



Plant Materials Program

GREAT BASIN PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

Mission Statement

Specialize in the collection, testing, and selection of native and adapted plant materials, cultural practices, and restoration and rehabilitation methods for resource concerns of the Great Basin.

The NRCS’s Plant Materials Program develops and transfers effective state-of-the-art plant sciences technology to meet critical resource conservation needs. The program is best known for its conservation plant releases. Plant materials centers (PMC’s) have selected and conducted over 500 plant releases during the past 60 years. The program is highly successful and the demand for products is increasing.

The Great Basin PMC is the newest plant materials center, bringing the number of PMC’s nationwide to 27. The PMC is located on the University of Nevada’s Agricultural Experiment Station Newlands Field Laboratory in Fallon, Nevada.

Collaborators include:

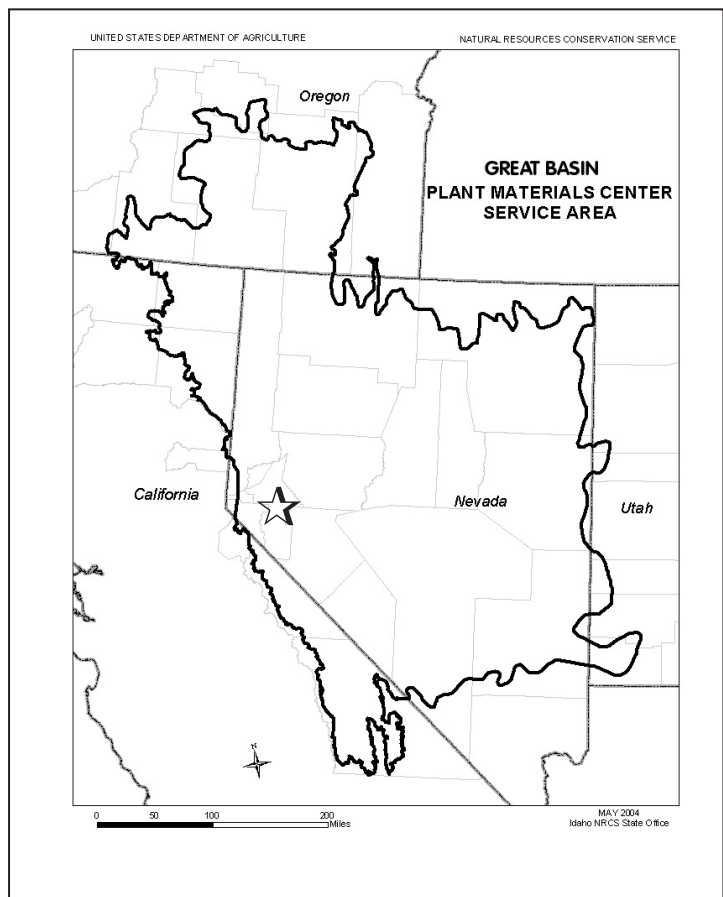
- University of Nevada, Reno, College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources
- USDI Bureau of Land Management
- Nevada Department of Agriculture
- USDA Forest Service
- Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station
- Nevada Division of Forestry
- private landowners
- and many others.

The Great Basin PMC area covers approximately 139,000 square miles, almost 89 million acres, in four states: Nevada, Oregon, California, and Utah.

The Great Basin is facing a serious crisis. The ravages of wildfire, invasive weeds, and severe drought have left the region on the verge of severe environmental degradation. The Great Basin PMC will be a source for plant materials, particularly native species, that are adapted to the harsh regional conditions found in the Great Basin. The PMC will develop native plants for the low precipitation and high salinity zones found in the Great Basin, and conduct range plant research.

The Great Basin PMC will:

- develop plant materials for vegetating non-cropland areas,
- develop technology for improved reclamation success,
- communicate seed production information needed for seed growers,
- develop a foundation seed source to meet restoration needs,
- work closely with cooperators to monitor the success and impacts of real-life plantings in the wild, and
- develop alternative, low-water-using crops.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE GREAT BASIN PMC

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GREAT BASIN PMC?

A. The Great Basin PMC will be a source for plant materials, particularly native species, that are adapted to the harsh regional conditions found in the Great Basin. The PMC will develop native plants for the low precipitation and high salinity zones found in the Great Basin, and conduct range plant research.

Plant materials provided by PMC's are used to restore and rehabilitate areas damaged by fire, erosion, invasive plants, and noxious weeds. They also help restore abandoned farmland and wildlife habitat, increase the amount of carbon stored by ecosystems, and enhance biodiversity.

Q. WHEN WILL THE GREAT BASIN PMC BE OPERATIONAL?

A. We have a lot to do before the PMC is operational. We have to construct buildings, purchase equipment, develop the fields, and plant the plants. It may take several years before we'll have seed and other plant materials ready to distribute.

Q. HOW MUCH STAFF DOES THE PMC HAVE?

A. The PMC currently has two staff members: a plant materials center manager and an assistant farm manager. If additional funding becomes available, we'll add plant and research scientists and other support personnel.



A trial site on abandoned farmland west of Fallon tests plant materials and cultural techniques to reduce wind erosion.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PLANT MATERIALS PROGRAM?

A. The Plant Materials Program:

- works with the commercial seed and nursery industries to develop and release plant materials for commercial availability.
- has released more than 500 commercially available improved grasses, legumes, forbs, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs for conservation uses. Commercial production of plant materials program releases exceeded \$93 million in 2001.



Between August 4 and August 9, 1999, more than 1,403,400 acres in northern and central Nevada burned. During that time, firefighters battled 170 separate wildland fires. More than 100,000 acres of grazing land were destroyed.

Source: Nevada Governor's Media Advisory, Aug. 12, 1999

Q. WHAT ARE PLANT MATERIALS?

A. Basically, plant materials are any part of the plant that can be used, such as seed, seedlings, and cuttings.

Q. WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

A. More information is available on the NRCS Nevada web site at www.nv.nrcs.usda.gov and the National Plant Materials web site at Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov.