



# NPSO Conservation Guidelines and Ethical Code

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## Part I: Chapter Guidelines

- 1) Know your rare, threatened and endangered species. Know your fragile environments and unique biotic communities.
- 2) Be alert to threats to native plants and their habitats. Appoint watchdog committees to keep aware of these threats and inform the chapter.
- 3) Take action to protect native plants. Work with all groups and the general public to protect native plants and their habitats. Be prepared to salvage plants where they are threatened by outright destruction. Help eradicate particularly aggressive and successful exotic plants that threaten native plants. Take responsible outings.
- 4) Educate your members and the public about native plants, and encourage them to use good judgement in the study, enjoyment, and use of native plants.
- 5) Encourage your members to grow native plants only from seeds or cuttings.

## Out There Among the Plants

- 1) Outings for whatever purpose must never endanger a plant population. Encourage

description, aesthetic prose and poetry, and so on.

2) On group outings (field trips, conservation activities, class field studies etc.), group leaders must take responsibility for protecting native plants from the activities of the group. All participants should understand the goal of plant protection, the purpose of the outing, and the means by which they can make the least impact on plants and the natural habitat.

3) Know where endangered species are growing and plan outings with this knowledge in mind.

4) Respect private and public property. Do not trespass. Know the regulations for use of the land and natural resources--public or private--your group is entering.

5) Respect the habitat as a whole. Avoid disturbing wildlife, such as nesting birds and nesting hornets.

6) Be sensitive to the human foot as a threat to plants. Visits to fragile environments should be carefully planned. Students should be given adequate direction by their instructor, and excessive collecting should be discouraged. Better one person enter a fragile area to identify a plant than the whole group.

7) Collecting should be considered only when identification cannot be made in the field or when it will contribute significantly to educational or scientific objectives. Collecting for whatever purpose should be done as inconspicuously as possible. Casual observers may not understand the reasons for collecting and may feel license to do likewise.

8) Collecting must never endanger a plant population. Collect seeds or cuttings in preference to whole plants. Do not collect underground plant parts except for identification purposes. Avoid excessive collecting; this calls for exercise of good judgement by the collector. Consider the use of rules of thumb for judging whether to pick or not to pick. Encourage group study of one specimen. Consider using weeds, garden species, or lab-grown specimens for educational purposes.

## Using Native Plants

1) Use of native plants--in wildflower shows, plant sales, and horticulture--must never threaten their populations.

2) Native plant species for sale should be obtained by salvage, seeds, or cuttings--in that order of priority--and whole plants should never be dug up, except for salvage. Seeds should not be sold. Growers must exercise discretion in collecting seeds and cuttings to avoid endangering plant populations.

3) Native plants for sale should state on the label how obtained or grown. Chapters should consider certifying commercial growers who follow good, ethical practices, and should urge the public not to buy unless plants were obtained or grown according to these guidelines.

4) The sale and use of particularly aggressive and successful exotic plant species, such as gorse, broom, and pampas grass, should be discouraged.

5) Salvage of native plants should be encouraged when their destruction is certain: at quarries, mines, dams, building construction sites, road construction sites etc. Salvage is not necessarily called for, however, on logging sites, some recreational areas, and rangeland. Salvaged plants should be kept potted long enough before sale to ensure that they will survive the shock of transplant

6) Wildflower shows should make maximum use of their educational potential. Inform the public of the goals of NPSO: explain the guidelines your chapter follows in studying, enjoying, and using native plants including guidelines followed in collecting for the show. consider using all other education options (slides, artwork, publications, herbarium collections, news media, etc.), and continue the education "life" of display materials after the show by donating them to schools.

## **Part II: Collection**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINE:**

THINK TWICE / USE DISCRETION / A PLANT IN PLACE IS WORTH TWO IN THE HAND /  
LOVE THY FLORA.

### **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

1. Know which taxa are locally or nationally rare or protected. Find out and follow all necessary legal procedures for collecting.

2. Avoid indiscriminate collecting. Collect only the amount of plant material necessary for documentation or research purposes. When feasible, use photography or other methods of documentation. Be aware that other collectors may visit the site.

3. Collect multiple specimens only of common taxa that are locally abundant. Collect no more than about five percent of the plants visible in any population.

4. Exercise care if you collect from a population of fewer than 100 plants. Collect only a single specimen when necessary to verify a possible new record for the area, or as a scientific voucher. Avoid collecting whole plants when plant parts are sufficient. Exercise care not to collect samples so large as to

adversely affect that plant's reproduction and survival. For voucher specimens, take only a small part if this would be adequate for certain identification. Never collect the only plant of a population.

5. If you encounter a plant with which you are unfamiliar, assume it is rare and exercise one of the following options:

Small population. Easy to return. Photograph the plant for identification and return for collecting only if the collection would add significantly to scientific knowledge;

Small population. Difficult to return. Collect only a single specimen; take care not to collect any taxa you know to be locally or nationally rare;

Large population. Follow general guidelines.

6. When collecting multiple specimens for exchange with other herbaria, or for population studies or other purposes, make sure there is a clear need for the number of specimens you wish to collect and the plant is abundant enough to justify the collection of multiple specimens. Before collecting population samples, determine that collection will enhance scientific knowledge about the distribution or biology of the taxon, i.e. do it as part of a scientifically designed sampling plan for a specific scientific purpose.

7. Care properly for the specimens you collect. Deposit herbarium specimens in an appropriate, recognized public collection. Use standard methods such as the guidelines issued by the Association of Systematics Collections for labelling the specimens.

8. Avoid purchasing wild-collected plants or plant parts or rare or protected taxa even for research, teaching, or herbarium specimens

9. When choosing plant material to use for scientific research, if possible, use plants or plant parts from existing collections or from propagated sources. If you must collect living plants for scientific research, collect in the manner least likely to damage the wild population, including (in order of general preference): seeds, cuttings or other plant parts, and whole plants. Leave behind some reproductive or regenerative parts such as fruits, roots, or rhizomes.

10. Find out about the laws that protect plants in your area. Obtain needed permits for scientific collecting on public lands. On private lands, attempt to obtain the permission of the landowner before collecting. Report any illegal collecting that you encounter to the appropriate authorities. If you discover a new plant record, notify the appropriate conservation official or land manager.

11. Collect out of the sight of the public if possible and avoid unnecessary damage to the collection site. (This guideline does not imply that collecting is a secret activity but is intended to avoid confusing the general public.)

12. If you plan to maintain living plants, collect in a manner designed to ensure the survival of the individual plants.

13. If you learn of rare or protected taxa in habitats that may be destroyed, notify your state conservation agency or The Nature Conservancy.

14. Conduct salvage projects only in sites that are scheduled for imminent destruction and 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, documentation or as propagation stock, and not for sale to the public.

15. When you discuss the results of your research, describe how your collecting techniques relate to conservation of the wild plants.

16. Teach your students about proper and careful collecting techniques. For classroom use, collect only those plants both common in the region and locally abundant at the site. Generally, collect only the portions of a plant necessary for identification such as a leaf and /or flower and fruit. When taking students into the field, visit only non-sensitive areas, taking care not to trample the site. Avoid frequent visits to the same site.