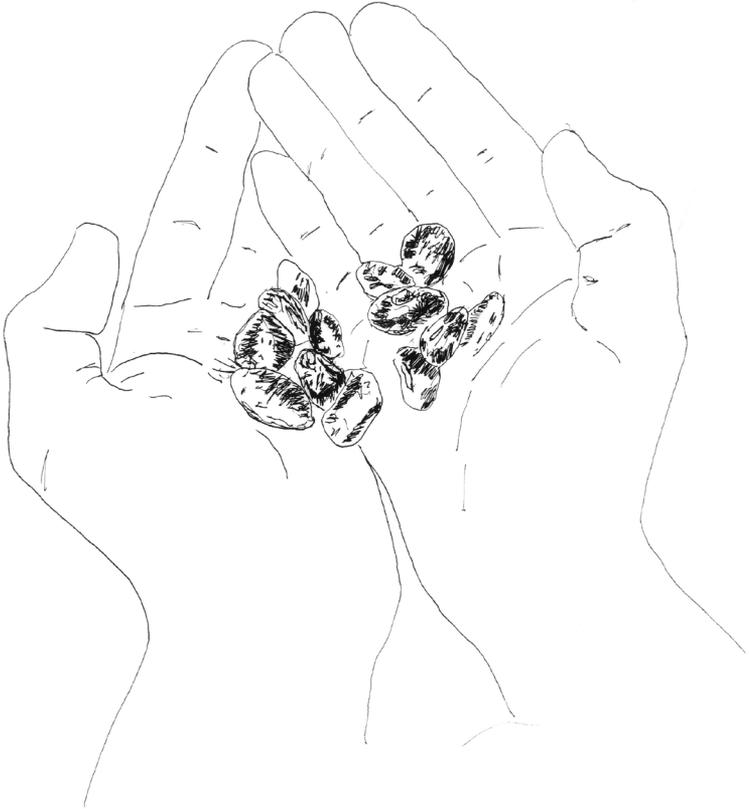


it starts with a seed:
a zine



katie gourley
spring 2019

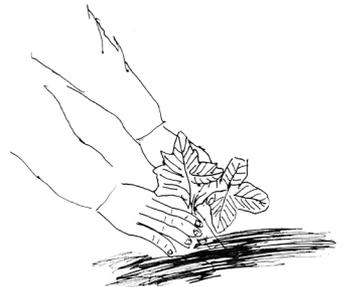
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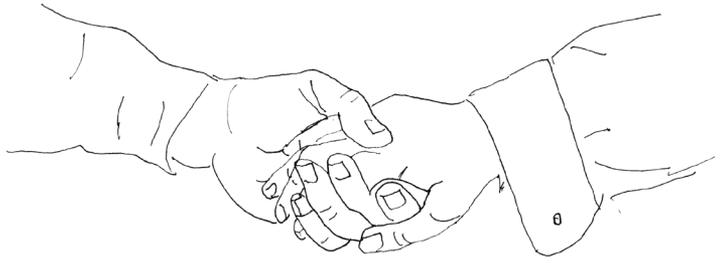
g r a t i t u d e

“We are showered every day with the gifts of the Earth, gifts **we have neither earned nor paid for**: air to breathe, nurturing rain, black soil, berries and honeybees, the tree that became this page, a bag of rice, and the exuberance of a field of goldenrod and asters at full bloom. Though we live in a world made of gifts, we find ourselves harnessed to institutions and an economy that relentlessly asks, “What more can we take from the Earth?” This worldview of unbridled exploitation is to my mind the greatest threat to the life that surrounds us. Even our definitions of sustainability revolve around trying to find the formula to ensure that we can keep on taking, far into the future. Isn't the question we need, “What does the Earth ask of us?”

...

Our first responsibility, the most potent offering we possess, is gratitude. Now, gratitude may seem like weak tea given the desperate challenges that lie before us, but it is powerful medicine, much more than a simple thank you. Giving thanks implies recognition not only of the gift, but of the giver. When I eat an apple, my gratitude is directed to that wide-armed tree whose tart offspring are now in my mouth, whose life has become my own. **Gratitude is founded on the deep knowing that our very existence relies on the gifts of other beings.** The evolutionary advantage for cultures of gratitude is compelling. This human emotion has adaptive value because it engenders practical outcomes for sustainability. The





practice of gratitude can, in a very real way, lead to the practice of self-restraint, of taking only what you need. Naming and appreciation of the gifts that surround us creates a sense of satisfaction, a feeling of “enoughness” that is an antidote to the societal messages that drill into our spirits, telling us we must have more. Practicing contentment is a radical act in a consumption-driven society.

