Grant Purpose:
Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) is now seeking mini-grant applications from Virginia nurseries to help expand the Commonwealth's capacity to grow native forest botanical planting stock in bulk, wholesale quantities. In order to increase the number of sustainable forest farms in Virginia, farmers require increased access to bulk, wholesale quantities of forest botanicals for cost-effective farm establishment. The goal of this program is to establish 4 acres of forest botanical nursery stock to meet the growing wholesale demands of forest farmers in Virginia. This program is sponsored by a Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) grant.

Funding for the Virginia Forest Botanical Nursery project was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant 301-20-029. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

Available Funding:
ASD has $6,485 available to fund applications in 2020. Individual projects may request funding of no more than $1,621.25. ASD anticipates awarding at least four mini-grants.

Cost-Sharing and Match Requirements:
This mini-grant program does not require cash match. However, in order to verify project implementation, ASD requires awardees to keep track of in-kind time for planting and maintenance in a log provided by ASD. This log must be completed, signed and returned with the final report by December 31, 2020.

Grant Period Duration:
All mini-grant funds should be expended by November 30, 2020 in order to qualify.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs:
Mini-grants are available through VDACS to assist nurseries in purchasing 1) planting stock and 2) soil amendments. Qualifying species include: Goldenseal, American Ginseng, Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, Bloodroot, Solomon's Seal, False Unicorn, Wild Yam, and Stoneroot. All other costs incurred are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Eligible Applicants:
- an operating nursery seeking to expand OR an aspiring/new nursery seeking start-up capital
- located in the state of Virginia (VDACS requirement)
• nursery property must either be owned or have a long-term lease agreement in place
• have an appropriate site for growing forest botanicals (forestland or shade structure is required)
• commitment to follow growing sanitation guidelines and best practices
• commitment to offering bulk, wholesale quantities of forest botanicals to customers

Submission Instructions:
Applicants must submit this google form application by 5:00 p.m. EST on June 19, 2020. ASD will not consider applications received after this deadline. It is recommended that applicants submit their application well before the deadline to avoid unforeseen delays.

Evaluation Criteria:
ASD will grade each application based on the following criteria:
• demonstrated need and anticipated impact
• alignment with project goals
• nursery property is owned or under a long-term lease
• appropriate site for growing forest botanicals
• acreage to be established
• planting stock is intended for bulk, wholesale sales
• forest botanical species meets qualifications
• familiarity with native forest botanical species and sustainable propagation and cultivation techniques
• current and/or projected growing infrastructure and capabilities
• currently holds a nursery certification from VDACS or is willing to obtain certification and/or
• willingness to undergo soil testing for Phytophthora

Award Announcement and Acceptance:
It is expected that applicants will be notified about funding decision on or around June 15, 2020. Applicants with the highest scores will be notified for an interview, with a site visit scheduled as needed. Grant recipients will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), accepting the award and its associated terms and conditions. ASD must receive the original signed MOU. Once the recipient accepts the award, the contents of the MOU are binding on the recipient.

Reporting Requirements:
Funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis unless otherwise negotiated in the MOU. After all purchases are made, grant recipients should submit an invoice with receipts for approved purchases ONLY. A reimbursement check will be mailed to the address provided within net 14 days of receipt. Grant recipients are also required to submit a final performance report by December 31, 2020, including the following information:
1) Photos of the established nursery stock
2) One page report outlining the use of approved funds and a summary of impacts and future plans
3) Signed in-kind time log

Contact Information:
Applicants are encouraged to contact ASD with mini-grant questions.
Katie Commender, Agroforestry Program Director
kcommender@asdevelop.org