

## Seed Collection time

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In 2010, in a collaboration between Massey University, the Department of Conservation, AgResearch, Landcare Research and the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, the Indigenous Flora Seed Bank in New Zealand was initiated. This was also the beginning of the partnership between the New Zealand Seed Bank and the Millennium Seed Bank led by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the United Kingdom. The aim of the Seed Bank was to collect seed from all flowering plants of New Zealand that have seed suitable for banking. Four target groups of species were initially focused on – the Myrtaceae, Fabaceae, alpine flora, and podocarps and other trees of the forest. Prior to myrtle rust coming to New Zealand, 19 partial Myrtaceae collections comprising seven species had been lodged in the seed bank.

As myrtle rust became imminent on our shores, the Department of Conservation was tasked with co-ordinating collection of seed from our native Myrtaceae species, with the overall management of the myrtle rust response in New Zealand co-ordinated by MPI (Ministry for Primary Industries). To represent all the genetic diversity of Myrtaceae within New Zealand, sites across a range of areas were selected and people in these regions tasked to collect seed if it was in season.

The first round of seed collection is now nearly completed and although it was done with some urgency due to closing seed windows, 300 seed lots have already been collected and partially processed at the Seed Bank. We now await a review and approval for round two next spring.