...

I don't think that it is more technology we need, or more money or more data. **We need a change in heart, a change in ethics, away from an anthropocentric worldview that considers the Earth our exploitable property,** to a biocentric, life-centered worldview in which an ethic of respect and reciprocity can grow.

...

How can we reciprocate the gifts of the Earth? In gratitude, in ceremony, through acts of practical reverence and land stewardship, in fierce defense of the beings and places we love, in art, in science, in song, in gardens, in children, in ballots, in stories of renewal, in creative resistance, in how we spend our money and our precious lives, by refusing to be complicit with the forces of ecological destruction. **In healing.”**

Quotes excerpted from “Returning the Gift” a speech by Robin Wall Kimmerer published by the Center for Humans and Nature (2014)

“Even if you think your life is totally divorced and can be sustained separate from seed, everything ultimately does boil down to what is happening on that level.”

Kristyn Leech, Namu Farm



introduction

re- seeding seeds



Humans have sowed, saved, and shared their own seeds for millenia. Growers have maintained relationships with seeds to influence factors such as adaptation to local or changing climate conditions, yields, and of course taste and flavor. Yet, this freedom is increasingly under threat. Legal and policy arenas in the last half a century having to do with seed patents and intellectual property rights regimes have creating a framework that life and plants can be owned, commercialized and privatized by giant corporations.

However, urban and rural farmers, home gardeners, chefs, and environmental justice activists all over the world refuse to accept corporate control, monoculture, rampant pesticide use, and shrinking human rights as the new normal. Alarmed by concerns about the commercial seed industry, ecologically harmful practices, farmers, future food security, and cultural traditions all related to the need to assure sustained availability of open-pollinated, seed savers refuse to wait around for governments or NGOs to create solutions and enact their own grassroots strategies to preserve and protect cultural and agricultural biodiversity.

The stories presented here were collected in January 2019 in the San Francisco Bay Area while undergoing field research for my thesis for a Masters in Urban Planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Deisng on community seed saving, socio-ecological care, and alternative economies within food sovereignty movements. The stories presented here illuminate the profoundly special relationships humans hold with seeds and highlight how seed saving and sharing—within and across place-based communities—can stoke transformative imaginations, spur collective action, and nurture hope for dealing with the multiple crises and injustices perpetuated by the industrial food system. Seeds contain stories of hope, resilience, adaptation, tradition, and new life that can transform our ways of thinking and becoming if we take time to listen.



the power of big questions

I darted under a corner store umbrella to wait out a rainstorm one morning as I walked between two of the seed libraries that formed my initial journey into the world of seed saving. As I waited, I chatted with a passing man and purchased a copy of Street Sheet from him (the newspaper published by San Francisco's Coalition on Homelessness). As I glanced down at the cover, a woodblock print depicting a messy pile of dandelions cracking through harsh cement stared back at me. It shook me. This image remained next to me, hung at my desk everyday as I wrote about the seed stories I had the honor of hearing.

I set out to write with a set of questions. Some of them I found answers to, even if they were incomplete answers. However, I moved forward with more questions than ever. My thesis did not conclude with a magic formula or prescribed set of policy objectives or interventions. Instead, I was left holding on to the power of the big questions that surface when we dare to demand more from the world around us. Imagination and creativity are essential in today's day and age when hope feel anemic. So, I invite readers to join me in sitting with questions that can help us reimagine the world and our responsibilities within it.

What would it look like to wake up and think differently about the spaces our bodies inhabit? What would it take to replace human arrogance with empathy toward the multitude of other beings we share those spaces with? What would it mean to act from a place of gratitude and humility rather than expectation and extraction? What would it mean to say the words 'wellbeing,' 'justice,' and 'love' more often in our educational and policymaking arenas? What would it mean to seek less not more? Where are the stories that remind us of our responsibility to act as custodians and caretakers for each other and our places? What are the stories held in the soils in our front and back yards, in the plants that feed us, in the waters that sustain us?

Many times, the answers to these questions are found already living and breathing in our communities. The stories of these worldviews are the small flowers that grow up through the cracks in the concrete. I am interested in imagining what our power is to tend to these flowers. I am interested in imagining a world so full of these flowers that our concrete paths, the very ones that once often seem so impenetrable, become cracked with so many small flowers that they are too crumbled to walk on. We may finally be forced to confront it is time to replace them with something softer.



Small flowers
break concrete

thank you!

