

## Walnut Collection

-Mike Kay  
Forester, Maryland Forest Service

---

Each autumn brings beautiful foliage displays, cooler weather, shorter daylight, and the falling of nuts and seed from trees. Once again community members from Frederick and Washington County are gathering up walnuts and providing them to the Maryland Forest Service to supply our nursery to grow seedlings.

A pile of walnuts waiting to be gathered, we will put these walnuts in a two-bushel basket for transport.

The baskets are loaded on a stake-body truck for transport to the nursery. Each truckload carries about 10,000 walnuts.

The walnuts are delivered to the State of Maryland nursery outside of Preston on the Eastern Shore.

The John S. Ayton State Tree Nursery grows about 8,000,000 seedlings each year for planting in Maryland. Most of the seed is collected within the state by volunteers. We grow more than 40 different varieties including black walnut.

The walnuts are run through a machine that separates the husk from the seed. The husk material is falling into the large white container the seeds are falling out on the right side in a brown container. Joe and Suzanne are loading the raw walnuts into the machine wondering when I'm going to help out.

The husk material will be used as mulch in the seed beds.

The de-husked seeds come out the side then they are placed in a large white bin.

The finished product. The nursery staff will try to plant these seeds within a week or so before they have a chance to dry out. The nursery estimates a 70% success rate for germination so 70% of these walnuts will develop into seedlings. Walnuts are usually grown for one season before they are distributed so these seeds will produce seedlings which can be planted in 2008.