

{Connie- please look this over and make suggestions- I'd like to send out to botanical gardens, etc. first and then open up remaining seeds to individuals. Happy Trails, Lee}

Torreya Guardians letterhead?, www.torreyaguardians.org.

{1/30/06 DRAFT letter for Torreya Seed Cooperators/Producers}

Dear {contact person/organization},

We are seeking your interest in a long-term project involving seed production and distribution of the rare conifer, Torreya taxifolia, aka Florida Stinking Cedar. In a nutshell, we will ship you free seeds if you indicate an interest in growing and further distributing seeds in the future.

T. taxifolia is considered one of the most endangered North American conifers, without any currently known seed production in its native habitat along the Appalachian River bluffs in Florida. This rare plant needs further horticultural distribution to prevent extinction!

I (Lee Barnes) am serving as the coordinator of Torreya Guardians' "**Rewilding and Seed Distribution Project**". Torreya Guardians is a group of unfunded volunteers (plants people, scientists, ecologists) dedicated to the preservation of Torreya taxifolia. Please review our website, www.torreyaguardians.org, for photos and more background on our project including the pros and cons of re-wilding of Torreya.

Science Writer and Torreya Guardians founder, Connie Barlow, has written several books including The Ghosts of Evolution: Nonsensical Fruits, Missing Partners, and Ecological Anachronisms where she discusses Torreya and other "anachronistic" fruits. Connie organized the Torreya Guardians after visiting the wild population while working on articles promoting the concept of assisted migration and re-wilding of rare plants.

Basically, we have access to a limited number of seeds (100) collected from trees at Biltmore Estates in Asheville, NC. Bill Alexander, Forest Historian at Biltmore, is cooperating by providing seeds, although seed production varies widely year to year. We would like to promote the distribution of Torreya seeds to organizations and individuals who are interested in seed production and further distribution of cultivated seeds.

We are seeking cooperators who would be interested in growing a small grove of Torreya to maturity for perhaps ten to fifteen years until seed production and to actively distribute seeds. Due to very limited seed production this year, we are focusing on botanical gardens and organizations, but we would like to see seed distributed to committed individuals who have already contacted us.

We have prepared stratified seed packets of 10 male and female seeds that we will send to you free of charge if you are committed to growing the trees and are open to the possibility of future re-wilding of Torreya in your area. We are especially looking for cooperators who have greenhouse or nursery facilities to "pot up" these seeds for 1-2 years prior to forest establishment. We are currently working on two short publications that will guide seed germination and seedling production, and offer site selection and cultural recommendations.

Please contact me as soon as is convenient to verify your interest in the project. (best to email me your mailing/shipping address and preferred time of shipment.) We are setting an end of February deadline for institutions, etc. request for seeds prior to distributing to individuals.

Thanks for your interest in plant conservation and education.

Happy Trails, Lee Barnes, Ph.D.
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