This work is the product of many minds over many miles and many millenia. Thank you to all who made it possible:

To the many seed savers and organizations who provided endless information and resources: The Indigenous Seed Keepers Network, Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library, B.A.S.I.L / The Ecology Center, The Seed Savers Exchange, Cesar Chavez Library of Oakland, African American Museum and Library of Oakland, Kristyn Leech of Namu Farms, Rowen White of Sierra Seeds, The Community Seed Exchange, The Sustainable Economies Law Center, Seeds of El Cerrito, the San Leandro Seed Lending Library, the Seed Ambassadors Project, Mountain View Public Library, the San Francisco Public Library, and countless other seed stewards.

To my advisor and mentor Dr. Lily Song. Thank you for your endless support and for pushing me to imagine new futures for planning and community development.

To Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler & Nikki McClure. Thank you for your bodies of ecologically-empathetic art that have served as invaluable inspiration for this work.

To my network of immensely powerful, brilliant, and inspiring womxn. Thank you for being far-and-away been the best teachers I could have hoped to find in life. I am lucky to call you all my friends.

To Mother Earth. Thank you for the endless life lessons you have taught me and the physical and spiritual nourishment you continue to provide in spite of the trying conditions we have created.

And finally, to my mother, Cecily Gourley. Thank you for teaching me everything I know about how to make sense of the world around me and for teaching me what a real strawberry tastes like. Thank you for the cream puffs that you didn't know I was slowly eating my way through straight from the freezer as a child. And thank you for demonstrating to humans' endless capacity for selflessness and care.



why save seeds?



There are as many reasons to save seeds as there are seeds to save! Part of the beauty of the seed sovereignty movement is its diversity. Seeds bring people together who are drawn to protect the biodiversity and cultural memories held in our seeds for various personal, emotional, political, spiritual, and economic reasons. As commercial seed companies become increasingly consolidated and our seeds fall into the control of agrochemical multi-national corporations and into the realm of intellectual property rights, the varieties of fruits and vegetables once available to our ancestors are rapidly disappearing. Reclaiming seeds is an important step in promoting sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. Selecting seed for chosen traits, adapting plants to our unique local climates, saving money on food, and protecting rare heirlooms, and becoming more connected to the full life cycle of our gardens are just some of the many reasons to participate in the human tradition of seed stewardship.



“Our seeds have as much memory as we do and have as much generational knowledge as we do. Once we stop treating them like commodities and start treating them like relatives we realize they have wisdom that helps us address the problems we are faced with.”

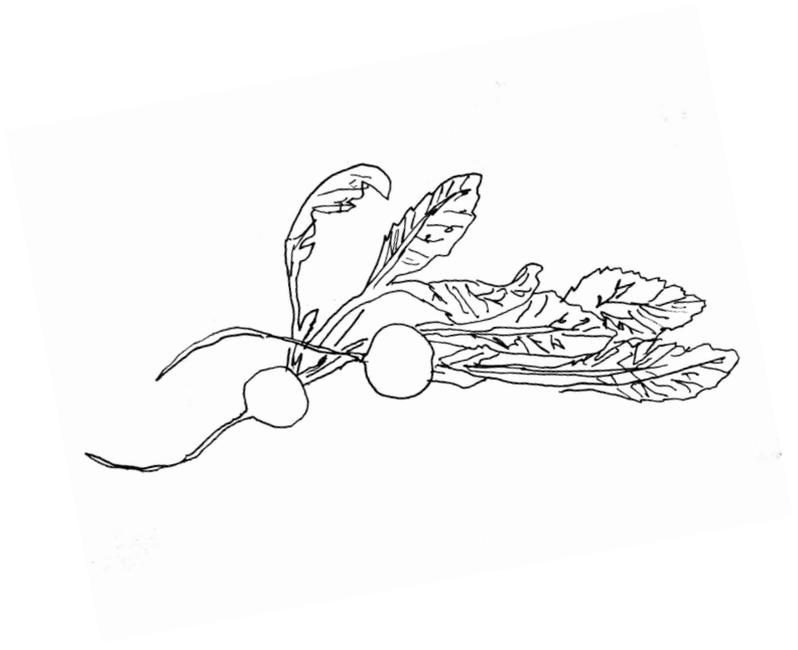
Maya Harjo

Quapaw, Shawnee, Muscogee Creek, Seminole, Jewish
Cultural Conservancy



“I am learning too, I don’t have all the answers, but let’s just try and see what happens. Water it and see what happens.”

