

Pacific Northwest Tree Seed Collections for Genetic Conservation

In the fall of 2015 US Forest Service Geneticist Andrew Bower accompanied representatives from the United Kingdom Forestry Commission's Bedgebury Pinetum, Westonbirt Arboretum, and the Oxford University Harcourt Arboretum for two weeks of their 3 week trip. They traveled through Washington, Oregon, and California to collect seed from trees and shrubs for propagation in their home arboreta, and for long-term genetic conservation at the Millennium Seed Bank run by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



US Forest Service Area Geneticist Andrew Bower collecting larch cones with a pole pruner by Luke Wallace.



Guy Horwood ascending a 200' sugar pine by Andrew Bower.

Being a Forest Service Area Geneticist, it is rare that I get a chance to travel in the woods with people as passionate about trees and plants as I am. Yet, in the fall of 2015 I got to do exactly that. I accompanied representatives from the UK Forestry Commission's Bedgebury Pinetum, Westonbirt Arboretum, and the Oxford University Harcourt Arboretum, for a whirlwind trip.

In two weeks we traveled through the Olympic Peninsula, the North Cascades, the Cascades in both Washington and Oregon, the Coast range in Oregon, and into the Siskiyou mountains in southwestern Oregon and northern California.



for the greatest good



Guy Horwood climbs a noble fir at Mary's Peak, OR by Andrew Bower.

Along the way the visitors were awed by giant Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, and western redcedar on the [Olympic National Forest](#), humbled by the vast areas recently burned on the [Okanagan-Wenatchee National Forest](#), excited to climb 200' tall sugar pines on the [Klamath National Forest](#), and overwhelmed on nearly a daily basis by the beauty of our Pacific Northwest forests and mountain peaks.

During the two week stint we labored to collect seed from over 90 different trees and shrubs, with most of our evenings spent extracting seeds from cones and berries for shipping back to the UK.

I accompanied them as far as the Klamath National Forest, then they continued south for another week all the way to southern California visiting both the redwoods, and the ancient bristlecone pines in the White Mountains.

Working together for the future

The fall 2015 seed collection trip whet the UK visitors' appetite, and they are anxious to return to the Pacific Northwest and make additional seed collections.

I look forward to working together in an international partnership with UK foresters to help secure future conservation collections from high-elevation conifer species that may be at-risk due to climate change. – *Andrew Bower, PhD, Area Geneticist and Region 6 Whitebark Pine Restoration Program Lead*

Read [Wild west coast, Andy Bryce's \(Westonbirt Arborist\) account of the tour \(.pdf\)](#) [Westonbirt, The National Arboretum Magazine, Issue 102, Winter 2015: December, January, February. © Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum. Reg. Company 4965522 Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8QS]



Cones from multiple species drying in the sun by Luke Wallace.



Andy Bryce collecting cones on a subalpine fir In the North Cascades by Luke Wallace.



Left to Right: Guy Horwood (Oxford University L to R Guy Horwood (Oxford University Harcourt Arboretum), John Allen (Bedgebury Pinetum), Andy Bryce (Westonbirt Arboretum), Daniel Luscombe (Bedgebury Pinetum), Luke Wallace (Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum) by Andrew Bower. .