



WHY SAVE SEEDS?

by Alex Barnett

~Calendar of Events~

Mar 8 (Sat) Cold-frame and cloche-building workshop. 2pm-5pm. North Loveland. Wear sturdy outdoor clothes and bring along a few tools if you have them: like a hammer, drill, handsaw. Also if you already have a sash or glazed door, you might bring that so we can custom-design a frame for you. Directions: east on 57th St to its end, right turn 100 yards to Kaiser, middle drive at its end.

Mar 9 (Sun) Seed-starting and start-transplanting workshop /party! Organic heirloom seeds for sale plus seed-starting materials plus the opportunity to offer to grow out seeds for planting and future fund-raising for GFNL. Fort Collins: *Foothills Unitarian Church* on Drake. 1-4pm

Apr 5) Cold-frame and cloche-building workshop. 2pm-5pm (see March 8 event for more details). Location: *Foothills Unitarian Church* on Drake.

Apr 6 (Sun) Seed-starting workshop.... A repeat performance! of our March 9 event. Location: Avogadro's Number, 605 S. Mason. 1-4pm
No Fee workshops – but donations to our non-profit greatly appreciated! Volunteer and sign-up info: 226-4256.

Contents:

- Gardener benefits and a draft agreement
- An introduction to Lauren Dittmann...
- A howdy and some history from down under
- A handy seed-starting chart for the next few months...

Deep inside a mountain on an island in the Arctic Ocean is the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Built by Norway and set to open February 2008, this vault will preserve millions of seeds in a frozen state for centuries, guarding against future catastrophe. And here at home in Fort Collins is the National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation which conserves genetic resources of crops and animals important to US agriculture and landscapes.

Why is saving seeds important? Simply put, the biodiversity of our plant heritage is vast, ancient, and increasingly at risk. Industrial agriculture has resulted in widespread monoculture farming. Habitat destruction, overgrazing, and species extinction is rampant. Cultivated varieties of plants are declining at an alarming rate. For example, of the 7,098 apple varieties documented as having been in use between 1804 and 1904, approximately 86% have been lost. Similarly, 95% of cabbage, 91% of field maize, 94% of pea and 81% of the tomato varieties apparently no longer exist.

Plants have been evolving for millions of years, reproducing through pollination. Rooted to one spot in the earth, plants

cont. page 3

Welcome

...welcome to the first issue of "Stewards of the Earth, Arise!" -- Grow Food not Lawns' monthly newsletter. This first edition is long-overdue and pre-mature in the same breath! But at the heart of it is a call to shake off the dust and the snowflakes of the passing season and to begin to gather together with us as volunteers and gardeners and donors to shape-shift the look of our neighborhoods. Let's *look* more attuned to the procession of the seasons and our connection to the Earth. Let's *look* more capable of declaring victory over rising food costs and declining faith in food quality. Let's *look* at what's at our feet and see healthy living soil capable of growing the most delicious, organic, and satisfying foods imaginable! SH

Mission

GROW FOOD not LAWNs

Our mission is to inspire individuals to develop and sustain organic food-producing gardens in their own backyards and on private and public land donated for that purpose... and to build competence, community and joy while doing it!

Sowing Knowledge,

Harvesting Joy

by Diana Hammerdorfer

While attending Virginia Tech and after graduation I lived in a tiny house on Green St. in Blacksburg, VA. My neighbors were mostly older folks still actively gardening. The next door neighbor Emory was in his sixties and lived with his mother Mrs. Ida-Mae Shepherd who lived to be 100. Emory, Mrs. Ida-Mae and my other neighbors were happy to share their gardening knowledge with me and I took full advantage of the opportunity.

Mrs. Shepherd told me stories of life in the area from the late 1880s and early 1900s, including tales of hiking up to Brush Mountain with her siblings to pick blueberries and scaring (or being scared by) bears. She related memories of sitting all night stirring a large kettle of apple-butter over an open fire under a starry sky. There were always stories of the family garden and its associated chores, which included stringing fresh green beans with needle and thread then hanging them from the porch to dry for later use, plowing fields with the family mule, growing the tastiest melons in the region, etc.

cont. on page 2

Harvesting Joy (cont. from p1)

Although almost blind, Mrs. Shepherd could still smell her roses and admire the giant flowers on her tulip tree. She often sat out in the garden directing Emory as he tilled and worked their vegetable plot, a large swath of fertile soil just over the wild honeysuckle hedge that separated our yards. Giant pokeweed, mint, and chicory wove through the hedgerow. Dandelions, plantain, and clover dotted our yards, but no one complained, least of all the bees! There were also dark woods and compost piles at the back of the garden.