Enoch Dames, San Leandro Seed Library



easy-to-save seeds

BEANS AND PEAS

Phaseolus vulgaris and Pisum sativum

Common beans and peas are among the easiest seeds to save because they are almost always self-pollinating. All you have to do is let some of them dry out on the plant toward the end of the season. Shell them from the pods once the pods are crispy dry. You know that bean and pea seeds are dry enough for storage if they shatter when hit with a hammer. When dry, freeze them for 3 days to kill any bugs like weevils that may live within the seeds. Seal in a moisture proof container and store in a cool dry place.

Fava beans and runner beans are both insect pollinated and will cross easily with varieties in the same species, meaning if you plant two varieties of favas close to each other, they will cross. Increase the isolation distance to about 100 feet between plants to reduce cross-pollination or simply plant one variety at a time

TOMATOES

Lycopersicon esculentum

Often considered the 'gateway drug' of the gardening world, tomato seeds are very easy to save. To save the seeds, cut the fruit in half. Use your fingers or a knife to scoop out the seed and juice (or squeeze the tomato over a glass jar.) Add no more than 25% water and slosh around. Place the jar in a warm place for 2-3 days, stirring once a day. After a few days, a mold should form on the top (which is a good thing!) and most of the seeds will have sunk to the bottom of the jar. This means the seeds are ready for cleaning. Pour the water out, discarding any mold and pulp along with any 'dead' seeds that have floated to the top. Reserving the seeds at the bottom of the water. Repeat this rinsing process until you only have clean seeds and clean water then pour the seeds through a fine mesh strainer. Pat dry then allow to dry on a flat surface until very dry.

Tomato seed can last for 10 or more years if stored in a cool and dry place.

Warning: most commercially available tomatoes are hybrids and the seeds saved from these fruits will not produce fruit identical to the ones you saved seed from.

LETTUCE

Lactuca sativa

Lettuce is also very easy to save seeds from. Allow the plant to bolt, flower, and set seeds, and then collect the seeds. A single lettuce plant can produce over a thousand seeds! Harvest seeds when about half the flowers heads have turned white and fluffy. Leave the plant in a paper bag to dry out more. Whack the lettuce upside-down into a plastic bucket or paper bag. Do this until you get all the seeds off and then discard the flower stalk into the compost. If you have a lot of lettuce plants you can leave the plants on a tarp and whack the seed heads with a stick, knocking the seeds onto the tarp and then you can remove the seedless plants. Take a handful of seeds and rub it between your hands to separate the seed from the chaff. The last step is to winnow the seeds from the rest of the remaining plant matter in the bottom of your bucket. Using a light breeze or a fan on the lowest setting (be careful, lettuce seeds are extremely light and blow away easily), pour the seeds back and forth between two containers, the mature seeds should drop into the other bucket and the unwanted plant material should float away. (If it is your first time winnowing, place a tarp below where you are working so a mistake in the breeze doesn't blow all of your seeds away too!)

**adapted from the Seed Ambassador's Project*



stories of seed

“I want to know more about the origins and how that seed got here, you can go so many places starting with a seed.”

Claudia Noble-Levingston, Cultivating Gardens



blue speckled tepary bean

[k]:

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[m]:

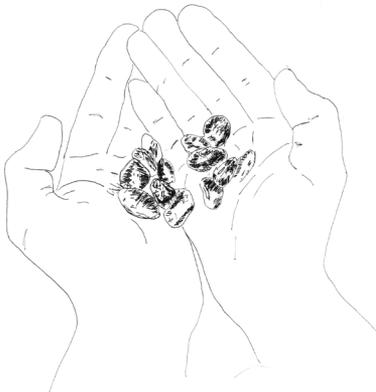
I know exactly what my favorite seed is. It is a blue speckled tepary bean. It is most beautiful seed I have laid my eyes on it. The first time I saw it I literally started crying. Tepary beans come from the Sonora Desert and are stewarded by the Tohono O'odham people. They are really close to their inedible wild relative and because of the wildness that still courses through their being, they have a hard time being put into large production systems. The beans still have the dispersal mechanism so that once the bean pod is ripe, it springs open and shoots out. That has been bred out of beans grown in commercial agriculture they can grow them on a large monoculture scale and mechanically harvest them. But tepary beans still have that spring. Not only is this bean really healthy for us - like a lot of traditional foods it actually regulates blood sugar as opposed to causing diabetes - I also love it because it can't be commercialized. It is this symbol of indigenous resistance. Anyway, I love this bean.

[k]:

It is like a little radical bean.

