Instructions for harvesting grass seeds for the Grass Restoration Collaboration

How do you know when there are flowers and the seeds are ripe?

The flower clusters (seed heads) are produced at the ends of stems and at the bases of the upper leaves. You may notice the yellow anthers holding pollen. Flowers change from light green to a brownish purple as they mature and produce seeds. It may be days or weeks between the signs of anthers and the point where seed is ripe. When the seeds are ripe and ready to be collected they will become light brown (1/16 inch long) and oval shaped, and will easily fall out of the flowers.

**Note:** During the first year plants may produce very few or no seeds while they are adjusting to their new environments.

How do we collect the seeds?

To collect seeds cut and place the entire seed head in the clean manila envelope (provided in packet) and gently shake the inflorescences, until all of seeds fall into the bottom of the envelope. Repeat for each inflorescence on each plant. Be sure to keep seeds from different plant species separate.

How do we measure our harvest?

The harvest for your garden can be measured as the total weight or volume of seeds produced by each species. First, compile all of the seeds collected from each plant. Next, be sure the seed samples are clean of debris or other plant material. Last, using a graduated cylinder and/or a weighing scale, record the total volume and/or mass of the harvest.

What do we do with the seeds?

One-half of the total harvest can then be used to build up the stocks at your school garden. The other half you will return to Fairchild Challenge in the supplied envelope, and these will be used for restoration efforts in Miami-Dade pine rocklands. Please fill out the information below and return with your seeds.
Basic Structures of Grass Plants

1. Flower stem
2. Leaves
3. Stem (crown)
4. Stem (stolon)
5. Roots
6. Seed head
   - The basic unit of the seed heads
7. Spikelet
8. Grass Seed
   - Pericarp
   - Endosperm
   - Embryo