In that garden plot I learned to plant potatoes, how delicious freshly picked corn tastes and how to grow everything from onion sets to all the makings for spaghetti sauce. It was from the Shepherd, Thompsons, and Linkenhausers that I got my first strawberry, raspberry, and asparagus starts. There I grew my first herb garden and canned my first preserves.

As a child growing up in a military family (Air Force brat) we had occasional gardens on the bases and I fondly remember my uncle Seppi's idyllic garden in Liechtenstein, complete with berries galore, chickens, rabbits and lambs. I recall gathering woodland mushrooms, picking wild blueberries, and eating too many apples, plums and cherries while sitting in the trees. But it was in that garden on Green Street where I learned the real magic of turning seeds and starts into food for my table.

Now I feel it is my turn to pass on what I've learned. The youth gardening programs I'm involved with through the city of Fort Collins and Dunn Elementary School Garden Club allow me to share the magic of growing vegetables with children who often have no idea how the food they eat is grown. Weeding races, harvest contests, and water fights are all part of the fun, but the amazement on their faces when they discover that potatoes grow underground and the delight they express when they taste their first homegrown carrots is why I love mentoring these young gardeners. It is my hope that through "Grow Foods Not Lawns" I can share the knowledge I've gained from others and my own personal experiences from almost 30 years of gardening (20 in Colorado) with anyone who wants to experience the magic of turning seeds into food. DH

Erin and Elijah are checking out the lights on the grow-lab Erin has just built. That was back in January... wonder what they've got sprouting and developing at their house today.



Meet Lauren

Meet Lauren Dittmann!! Lauren is a horticulture and landscape student at Front Range Community College who, in addition to being a valued volunteer, is collaborating with Grow Food not Lawns through her new business Northern Colorado Gardenscapes (NCG). She is willing to provide the de-turfing, digging and hauling and other special ground-work to jumpstart your new gardens this spring. Plus she's been collaborating with peers and teachers to bring you the best deals on carefully selected and salvaged materials of all kinds.



Lauren is part of the consultation team that will visit your site, take soil samples (test provided by NCG), listen to your thoughts and recommend options for how to begin, or how to expand, your gardens.

Lauren has really got it dialed in when she expresses, in regards to Grow Food not Lawns gardeners: "my greatest rewards will come when people don't need my services because gardening has really caught on for them and community is there to help it happen!"

reach Lauren through: Northern Colorado Gardenscapes (847) 714-2764 www.nocogardenscapes.com

[The last page of this newsletter was prepared by Lauren as a quick reference guide for seed-starting and transplant dates for the next few months.]

Benefits of Being a Garden Recipient of Grow Food not Lawns:

- A \$50 discount from Northern Colorado Gardenscapes (NCG) should you choose NCG to set up your garden.
- A free soil test performed by NCG- \$20 value.
- Access to volunteer helpers, advice on the phone, 3 on-site visits per year for advice and light assistance with garden work.
- Access to our list of organic master gardeners from the CSU extension office.
- Discounts to all functions, workshops, classes including season-end Harvest Meal Celebration and Fund-raising Gala.
- Garden tools as available -- new and used tools at a low cost. Access to shared tools.
- Membership in our book-sharing library.
- Quality compost, heirloom seeds, and organic starter plants at a discount.

Why Save Seeds? (cont from p1)

developed myriad ways to aid pollination and seed dispersal: the color and smell of flowers, the taste of fruit and nuts, the wings and barbs on seeds. Over time, traits relating to growth habit, disease and pest resistance, yield, and chemical makeup of plants have evolved. Each seed represents the unique genetic blueprint of a plant.

All flowering plants reproduce by pollination. Open pollination is pollination by natural means, such as insects or wind. Because reproduction is uncontrolled and the pollen source is unknown, open pollination can result in offspring that vary in genetic traits and characteristics. This is how new varieties of plants evolve.

We humans have been co-evolving along with plants for more than 10,000 years. As we began the transition from hunter gatherers to an agrarian based society, we collected seeds of particularly promising plants and replanted them. For as long we've grown food on the earth, we've been selecting particular traits from the natural variation in successive generations of plants. Years of open pollination and replanting has resulted in a profusion of plant varieties.