[m]:

It IS a little radical bean. I've grown it before while sharing a space with a non-Indigenous farmer and they got upset because they sprout up on their own, and then they are considered a weed. But really, that is true regenerative agriculture. That is true sustainability.



louie's beans

pulling a history book from the shelf and pointing at a black and white photo with the caption: Another typical El Cerrito family scene from the 1920s, this photograph shows the Nicoli family and their livestock. Many families had some combination of cows, goats, rabbits and chickens which they used for milk, eggs, and breeding. From left to right are Mary (in back), Elvira, Louis, John, Frank, and Peter*

[t]:

This is the Nicoli family. One of the reasons I am showing you the picture is that I still grow his seeds, his beans. Louie Nicoli's Italian beans. They are what Louie always grew, anyway, I don't know where he got them. Early on in my oral history interviews I met Louie, all his life he had been remembering everything and never had anyone to tell it to. Anyway, as Louie was dying I used to go over and take care of his vegetable garden. One day I said Louie, 'can I have some of your seeds, some of your beans?' He said 'Tom, I thought you would never ask!'. It was the most wonderful moment. I treasure those beans.



stolen quinoa

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[n]

I don't know if this is my favorite seed. But the story that comes to mind is when I was working on a farm in Santa Cruz, we grew quinoa which is my first time seeing what quinoa looks like. It is a really beautiful plant. We saved the quinoa seeds on the farm and I took that seed with me when I moved back to San Francisco. Well... this ends up not being a very uplifting story!

We became members of a community garden and started growing stuff. I planted the quinoa I had saved from the farm, the quinoa that I had planted. It came up and looked beautiful. Everyone was so excited about it because they hadn't ever seen quinoa growing before. Just before it was ready to be harvested, we showed up one day and the stocks were cut. Someone had stolen *all* of the quinoa. The seed head was so tall. Someone just lopped it all off and it looked so dead and sad. The seed wasn't even ready! Anyway, it was a good lesson in not being too attached to things. We grew it. It was beautiful and it gave us a lot of joy.

[k]

you do have to wonder what someone does with all of that stolen quinoa...

[n]

We haven't grown quinoa since.



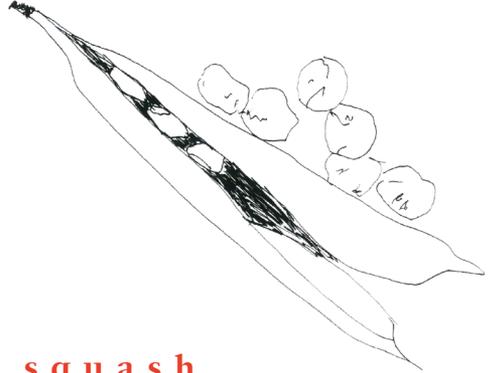
just seeds

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[d]

Just seeds themselves! I am in awe of the experience of seeds. The process of opening a plant at the stage of decomposition and the end of its life and finding something within it that carries so much potential.



hand-pollinated squash

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[j]

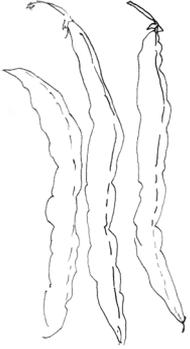
We grew a couple of different kinds of squash that would cross. A naked seed pumpkin and a delicata squash and they were next to each other. So, we had to come in and seal off the flowers each night and come in and hand pollinate them the next morning then tape them back up and flag everything. It was pretty technical. The plants were growing all over each other and we had to figure out which way it was growing and which vine was what plant. We were trying to beat the sun and beat the bees in the morning, and those were really hot days. That was really challenging and really exciting and fun.



rio zape beans

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?



[k]

do you have a favorite bean to grow?

[l]

My seed story has to be about beans. There is something very powerful about being able to grow your own food. Beans are such a simple entry into it. You plant this thing that grows happily and sits in the garden all summer. You can ignore it and then in the fall, you harvest the pods and you end up with this big pile of beans. You can eat the beans and you can save the beans and re-plant them next year and start all over again. When I finally realized it was that easy, it was so powerful to feel that able to take care of myself.

[l]

It's hard to name a favorite- there's a lot of beans. Rio Zape is one favorite. It grows really well around here.

marigolds for fiber dye

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?



