Background information

**Securing the future of our trees**: The risks to the UK’s woods from changing phenology, drought, fire, invasive species and increasing numbers of pests and diseases ([http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/learn/threats-to-our-woodland/pests-and-diseases/](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/learn/threats-to-our-woodland/pests-and-diseases/)) have increased the need to ensure the long term survival of our tree heritage. We can all play a part in guaranteeing future generations of trees for the benefit of nature and people.

**UK National Tree Seed Project**: Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank has established the UK National Tree Seed Project ([http://www.kew.org/science-conservation/research-data/science-directory/projects/uk-national-tree-seed-project](http://www.kew.org/science-conservation/research-data/science-directory/projects/uk-national-tree-seed-project)), with the Woodland Trust as partners. The aim is to establish the country’s first comprehensive collection of national tree seeds across the different native seed zones ([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-72kldl](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-72kldl)), preserving a range of local genetic diversities. The conservation of this valuable seed resource will support research (into areas including natural pest or disease resistance), (re-)establishment of populations and providing diverse genetic material to support resilient landscapes.

**SUMMARY OF TASK**

This is a fantastic opportunity to support the work of the Woodland Trust and Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank in collecting and securing tree seed from across the UK’s native seed zones.

Your 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, which will be emailed to volunteers. 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. Site visits to woods will need to be carried out to assess tree species and seed availability – for ease, sites will be assigned as close to your home as possible.

As a Regional Lead, you will lead collection days with other volunteers, in coordination with the Volunteer Manager, ensuring seeds are correctly collected and all required information recorded. You will be responsible for looking after a seed collection kit and be able to transport it to and from seed collection events. You will also need to send the collected seed to the Millennium Seed Bank as soon as possible following collection – this will be via a pre-paid courier service. This role can be shared with other Seed Collection Champion Leads in your region – depending on availability. These important seed collections will be used by various organisations to ensure long term research and conservation into the nation’s trees, helping to safeguard their future.

Pest and diseases are one of the biggest threats to our native trees and woods. As this role requires you to spend time in a variety of our woods, we would ask you to take biosecurity precautions before and after collections. Along with the seed collection kit, it will be necessary for you to take responsibility for a small biosecurity kit to be used at collections by all volunteers. This simple action can help prevent the further spread of tree pests and diseases.

Training, from Kew or Woodland Trust staff, and advice from the Volunteer Manager is available for all aspects of this seed collection role – to ensure you are supported. As part of this role, you will need to keep a record of your activity and time spent and send this to the project’s Volunteer Manager.
Key Contact/s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Manager</th>
<th>Assistant Advisor, The Woodland Trust Conservation Team</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering Development Team</td>
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Timescale

In order to support you and enable you to carry out this role with confidence training will be delivered on the seed collection techniques needed by Kew. This will ensure collected seeds can be stored well and used effectively for research and conservation purposes. For a lead role, it is important you are able to attend the training day in your region, below is a list of training locations and dates. **Please indicate which training day you can attend when applying for this role:**

- North – Malham Tarn, Yorkshire – 23/09/2014
- South East – Haywards Heath – 30/09/2014
- South West – Nettlecombe Court, Exmoor – 28/10/14
- Central – Telford – 18/11/14

The optimum time for tree seed collection is around autumn, although some trees produce seeds at different times of the year. Seed collection opportunities will therefore be more frequent during certain months than others.

Site assessments for available tree species and seed condition can be made throughout the year. A number of Woodland Trust woods have been highlighted as having good potential for seed collection. These are all ancient woods that have grown there naturally and should have trees of local provenance within them.

Location

Volunteers will need to travel to Woodland Trust woods within their region for assessing and selecting seed collection sites, and for seed collecting. Only regions in England are being targeted in 2014. Specific events will be organised at regional Woodland Trust woods, ancient semi-natural woods over five hectares in size, to enable seed collection. As the project develops lead volunteers may wish to use the seed collecting guidelines to collect seed outside of organised events, please discuss this with the Volunteer Manager.

Equipment Required

At Woodland Trust events a seed collection kit will be available for volunteers to use, including equipment such as collecting bags, hand lenses, long arm loppers, herbarium presses, etc. A biosecurity kit will also be used to prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases.

Experience Required/Desired

- Experience of surveying/sampling in the natural environment.
- Identification of tree species.
- An understanding of phenological timings of tree events (e.g. seed times).
- Confidence in data entry on recording forms and careful handling of seed collection for posting to Kew.

Qualities Required

- Good communication & organisational skills.
- Ability to record information accurately.
- Confident in the use of collecting equipment and accurate form filling.
- Able to complete tasks confidently and work with minimum supervision.
**Key Duties**

- Complete an initial telephone interview with the Volunteer Manager.
- Attend initial training day at a regional location.
- Take responsibility for seed collection and biosecurity kits: transport to and from seed collections, care of equipment, replenishment of contents via Volunteer Manager, etc.
- Take responsibility for seed collections, including directing other volunteers to ensure collecting is done to Kew guidelines.
- Collect seed and herbarium sample, complete relevant documentation as per the seed collecting guide, and carefully package and post all material free to Kew.
- Proactively identify key areas/species for seed collection as per the seed collecting guide and inform the Volunteer Manager.
- If collecting outside of seed collection events please inform the Volunteer Manager. The Site Manager needs to be informed before collecting at Woodland Trust woods, and the landowner’s permission must be sought to collect seed from non-Woodland Trust woods – these must also fit the criteria of being ancient semi-natural woods.
- To work within the guidelines set by the seed collecting guide, including adhering to biosecurity guidance and health and safety. Identify any risks that the task may pose to you personally and discuss those risks with your Volunteer Manager.
- You will need to have a reasonable level of fitness to carry out seed collections.
- You will not be required to carry out any additional tasks without prior consultation with the relevant Woodland Trust staff.
- You will be required to work with consideration with the Data Protection Policy within this role. Information will be provided.

**Health & Safety**

- Please refer to your volunteer handbook for guidance on working alone. Further information will be provided at the training day.
- Due to biosecurity measures in relation to the spread of Phytophthora ramorum, you will not be permitted to enter Larch plantations, even if there is a public right of way. Further guidance will be provided within your volunteer toolkit. 
  [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/WCAS-4Z5JLL](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/WCAS-4Z5JLL)

**Expenses**

Expenses for the following:

- Expenses will be paid for public transport costs or mileage at standard rates for Woodland Trust task related return journeys from home.
- Receipts must accompany expenses claims.

Other costs:

- Kew will supply a postage code to enable Woodland Trust staff and volunteers to post material to them without cost, charges will be paid directly by Kew.

UK National Tree Seed Project – Seed Collection Champions
• Replacement of materials in seed collection (e.g. seed collection bags) and biosecurity kits (e.g. propeller spray) will be organised and paid for via the Volunteer Manager.

Conflict of interest
It is important that volunteers avoid situations that give rise to a personal or business conflict of interest while undertaking their volunteer role. If a volunteer is in a situation where they may end up gaining financially or where their own self-interest and the interests of the organisation might be in conflict, it is important to speak to your volunteer manager as soon as possible.