



COLORADO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Guidelines for Collection of Native Plants For Use in Restoration, Horticulture, Medicinal Preparations and Scientific Research

INTRODUCTION

Increasing interest in the use of Colorado and regional native plants for horticulture, ecological restoration, and medicinal preparations has prompted the Colorado Native Plant Society to develop guidelines for collection of native plants and plant propagules from the wild. The need for ethical and judicious collecting guidelines for research scientists was recognized nearly a decade ago by a group called The Plant Conservation Roundtable. The guidelines published here are adapted from the 1986 The Plant Conservation Roundtable Conservation Guidelines which appeared in the Natural Areas Journal, Volume 6, Number 3, pages 31-32.

The Colorado Native Plant Society is dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of Colorado's native flora. We support the use of native plants in landscaping and ecological restoration. We also recognize the role scientific research plays in the conservation of native plant species and the communities and habitats in which they occur. Responsible collection and use of wild native plants or plant propagules by knowledgeable people enhances public understanding and appreciation of our native flora. We encourage individuals and agencies involved in the collection of native plants to adopt the following guidelines.

The Colorado Native Plant Society's Collection Guidelines are intended to apply to collection of Colorado and regional native plants, plant parts, or plant propagules for use in horticulture, ecological restoration, medicinal preparations, and scientific research.

1. Know which plant species in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region are Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or Species of Special Concern. Such plants should not be collected. If special circumstances exist, such as imminent destruction of habitat (salvage operations), scientific research contributing to long-term conservation of the species, or reestablishment of extirpated populations, use care and judgement in collecting only what is necessary. Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for current status information. The Center for Plant Conservation should be consulted before attempting reintroductions.
2. Obtain necessary permits and permission for collecting on public lands. Collecting is prohibited by regulation on some public lands (Open Space lands managed by the City and County of Boulder and National Parks, for example). Other public land management agencies require a Special Use Permit (the U.S. Forest Service, for example). Know and abide by all regulations. Report any illegal collecting that you encounter to appropriate authorities.

3. If you intend to collect on private land, obtain permission from the landowner beforehand.
4. Do not collect indiscriminately, even in large populations. Collect only the minimum amount of plant material necessary. Take into account the cumulative effects of multiple collections on survival and reproductive success of the plant population. Never collect the only plant at a given location. A general guideline is one collection for every 20 to 50 plants.
5. Do not collect whole plants when plant parts (e.g., seeds or cuttings) are sufficient.
6. Know when collection of a voucher specimen is appropriate. Record all data required by the institution where you intend to deposit the voucher at the time the collection is made (i.e., in the field). Herbaria at the University of Colorado (COLO) or Colorado State University (CS) are recommended as primary repositories for plant materials collected in Colorado. If another institution is chosen, it should be a publicly accessible institutional herbarium recognized by the International Association of Plant Taxonomists (listings are published in Index Herbariorum).
7. Collect only if you are (or are accompanied by) a trained individual. Care properly for the specimens you collect, whether they are intended for preparation as herbarium specimens or as propagation materials. Keep a permanent record of your collection activities. Complete records of location, habitat, collectors, and date should be transferred with plant materials whenever they change hands. Collect discreetly so as not to encourage others to collect indiscriminately. Be prepared to explain what you are doing and why.
8. Respect and protect habitat. Avoid trampling vegetation or other sensitive features. Stay on designated trails wherever possible. Do not collect from areas that are vulnerable to erosion (trailside areas, for example). The standard rule is to leave no trace of your visit; avoid damage to the site and its natural and aesthetic values.
9. If you discover a new plant record, notify an appropriate conservation official or land manager. Be cautious in providing site locations of rare plants to others.
10. If you learn that rare or protected plant species or their habitats may be destroyed, notify a Colorado Native Plant Society board member or The Nature Conservancy.
11. Conduct salvage (rescue) projects only in sites that are scheduled for imminent destruction and only in conjunction with appropriate state agencies or conservation organizations. Obtain prior permission of the landowner. Do not collect from portions of the site that will remain in a natural state. Use salvaged plants only for such purposes as relocation, public education, botanical research or documentation, or propagation as stock, not for sale to the public. Document your collections with voucher specimens deposited in a recognized herbarium.

12. Do not purchase wild-collected plants (or plant parts) of rare or protected taxa for any reason. Beware of wild-collected plants advertised in commercial seed and bulb catalogues, or sold in the form of medicinal herbal preparations or other products. Be informed and watchful. The word "wild-crafted", which is found on many medicinal herbal preparations, means the herbs were collected from the wild. If you are not sure that the plants or products came from cultivated material, do not purchase them.
13. When discussing or publishing research results or preparing horticultural promotional or educational materials, describe conservation considerations underlying your collecting techniques.
14. If you are involved in education, teach your students about proper and careful collecting. When taking students into the field, visit only non-sensitive areas, taking care not to trample the site. Avoid frequent visits to the same natural site. For classroom use, collect only those plants both common in the region and locally abundant at the site. Whenever possible, collect only the portions of a plant necessary for identification, such as leaf, flower, or fruit.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Colorado Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Office
 Mailing Address:
 Denver Federal Center
 P.O. Box 25486
 Denver, Colorado 80225-0486
 Location Address:
 755 Parfet Street, Suite 496
 Lakewood, Colorado 80215-5599
 Phone: 303-275-2392
 FAX: 303-275-2395
<http://www.r6.fws.gov/co.html>

The Nature Conservancy
 1881 9th Street, Suite 200
 Boulder, CO 80302
 303-444-2950
<http://nature.org/states/colorado/>

Center for Plant Conservation
 c/o Denver Botanic Garden
 909 York Street
 Denver, CO 80206-3799
 303-331-4000
<http://www.denverbotanicgardens.org/>

U.S. Forest Service
 Rocky Mountain Regional Office
 P.O. Box 25127
 Lakewood, CO 80225-0127
 303-275-5350
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/>

Colorado Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 200
 Fort Collins, CO 80521
www.conps.org

Bureau of Land Management
 Colorado State Office
 2850 Youngfield Street
 Lakewood, Colorado 80215
 303-239-3600
<http://www.co.blm.gov/>

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