[e]

I work with natural dyes and so I want to do more seed saving to be able to continue to use them for flowers for dye. That's why I love marigolds. They are a really beautiful dye plant and they are really easy to save. They are long skinny needle seed pods. I think that is my favorite because it is so simple to get started. The product that I get from it and the joy that I get from it.

korean soybeans

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[kl]

I wanted to grow soybeans because I was finally in a place where I could. I grew a variety from Kititawa Seed Company called Korean black soybeans. At first we ended up with 3 gallon buckets of beans from like 400 plants. It felt mildly demoralizing to get such a small batch from so much time and effort. After that, I was like, 'okay, dry beans are for suckers.' Then, a couple years later, I went to Korea and met all of these heritage seed activists. They showed me all of the kinds of soybeans native to Korea. I realized this is so special. It is like East Asia's version of corn. It is this spiritual mother figure in terms of plants. I felt so ashamed that I had talked so bad about soybeans because the economy of them hadn't penciled out. If you look at the way our diets have changed and our public health epidemics and then you look at something like a soybean, you see our ancestors were way wiser. They knew what would feed us and sustain us, and also they knew what our commitment was to sustain the things that give us life. We have veered so far. Soybeans also feel so important because as people shared soybeans with me, I would have only 10 seeds or so. So I would grow them out for years and never get to taste them because my first responsibility was to grow you because you need to grow before I ever think of you as something to consume. It is 150 painstaking days of being stressed out every day. You wake up and think, 'are all my soybeans okay?' You might think it's just beans, something so humble, so devalued. But then it is like, oh my god I am getting an ulcer from this half of a year spent with this crop. The gestation period is pretty much as long.



alberto's sunflowers

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[r]

I think we've become so disengaged and disconnected from our food sources. If our great grandparents were to look at what people are eating they would say, 'that's not food, what are you even eating?' We've lost flavor, we've lost stories. For example, one of my colleagues has these sunflowers that he grew with his daughters and he had this beautiful picture of his daughter running through the sunflower fields. And it becomes that you aren't just borrowing sunflower seed, you are borrowing sunflowers from Alberto and from this beautiful picture of him and his young daughter running through the patch in the front yard. When we have that connection and when our food has a story, there is so much more of a desire to cherish food. It is not just a disposable commodity. There is a level of savor that we have lost in our culture.



seed processing day

[k]

can you share a favorite seed story with me?

[s]

I don't know if I have a specific seed story about a specific plant. It varies what I get excited about year to year. But my favorite thing is that we started to do a yearly seed processing day. The whole core group gets together and it is just about processing seeds. We sit around and talk. The fan is going and we are going full-speed. All of a sudden, we have two cars full of bags of seeds. This is the way seed saving should be. We should be saving and cleaning seed all together as a community. We are all learning a lot, we are building community, we are processing gallons of seed. It is the best of all of it. These gorgeous harvests, building community, and being able to gather to celebrate what we did that year.



“This is the way seed saving should be. We should be saving and cleaning seed all together as a community. We are all learning a lot, we are building community”

great-great aunt rosie's italian pole beans

[k]

can you share a favorite
seed story with me?

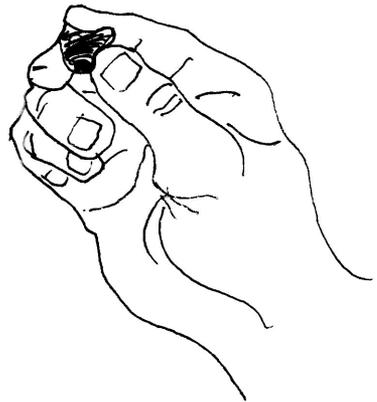
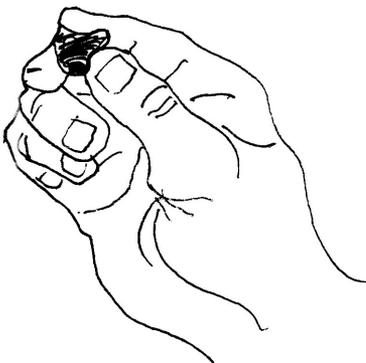
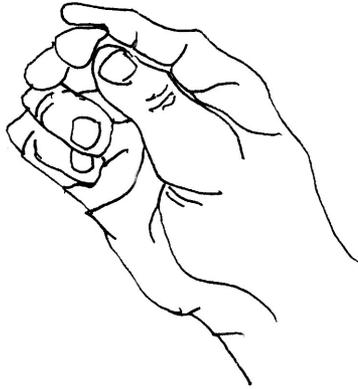
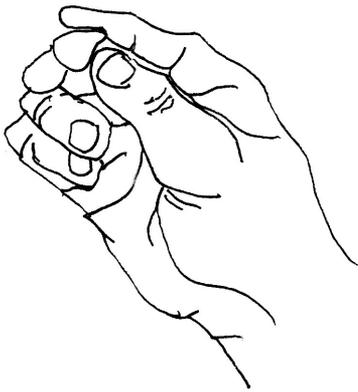
[r]

We've got Great-Great Aunt Rosie's Italian Pole Bean in the library. That seed has been saved on my neighborhood block for 30 years, it was one of my neighbors' great-great aunt. When you hear the story about Great-Great Aunt Rosie and her big Italian family, people become engaged and want to be part of that story. We all want to be part of something larger than ourselves. Food is a great way to do that.



