

Exciting Updates to the National Reforestation and Restoration Directory and the Addition of a New Marketplace

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Abstract

The Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetic Resources (RNGR) program is a leading source of technical information for nurseries and land managers who are engaged in tree propagation and planting, as well as native plant restoration and conservation. One popular RNGR resource is its online national directory of forest and conservation nurseries. The current increased interest in tree planting efforts and production of restoration plant materials signaled a need to improve the offerings and functionality of the directory. The nursery database has been updated to meet the growing demands for information, products, and services related to the entire reforestation and restoration supply chain, from seed to outplanting. Additionally, a marketplace has been added to provide a location for communitywide classified ads for available and needed supplies and services. This paper was presented at Growing Pains: Scaling up the Reforestation Pipeline—Joint Annual Meeting of the Western Forest and Conservation Nursery Association and the Forest Nursery Association of British Columbia (Portland, OR, September 19–21, 2023).

The Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetic Resources Online Platform

The Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetic Resources (RNGR) program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, in collaboration with Southern Regional Extension Forestry, hosts a website (<https://rngr.net/>) that

provides up-to-date technical information for nurseries and land managers to improve the production and planting of trees and other native plants for reforestation, restoration, and conservation. In addition to sharing publications, webinars, and other resources, the website has hosted a nursery and seed directory that helps users connect with more than 1,100 businesses across the United States and Canada that provide seed supplies and nursery propagation services.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that landscapes across the globe need increased reforestation and restoration plant materials to mitigate disturbances, respond to climate change, and provide ecosystem services. To support this, efforts are underway to increase tree planting and native species restoration in the United States and Canada. These efforts will require a transformation across the supply chain in both the public and private sectors. As customers in a greater number of geographies seek to reforest and restore tree cover, it is critical to increase information flow and ensure that it is easily accessible. Thus, the RNGR nursery and seed directory has been expanded to provide a more informative aggregation platform where clients can quickly find businesses specialized in supplies, equipment, and services to support seed collection, nursery propagation, outplanting, and other aspects of reforestation and restoration. The updated platform expands on the information available for each directory listing, broadens the scope to include supporting businesses, and adds the “Branch Out Marketplace” where participants can share or find available products and services.

The new RNGR platform will continue to host the nursery and seed directory but will have an expanded scope and search functionality. The expanded directory is intended to be a comprehensive tool that incorporates all businesses providing relevant services or equipment for all aspects of plant production and outplanting, such as seed collection,



Home → Directory & Marketplace → Directory

Directory
Marketplace

NATIONAL REFORESTATION & RESTORATION DIRECTORY

The directory is your online source for finding businesses that support the propagation of forest and native plant materials in the US and Canada. You can search the directory by name, state, product, or business type.

SEARCH THE DIRECTORY

Offering Category: Products or Services: Operating Area:

Search

Add a new directory entry

The screenshot shows the RNGR website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Directory & Marketplace', 'Publications', 'Resources', 'Seed Lab', 'Tribal', 'Tropical', 'About', and 'Admin'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home → Directory & Marketplace → Directory'. The main content area features the 'NATIONAL REFORESTATION & RESTORATION DIRECTORY' header and a search box. The search box has 'Offering Category' set to 'Nursery', 'Products or Services' set to 'Services', and 'Operating Area' set to 'Georgia'. Below the search box, there's a 'Search Results' section with a list of 22 results, including 'ATL Urban Farms', 'ATS Partners LLC', 'ArborGen - Bellville SuperTree Nursery', etc. To the right of the list is a map of Georgia with red pins indicating the locations of the listed nurseries. At the bottom of the screenshot, there are logos for USDA, UAS, and Southern Regional Extension Forestry.

EXTENSION FORESTRY AND IS A COLLOBORATIVE



Southern Regional Extension Forestry

Figure 1. The updated Reforestation and Restoration Directory (<https://rngr.net/>) has improved search functionality, including intuitive search boxes to facilitate keyword searches by project area, product, or service (top). The search returns listings and a map of businesses that meet the search terms (left).

processing, and storage; nursery propagation and storage; site preparation and outplanting; and postplanting services (figure 1). Previously, the directory provided basic contact information; now, participating businesses can provide a more detailed description of their services and products, thereby facilitating keyword searches. In a future phase, the RNGR program will engage with the urban forestry community to understand how it might be useful to urban greening efforts. Currently, however, the directory and marketplace focus only on native species.

In addition to the updated and improved directory, the Branch Out Marketplace will further support reforestation and restoration efforts (figure 2). Similar to existing and familiar platforms such as Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace, Branch Out will create a community of users that offer time-limited goods and services. For example, nurseries could advertise excess stock, planting crews could seek new contracts for a given location, and used equipment could be sold, traded, or given away. Listings in the marketplace will be free but limited to 90 days. This

new resource is intended to increase direct communication among restoration, reforestation, and conservation businesses and clients, and contribute to greater supply chain efficiency.

Join the Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetic Resources Community

The updated and expanded directory and new marketplace require your direct participation to provide their intended benefit! If you are new to the industry or were not previously listed in the directory, you can easily add your business and start using the RNGR platform at <https://rngr.net/participate>. You will be prompted to enter information about your business and the products or services it provides for forestry, conservation, and/or restoration. RNGR staff will verify the data provided by each business, thereby ensuring that the directory is accurate and up to date. For those businesses already listed in the directory, you will need to update your business listing with more detailed information so that your business can be keyword searchable.



Figure 2. The new Branch Out Marketplace offers a platform where reforestation and restoration businesses can offer or seek available time-limited products and services.

All businesses in the directory will be able to post time-limited classified ads in the Branch Out Marketplace by entering specific information about the product or service offered. Thus, potential consumers can best match their needs. For example, sellers of nursery overstock will be asked to provide information about the seed source to enable clients to make informed decisions.

Growing Forward

Increased risks associated with extreme weather events, international and national tree planting commitments, and a growing interest in carbon offset markets are driving an increase in demand for tree planting and native plant

restoration across the United States and Canada. Uncertain market demand has limited investment in critical nodes along the reforestation and restoration supply chain, resulting in some areas with insufficient or poor infrastructure, a dearth of skilled labor, and insufficient access to funding for capital improvements. Amid these growing pains and increasing demands, the updated RNGR directory and marketplace helps to remove the guesswork by creating a place for businesses to connect with clients. Please join this endeavor and contribute to its success. This is version 1.0—anticipate minor issues and be patient as improvements are made. Opportunities to improve will arise, and your input and feedback are encouraged and welcome as this platform evolves. Finally, remember that the RNGR website also hosts numerous other resources related to seedling production and outplanting, including publications, webinars, current event listings, and job and educational opportunities.

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