Plant Exchange – A guide for coordinators

The Plant Exchange runs from **late September until spring the following year**. It helps members conserve plants at risk of being lost from cultivation by sharing and exchanging them with others. As a local Plant Exchange Coordinator, your role is to collate members' offers and requests and coordinate the movement of plants between members and the central Plant Exchange. Ideally plants moving through the exchange need to be well-rooted, healthy plants which can withstand being transported to and from exchange.

You can communicate with members in your area through your group leader.



1. Late September–October: Collect plant offers and wants

The Conservation Team invites members and Collection Holders to submit:

- **Offers:** plants they have available to share.
- **Wants:** plants they would like to obtain.

Your actions:

- Circulate the invitation to all members in your area.
- Collect and collate their offers and wants using the spreadsheet provided.
- Check that plant names are accurate using the RHS Plant Finder.
- Encourage members to check plant eligibility. Plants should have two or fewer known suppliers. If you are unsure whether a plant is eligible, include it on your list and flag it for checking rather than excluding it.

2. By the end of November: Submit your lists

Send your area's collated **offers and wants** to the Conservation Team at collections@plantheritage.org.uk.

For every plant offered, include:

- The correct plant name, checked against the RHS Plant Finder.
- The number of plants available.
- The donor or supplier's name.

Please ensure that plant names are as accurate as possible and flag any plants whose eligibility needs checking further.

3. New Year: Conservation team will publish combined offers and wants lists

The Conservation Team checks and combines the lists from all regions and returns the consolidated lists to Plant Exchange Coordinators. The full lists will be published on the Plant Heritage website **Conservation>Annual Plant Exchange**.

Your actions:

- Direct members to lists published on website.
- Encourage members to identify plants they would like to request.
- Encourage members to check whether they can supply any plants wanted by others.
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4. Early February: Collect and submit requests

Members identify the plants they would like to receive from the combined offers list and send their requests to you.

Your actions:

- Collate all requests from your area.
- Submit the combined requests to the Conservation Team by the stated deadline.

5. Early April: Confirm plant allocations

The Conservation Team sends you an allocation list showing which plants have been allocated to members in your area and where those plants are coming from.

Your actions:

- Contact members who have offered plants to confirm which plants they need to supply and the destination for each plant. Remind them of the labelling requirements.
- Check the plant allocations to your region.

6. Before Members' Weekend: Label and gather plants

Members supplying plants must label each plant clearly with **two labels**:

1. **Plant name and source**, if known.
2. **Sending and receiving groups**, in the format *From [sending group] – To [receiving group]*, for example, *From Yorkshire – To Suffolk*.

Your actions:

- Remind donors to label their plants correctly.
- Arrange a local collection point or agree individual collection arrangements with donors.
- Bring together the plants being sent from your area before the Plant Exchange.
- Arrange transport to the central Plant Exchange.

Your group committee or local volunteers may be able to help with collection and transport.






7. Members' Weekend: Exchange and distribute plants

At the central Plant Exchange, plants arrive in **labelled trays or crates**, clearly marked with the name of the sending group.

Plants allocated to members in your area are gathered into the appropriate trays or crates for their return journey.

Your actions:

- Arrange to collect your area's allocated plants and organise their return.
- Inform members when and where they can collect their plants.
- Distribute plants using an agreed collection point and time or arrange individual collections.

Your Group Committee or local volunteers may also be able to help with distribution.

Important: Collection arrangements

Every member requesting plants should make sure they have a collection or delivery arrangement in place.

Members in areas without a local Plant Exchange Coordinator will be able to submit their plant **offers and wants using online forms**. This information will be collected by the Conservation Team and included in the central Plant Exchange process. Members wishing to request plants will also need to state how they intend to collect them, either through a coordinator or another member attending the Plant Exchanged, or by attending the event themselves.

Summary

- **Late September–October:** Circulate the invitation and collect Offers and Wants.
- **End of November:** Submit local lists to the Conservation Team.
- **New Year:** Circulate or signpost to the Offers and Wantts lists on the website.
- **Early February:** Submit members' requests.
- **Early April:** Receive allocations and notify members.
- **Before Members' Weekend/Plant Exchange:** Check labels, collect plants and arrange transport.
- **Members' Weekend/Plant Exchange:** Deliver your plants and collect plants allocated to your area.
- **After Members' Weekend/Plant Exchange:** Distribute plants to members.

By keeping information flowing and helping everyone stay on track with agreed timelines, you play an important part in ensuring that plants are collected and delivered successfully.