“When anyone - it doesn’t matter what age they are - puts their hands in a pile of beans they just shelled, something reawakens. When in history have we ever taken food – that which sustains us – so for granted. We are at a point of insanity.”

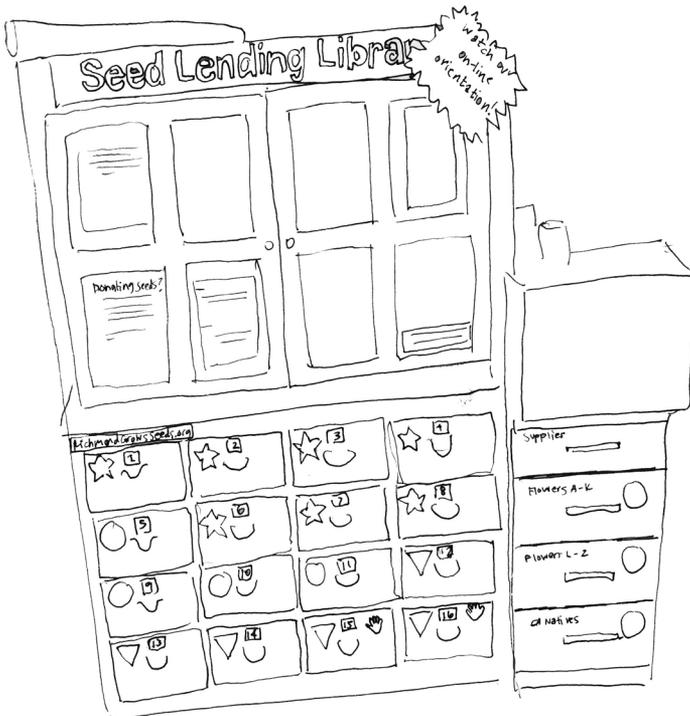
Rebecca Newburn, Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library



seed libraries

Seed libraries are community projects that create free access to seeds. Seed libraries are often found in heavily trafficked public spaces, such as public library branches, community centers, or churches. They help get seeds back into the hands of the people. Seed libraries stock collections with culturally- and historically important seeds as well as plant crops that are nutrient dense and can support food security and self sufficiency.

There are now over 600 seed libraries in 48 states in the US. These institutions bring seeds beyond private gardens and make them available to the public. Seed libraries can help raise awareness and education about traditional farming and culinary knowledge that is at risk of being lost and create opportunities for community members to get involved in food politics, help contribute to a culture of mutualism, and rebuild a localized seed stock adapted to local micro-climates.



“There is strength in the difference across landscapes, across geography, across climates, across the way seeds are kept. The same with seed libraries. The strength of them is that they are not going to look the same everywhere you go.”

-Neil Thaper, Sustainable Economies Law Center



If your community doesn't have a seed library yet, visit seedlibraries.net to find resources on how to start your own. Anyone can become a seed steward!

seed saving terms

ADAPTIVAR

Usually describes a population of an out-crossing species, such as kale or melons, in which many distinct varieties have been allowed to flower together and pollinate each other to create a diverse gene pool. The seeds of an adaptivar produce many unique plants which themselves may or may not produce similar offspring. Essentially, an adaptivar is a collection of many varieties that continually hybridize with each other. The population is stewarded by human and/or natural selection to increase the frequency of desirable traits, such as disease resistance or flavor.

ANNUAL

A plant that completes its full life cycle—including germination, reproduction, and death—in one growing season.

ANTHER

The pollen-producing part of a stamen.

BIENNIAL

A plant that requires vernalization and usually completes its life cycle in two growing seasons, growing vegetatively during the first season, undergoing vernalization, and producing flowers and seeds and dying during the second season.

BIODIVERSITY

The variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, or for the entire earth. Biodiversity is often used as a measure of the health of a biological system.

BOLTING

When a plant elongates to begin flowering.

CROSS-POLLINATION

The transfer of pollen from one plant onto the stigma or flower of another plant

CULTIVAR

a plant or group of plants that have been bred or selected to have distinguishable, desirable traits; commonly called a variety

F1

The first-generation offspring produced from a cross between two different

populations or varieties; an abbreviation of “first filial generation.”

FILAMEN

The hairlike stalk of a stamen that has a pollen-bearing anther at its tip.

FLOWER

The reproductive structure of an angiosperm.

