety Plan will need to be submitted to VicRoads.

Seed collection from local government reserves

For collection on Council owned land, permission is required from the Local Government Authority (Council). Obtain their details from the telephone directory.



Figure 1. Collecting seed (Greening Australia Victoria)

Where to apply for permits

For a FFG protected flora permit to collect seed in one DSE Region, on land that is not managed by Parks Victoria contact a Flora and Fauna Planning Officer in the nearest DSE office.

For permits to collect seed in multiple Regions, or on land managed by Parks Victoria contact:

- Environmental Research Coordinator
Department of Sustainability and Environment
Locked Bag 3000
Box Hill 3128
Phone: (03) 9296 4400

Costs

Permits from DSE are free, licence costs (if they apply) are minimal, and royalties apply if capsules or pods are collected on a commercial basis.

For collection on a non-commercial basis in State forests, a licence is still needed, but royalties will be waived for collection of up to 30 kilograms of capsule and plant material for projects that have clear community benefits (e.g. Landcare) and where seed is not subsequently sold. If the weight of material collected (for community projects) exceeds 30 kilograms, halved royalty rates will apply.

Alternative sources of seed

If you can not collect your own seed, around the State, there are a number of indigenous seed banks, operated by different agencies and community groups. Your local Flora and Fauna Planning Officer will be able to advise you on any seedbanks in your local area.

Occasionally, Forestry Victoria has small amounts of eucalypt seed for sale (where surplus to their own requirements). Inquire at your local DSE office.

Another option is to organise local collectors to collect enough seed or propagation material to cover your needs. You must ensure that the seed collectors are given adequate notice to meet your requirements. Alternatively, indigenous plant nurseries will often collect seed, and / or grow plants to your requirements.

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