



# Sutton Germplasm northern geranium *Geranium erianthum* Selected Class Release “Natural”

**Uses: Revegetation  
Southcentral, Interior,  
and Southeast Alaska**

## **Background Information**

*Geranium erianthum* is a native forb to Alaska. It can be found in moist, open forests, meadows, and clearings, from low elevations to above the timberline (Pojar, 1994).

It can grow up to four feet in height. Geranium blooms in early summer and attracts bees, butterflies, and/or birds to their blossoms.

Seeds are contained in long-beaked, five-parted, seed capsules. The seed capsules curl backward releasing the seeds rapidly with considerable force, spreading seeds a significant distance away from the parent plant (Pojar, 1994).

Both the Dena’ina and Aleuts used *Geranium erianthum* as a sore throat treatment. The leaves were prepared as a tea then gargled (Garibaldi, 1999).



Map from Hultén, 1968.  
Used with the permission of Stanford University Press.

## **Distribution**

*Geranium erianthum* is found throughout Alaska as far north as Delta and Nenana. It is also present in the Yukon, British Columbia, and Alberta.

Sutton Germplasm  
northern geranium seed is  
maintained by the Alaska Plant  
Materials Center for  
commercial production.

## **Sutton Germplasm**

*Plant Identification Number: 9097539*

Sutton Germplasm northern geranium seed was collected on Buffalo Mine Road north of Palmer by Nancy Moore in 2001.

This native forb is a Selected Class Release by the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC). This means it has been grown and harvested at the PMC and continues to exhibit excellent performance.

This forb is recommended for use in revegetation because it adds color and variety to the revegetation project.



**Alaska Plant Materials Center**

*Serving Alaska’s need in production of Alaska native plants.*

August 13, 2008



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## Sutton Germplasm northern geranium for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

Geranium seeds can be incorporated into a revegetation mix for southcentral, interior, and southeast Alaska. It prefers full sunlight and moist soil, growing to about four feet maximum. Sutton would do well on roadside revegetation projects. It is a natural perennial forb that will add to the visual appeal and attract birds, bees, and butterflies.



*Geranium erianthum* seed.  
~86,780 seeds per pound  
0.2-0.3 mm long



Seed capsules that have already released their seeds.

### *To Produce Sutton Germplasm northern geranium*

Sutton is propagated from bare root, seed, and cuttings.

Sutton germinates easily from seed. Collect the seeds in fall after the seed pods have hardened but before the seeds have been catapulted. A bag can be placed around the seed pod so that the seeds are captured as they are being catapulted. Plant the seeds in spring and water the soil well as Sutton requires moist soil in order to grow (Moore et al, 2004).

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### *Interesting Notes*

*Geranium* is Greek for 'crane,' hence the name Crane's Bill, which is another common name for *Geranium erianthum*.

The species name *erianthum* is Latin for 'soft' and 'flower' (Pojar, 1994). This refers to the hairiness of the leaves and flowers.

### *References*

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