

FAMINE in the Seeds!

There are many aspects to growing your own food, especially in the colder climate that we have here in Montana. Working with nature is the goal and that begins with your seeds.

It is important to consider the way we are handling today's seeds. So many hybrids have been developed that you actually have to seek out original, non-hybrid seeds. Hybrid plants are sterile, meaning that seeds must be purchased for every planting. They cannot be saved and shared from year to year as your ancestors did in the past! This may be good for the seed companies, but NOT for the seeds. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences has indicated that since many of our crops are so genetically uniform through hybrids, they could easily be wiped out by one disastrous disease epidemic.

Most of our vegetables were derived from herbs, but they no longer have the essence, the pungent tastes, or the odors of those herbs. They are increasingly losing their power and effect in the human body. These original, non-hybrid seeds produce crops with immunities to pests and blights through struggles of nature. These seeds have survived the centuries, and so did we.

This hybridization is one part of a degenerate food system that is largely money-motivated. The driving force behind Big Food, Inc., and their army of chemical-polluting, fossil-fuel-intensive, water-wasting, soil-destroying farmers, food processors, and marketers is the idea that maximizing short-term profits trumps all other considerations. These factors include: health, economic justice, animal welfare, the environment, climate stability, and the spread of antibiotic-resistant pathogens.

Squash, for example, is now grown five-to-ten times bigger than it used to be, so we are eating more pulp and bulk instead of the necessary



**Consider
the next
generation
of seeds
today!**

chemical elements (vitamins, minerals and enzymes) needed for health. To get a chemical balance, we would have to eat the whole, larger squash. The same is true for the large versus small banana. We want to be getting our nutrition in a concentrated form as it was before our nuts, seeds, fruits, berries, and greens were hybridized.

In these modern times, THOUSANDS of varieties of seeds have been replaced with only hundreds of hybrids. The problem with this is that most of the crops growing in the US are derived from these hybrid seeds, making us vulnerable in more ways than one. This is a serious situation.

Heirloom seed vegetables are the old-time varieties. They are open-pollinated instead of hybrid. They are saved and handed down through multiple generations of families. Usually, they cost less than hybrid seeds, but there are more reasons than just seed prices to choose heirlooms.

ParadisePermaculture.org is an excellent, local Montana resource for seeds, and the passionate work of Mona Lewis, a certified permaculture-design specialist and instructor. In our interview, she shared with me the three permaculture ethics: Care for the earth, share what you don't use, and care for all people. Through this website, you can access and register for monthly classes on the Edible Backyard series, with information on colder-climate gardening, kitchen gardens, and Paradise Valley Perma-

sprouts, to name a few. In January, they have their annual heirloom seed-savers exchange. If you missed out—no worries—here are some additional resources:

- 1) Livingston's Woods Rose Mkt:
WoodsRoseMarket.com
- 2) Located in Whitefish, MT:
GoodSeedCo.net:
- 3) From Utah, for cold-weather crops: RenaissanceSeeds.com
- 4) Peaceful Valley Farms, in Grass Valley, CA:
GrowOrganic.com

So whether your garden is in your kitchen (sprouts), on the patio in pots, or in raised beds in your backyard, let your harvest be a feast, not a famine. The food out of your garden is better than anything you could ever buy! Thank you for considering the next generation of seeds today. ■



Sara J. Gibbs NCMT

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