Hybrids, on the other hand, are created by controlled crossing of two parents that have highly selected traits. That first generation of offspring is called an F1 hybrid. Often it will be more vigorous than the parents, a phenomenon called hybrid vigor. If you plant seeds grown from the F1 hybrid plant, they will not breed true. The resulting plants may be sterile, have traits of only one parent, or have some other combination.

Heirloom plants are varieties of prized plants that have been grown for 50 years or more and are open pollinated. Heirloom varieties are nurtured, selected, and handed down from generation to generation. They are often well adapted to their climate and have unique traits. Heirloom vegetables, unlike commercial hybrids, are often more flavorful, colorful, healthful or unique. If you save seeds from an heirloom vegetable and have been careful to have it pollinated within a specific variety, then it will perpetuate the unique characteristics of its parents.

One hundred years ago, millions of farmers worldwide controlled their seed reserves. But the number of farmers in the western world has diminished, in some countries by 80%. The "green revolution" led to the industrialization of farming. Agribusiness companies mostly value profitability and uniformity over diversity. Crops are bred for transport or shelf life, not for taste or health. Selling mostly hybrids, they enjoy a continuous stream of income from seed, fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide sales.

Most seed companies today are owned by a few huge multinational corporations. In order to make a profit the
...[continues on next page]

(benefits of...)

- Option of being a host garden for a workshop (we will limit workshop size appropriately). Host gardens end up with the product of our hands-on workshop! (after paying materials costs.)
- Inclusion in our garden directory so gardeners can network, help one another, share produce.
- Discount on purchases at Bath Nursery (and possibly others).



- E-mail newsletter with garden ideas and workshop announcements.
- The benefit of knowing that part of your \$100 annual member fee will go towards providing garden scholarships for individuals who are financially challenged.



Checking the January temp in their unheated homebuilt greenhouse... Dan and Chester harvest root crops and greens throughout the winter.

Why Save Seeds? (cont from p3)

company usually develops a hybrid which can be patented, and then controls the seed and its production. The courts have generally supported the corporate ownership of hybridized or modified seed. Open pollinated crops do not warrant their investment since they can't be patented or controlled. This greatly reduces the diversity of seed available to be planted.

What happens when a manufacturer of herbicide like Monsanto becomes the world's largest seed supplier? We get Roundup ready corn and soybeans; crops genetically altered to resist the herbicide Roundup. We also get genetically engineered crops that produce sterile seeds. We get genetically modified food in the supermarket, unlabeled, and untested by the FDA. And each year farmers must go back to Monsanto to buy more seed and of course, more Roundup.

Industrial agriculture is the story of profit and yield, of inputs and outputs, of uniformity and control. The large scale industrial production of food has caused environmental degradation, unsustainable farming practices, and public health consequences. In the quest for profit, the collateral damage to our health and environment is often overlooked. With something as intimate as food, something we put into our bodies every day, it is important to make carefully considered choices.

The long history of heirloom plants is the story of passionate gardeners from around the world nurturing the diversity of fruits and vegetables. An heirloom plant may have grown in someone's family garden for years. ...or been passed from neighbor to neighbor...or been created by some patient gardener experimenting with a favorite variety. Heirlooms have stood the test of time. Our gardens start with seeds. Let's do our part to maintain the wonderful diversity of plants. By planting heirloom seeds we will continue the tradition since the beginning of agriculture, of finding a pleasing plant, growing it, and saving it's seed.

Plant heirloom and open pollinated seeds from responsible seed companies:

- Seed Savers Exchange www.seedsavers.org
- Botanical Interests www.botanicalinterests.com
- Seeds of Change www.seedsofchange.com
- Seeds Trust www.seedstrust.com
- Johnny's Seeds www.johnnyseeds.com
- Turtletree Seeds www.mamasearth.com
- Fedco Seeds www.fedcoseeds.com

This article was written for Grow Food not Lawns by Alex Barnett, abarnett88@comcast.net

A Draft of Our Garden Membership Agreement:

Individuals who want Grow Food not Lawns to help them start and maintain vegetables gardens agree to:

- Hire a landscaper for the cost of labor and materials to set up the garden beds unless they do it themselves.
- Commit to stay with the GFNL program for two years and agree to pay GFNL \$100/year for 2 years for a GFNL garden membership. Optional membership after 2 years.
- Decide on plants wanted, purchase plants or seeds, and help plant them during preferred planting times.
- Maintain the garden by regular watering, weeding and harvesting of produce. [We advise setting up a drip irrigation system and automatic water timer to enhance water conservation and success.]
- Share some of their excess produce with volunteers, in return for their efforts.
- Decide if they would like to host a hands-on workshop at their garden; if so benefit (after paying for materials) from implementation of a garden asset, such as cold frames, pit compost, trellising, etc. __Yes, I would! __No thanks

It is not a requirement, but we *encourage* recipients to Plant a Row for the Hungry.

