

Production of Dwarf Bilberry for Outplanting - Ottawa National Forest 2005 Accomplishments

Project made possible through the
Native Plant Materials Earmark

Desired Product: Dwarf bilberry seedlings for outplanting on suitable sites to help in recovery of this Regional Forester's Sensitive/State threatened species and its dependent Sensitive/State threatened butterfly, the northern blue.

Concurrent with this earmark, grant funding was obtained from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to survey for bilberry sites and evaluate their status. Over 200 acres of openings were surveyed and three new populations found. Bilberry stem cuttings and berries were collected under permission from landowners and permit from the Michigan DNR. 0.04 pounds of seed were obtained after the berries were cleaned. A few seeds were also collected from the Hiawatha and Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests. Seed will be sown in January 2006 following the recommended propagation protocol. Stem cuttings were planted mid-summer but did not survive, which may be related to the unusually hot and dry summer and stress that placed on the plants at collection time. Cleaning, sowing, and stem cutting work were conducted at J.W. Toumey Nursery in Watersmeet, Michigan.



*Top: Bilberry fruit ready for cleaning
Right: Extracted seed drying on a filter
Bottom: Seed packaged for storage*

2005 Expenditures: \$12,000

Other Funding: \$5,850 Michigan DNR,
\$3,055 Forest match with DNR grant.

Cooperators: J.W. Toumey Nursery,
Michigan DNR, Hiawatha and
Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests.

Initial funding received 2005. Products
expected 2008.



Dwarf bilberry (Vaccinium cespitosum)



Ottawa National Forest
E6248 US Hwy. 2
Ironwood, MI 49938

For more information about the
Native Plants Program on the Ottawa
National Forest, contact:

Sue Trull, Forest Botanist
906-932-1330 ext. 312