FRUIT

The seed-carrying part of a plant.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM (GMO)

An organism that has had its genetic composition altered by way of molecular breeding techniques.

GERMINATION

The process by which a seed absorbs water and swells, causing the radicle to break through the seed coat; the emergence of a young plant from a seed.

GERMPLASM

A term used to describe the genetic resources for an organism, such as the characteristics of seeds or nursery stock

HEIRLOOM

A variety of plant or animal that has been passed down from generation to generation. All heirlooms are open pollinated but not all open pollinated varieties are heirlooms.

HYBRID

A plant variety that is achieved by crossing two distinct inbred lines. This results in increased uniformity and disease resistance. Seed saved from hybrids will not grow true to type. Hybrids are used extensively in industrial farming because they are uniform and yield all the same time which is good for the commercial market. Hybrids are also good for seed companies because they create proprietary control over the seed: if a farmer wants to grow a hybrid variety she must purchase new seed from the company every year.

INSECT-POLLINATED

A term used to describe plants whose flowers are or can be pollinated by insects,

such as carrots, broccoli, or onions.

ISOLATION DISTANCE

The distance required between two varieties of the same species in order to save seed that maintains varietal integrity.

LANDRACE

A cultivated plant population that is genetically diverse and genetically flexible. A landrace can respond to selection pressures during cultivation. Prior to the pure line plant breeding begun in the early 1900's, most crop varieties grown in the industrial world were landraces. Most subsistence crops grown in the non-industrial world are still landraces.

NATURAL SELECTION

The multigenerational process by which heritable traits in a population become more or less common as a result of how efficiently those traits help individuals survive and reproduce

OPEN-POLLINATED VARIETY

A variety that, when allowed to cross-pollinate only with other members of the same population, produces offspring that display the characteristic traits of the variety.

PERENNIAL

A plant that can live for more than two years, usually producing flowers and seeds for many years.

PISTIL

The female reproductive organ at the center of a flower, usually composed of an ovary, style, and stigma.

PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION (PVP)

A form of patent on open-pollinated varieties of plants. If a plant has been registered for PVP protection, it is illegal to save seed to grow out yourself. You must buy seed from a licensee or pay royalties to the license holder.

POLLEN

Typically dust-like structures, produced by anthers, that carry male reproductive cells in flowering plants.

POLLINATOR

An animal, often an insect, that moves pollen from an anther to a stigma.

POPULATION

The total number of plants of a variety that contribute their genetic material to the seeds being collected; a group of interfertile plants growing together that have the potential to interbreed.

SELECTION

Choosing the most vigorous or most well formed plants out of a population for seed saving purposes. If you eat the plants that are less than optimal, and leave the rest for seed production, you ensure the best genetics for seed

SELF-POLLINATION

The transfer of pollen from an anther to a stigma of the same plant.

SPECIES

A population of organisms capable of interbreeding in nature.

STAMEN

The male reproductive structure of a flower, comprised of a filament and an anther.

STEWARDSHIP

The mindful care of a place, plant, or anything else. For seed saving purposes, stewardship is the process by which an open-pollinated variety is maintained or improved through the careful selection of plants from which to save seed.

STIGMA

The pistil's sticky tip, which receives pollen.

STRATIFICATION

The process some seeds must go through for successful germination, in which the seed is kept cold and sometimes damp for a period of time before sowing. This may include freezing or refrigeration. The time involved may be a few weeks to a year. Usually it is for a few months.

VARIETY

A phenotypically distinct, naturally occurring population of plants within a species:

commonly used as a synonym for “cultivar.” Will hybridize freely with those other varieties (if brought into contact).

VEGETABLE

Any part of a plant that you eat that is not the fruit or seed. Sometimes the botanical fruit is referred to as a vegetable when it is used like a vegetable, such as zucchini.

VERNALIZATION

The exposure of a plant to low temperatures, enabling the plant to flower.

VOLUNTEER

A plant that grows without having been deliberately planted.

regional seed organizations

PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Organic Seed Alliance
www.seedalliance.org

Seed Ambassadors Project
www.seedambassadors.org

CALIFORNIA:

Sierra Seeds
www.sierraseeds.org

ROCKY MOUNTAINS:

Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance
www.rockymountainseeds.org

SOUTHWEST:

Native Seed / SEARCH
www.nativeseeds.org

Seed Broadcast
www.seedbroadcast.org

MIDWEST:

Seed Savers Exchange
www.seedsavers.org

NORTHEAST:

Hudson Valley Seed Company
hudsonvalleyseed.com

TrueLove Seeds
trueloveseeds.com

SOUTHEAST:

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange
www.southernexposure.com





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