

Collecting and Cleaning Seeds

This is one of my favorite times of the year. Not only is the weather cooling off and the trees are turning into beautiful, vibrant, autumn colors, it's seed collecting time!!! I love, love, love seed collecting. There's something purifying and cathartic about the process; maybe it's in knowing that I'm spreading the "prairie love" by gathering some of the fruits of previous restoration efforts and giving them life in new restoration efforts. Maybe it's because seed collecting is quiet work, unlike the summer of chain sawing and brush cutting. Whatever the case, it's rewarding and gratifying work.

Earlier this month the Green County Garden Club visited for a presentation on [collecting](#) and [cleaning](#) prairie seed. It was a nice turnout of 14 people on a rainy October evening. The weather didn't present a problem as the whole presentation was done in our oversized garage. Everyone seemed interested and pleased with their new-found knowledge.

Annually, we collect some amount of seed because we are continuously working to improve areas of our prairies and introduce additional diversity. This year, we are collecting in order to overseed the Berry Prairie (3 ½ acres) this winter and for the upcoming 12-acre planting in a couple of years. I'll be glad to get the total amount of seed calculated! To date, we've collected 73 different species of grasses and forbs. We have only a couple of asters that we are waiting on to ripen. Once we have all the seeds clean, we'll weigh them, document what we have, and then sort them into four categories 1) seeds for overseeding, 2) seeds for propagating, 3) seeds to give away, and 4) seeds to store for a year. I'll be excited to see how many pounds of seeds the two of us collected!