



Wild Rice Cultivation in the NWT

Where to get northern-hardy wild rice seeds

Suitable wild rice seeds can be purchased commercially from Manitoba or Saskatchewan. The seeds used in this project were purchased from Riesels Canadian Lake Wild Rice. In the future, you may be able to harvest seeds from local ponds or contact the Northern Farm Training Institute to see if they have any available.

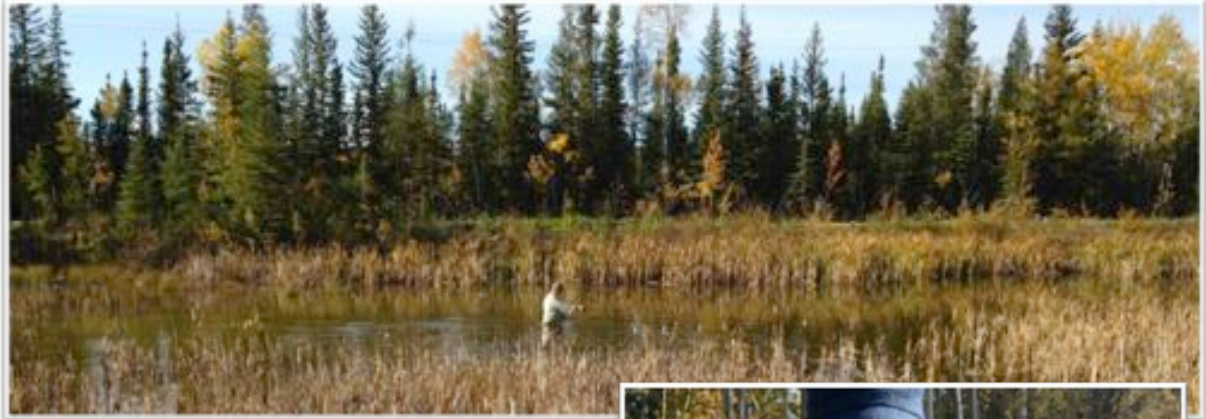
Optimum growing conditions for the wild rice

- At least 1.5 – 2.5 feet of water is ideal
- A sandy soil is good, but they will also grow in a clay / gravel mix
- Somewhere that is protected from the wind and weather is best
- Ponds work well, but a very slow-moving creek or river like an oxbow or snye can also work well



How to seed ponds

Seeding should be done in the fall. Seeding is very simple – the seeds do not need any preparation, just scatter liberally in water close to the shore in the fall time. Try to select ponds that do not have too much debris on the bottom, and areas that are not too deep, and at the edge of bullrush beds.



How to harvest

Harvest mature wild rice seeds by running your hand up a stalk and pulling off the seeds into a bucket. You can also whack the plant lightly against your canoe, and they will fall into the bow.

How to process and eat

We would recommend that you save any seeds you grow to replant until you have a large enough harvest some day in the future. If you do have enough of a harvest, you must cure and parch the rice right after harvesting to remove as much of the moisture as possible (the kernels contain 40 – 60% moisture when harvested). Besides removing moisture, the curing process ripens immature grains and makes them more firm. Parching is another process to remove more moisture so that the rice is ready to eat or stored. For more detailed information on traditional wild rice processing, visit: <http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/wildrice.html>

