

## What Is The Native Species Program?

Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) initiated the Native Species Program in 1994 with the certification of 10 species. Several organizations contributed significantly to the development of this program and continue to assist in steering the program today:

Tallgrass Prairie Center, University of Northern Iowa  
Living Roadway Trust Fund, Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT)  
USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Iowa office  
USDA-NRCS Elsberry Plant Materials Center

In 2008, the association provided inspection and certification services for over 150 native species produced as Source Identified class seed.

Certification of native seeds is not a unique program to ICIA. As a member of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA), ICIA joins many other states who offer the certification of native grasses, forbs, and woody plants under a common set of guidelines and requirements set by AOSCA.

Seed sold as Source Identified class is comprised of two components:

1. Seed collected privately
2. Seed collected for the Iowa Ecotype Project

The following paragraphs describe the components of the Source Identified program. All of the seed certified as Source Identified class has been collected from native sites. These collection sites are remnants of the vast prairie that once covered the Midwest.

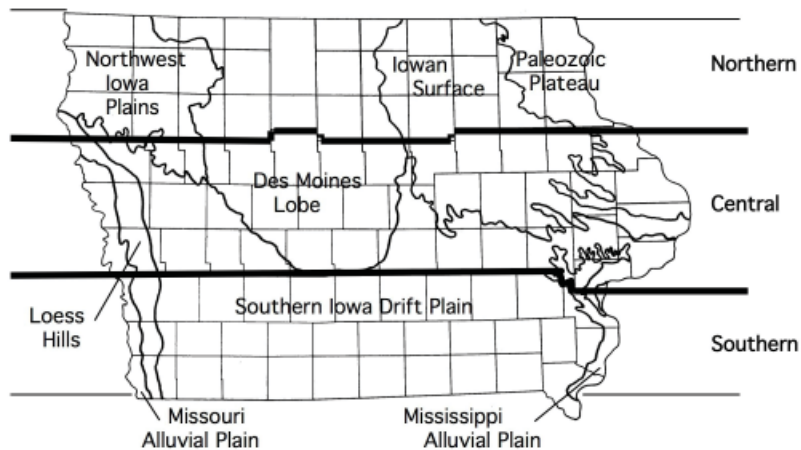
### Private Collection

The biggest component of seed certified as Source Identified class is that which is privately collected. Hours of work go into locating and identifying a native site, receiving approval for the collection of seed, and then the harvest and cleaning of seed. Typically, another season or more is required to increase the seed to a marketable quantity. An applicant applying for certification of privately collected seed is required to submit germplasm collection documentation. This documentation identifies and describes the specific location from which the seed was collected. An ICIA inspector checks the site to verify that it is "native". The privately collected species listed on the following pages are identified under the heading **Source** as **Private** and **State** indicates the state where the seed collection was taken.

## Iowa Ecotype Project

The second component of seed in the program is part of the Tallgrass Prairie Center's Iowa Ecotype Project. The Iowa Ecotype Project, which began in 1990, is funded in part by the Iowa Department of Transportation's Living Roadway Trust Fund. Its purpose is to provide a commercially available seed supply of native prairie plants of Iowa origin. For the purpose of this project, Iowa is divided into three regions, north to south, with about three tiers of counties in each region. Parent seed is collected from Iowa remnant prairie communities in each of these regions, and initially increased at the Tallgrass Prairie Center, with some species increased at the regional USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center in Elsberry, MO. The seed is subsequently released to qualified native seed growers in or very near Iowa. When applying for certification, seed growers receiving and planting this seed submit a label they receive from the Tallgrass Prairie Center to document the origin of the seed and the region in which it was collected. The seed in the Iowa Ecotype Project is identified on the following pages under heading **Source** according to the region in which it was collected. Iowa Ecotype Project seed is sold and labeled under the trade name "Natural Selections"™

*For more information about the Iowa Ecotype Project, contact Greg Houseal at 319-273-3005 or [gregory.houseal@uni.edu](mailto:gregory.houseal@uni.edu)*



Iowa Ecotype Project seed collection regions. Currently the Loess Hills are excluded from the Project. Growers may produce seed anywhere in Iowa or within one county of it's borders.