See www.gardenwriters.org/par for more information.





This is what happens when you really go for it! (no more lawn) Chester and Dan have created a masterful year-round food garden complex of their home and grounds.

produce on our door step and children visited the next day with fresh, warm eggs. Amazing!

Almost everyone here grows some type of fruits, veggies or flowers so there are lots of things to exchange. This year a group of us are talking about having work parties to help more individuals start gardens, planting fruit trees along the roads for all to share, doing workshops on composting, swapping seeds and plants, etc.

This favorable community experience has given me faith that a concept like Grow Food not Lawns is very doable. I am also having talks with a relocation group here in Nelson about the possibility of starting a Grow Food not Lawns project in NZ. They have asked me to give a lecture on GFNL in March.

BJ

A Message from our Founder "Down Under"

Origins of Idea for Grow Food Not Lawns by Bob Jones 2/08

For me, it all started with a successful community gardening experience in New Zealand. I first came to NZ in November 2001 and fell in love with the country. The next year I came back and bought a small house in a seaside community near Nelson on the north coast of the south island. I have returned every year since then- usually from January to April with my partner Marion Brown.

What's it like? Being in the southern hemisphere, the seasons are reversed. So we leave snow and cold and step into mid summer with 6 hours more daylight. We are at latitude of 41 degrees, similar to Oregon. The landscape looks like northern California but with fewer people- only 4 million in the whole country- less than in LA.

It's an ideal climate for growing things. Temperatures are very moderate due to the maritime influence. There is light frost here in winter but no snow. With a tunnel or greenhouse, food can be grown all year. The average yearly rainfall is 38 inches and the soil is pretty good. The summer season is long with temperatures ranging from 60 to mid 80's. Growing 3 crops in succession is possible.

Bedding plants produce zucchinis, cukes, lettuce and chard in 3 weeks! I have a veggie garden which is 300 sq ft of raised beds. Two years ago I realized that I was growing much more produce than we could use. What to do with the excess? Compost, sell or give away? I decided to give my excess to neighbors to build good will. That year I gave produce to 8 families. Folks started to give me things from their gardens. Last year I helped some friends start gardens and exchanged veggies with 21 families. This year before coming to NZ, I sent an e-mail to neighbors asking for excess fruit and veggies until our garden gets started. We arrived to find a variety of



Lauren is excavating as a first step for a solar-powered electric-coil-heated hotbed ... swinging her mattock adventurously into barely defrosted February ground.

NEEDS AND WANTS LIST:

Obviously, we need you to help make the Grow Food not Lawns vision work! As gardener, volunteer, donor, we need to come together in one or all of these capacities. In order to meet our public support requirements, keeping track of the hours of your in-kind service to this project is important. Would you do that for us?

Feel free to contact your friendly co-coordinator and editor (that's me) with questions and comments, and of course, to sign up! And thank you for your patience waiting for our website to go live. SeaHeart 226-4256; seaheart@olympus.net

The Newsletter of Grow Food not Lawns

Days of:	Start Seed Indoors	Transplant Starts Outdoors	Start (root/seed) Outdoors
March 1 st – 15 th	Asparagus, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Calendula, Delphinium, Dill, Fennel, Lettuces, Leeks, Onions, Parsley		Delphinium (r) = root
March 16 th – 31 st	Artichoke, Basil, Cosmos, Eggplant, Curly Endive, Long-season Gourd*, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Mint, Nicotiana, Oregano, Sweet Pepper, Hot Pepper, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Thyme, Thunbergia, Tomato,		Apple(r), Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Currants(r), Delphinium, Grapes(r), divide ornamental grasses(r), Kale, Horseradish(r), Jerusalem Artichoke (r) Peas, Raspberry(r), Rhubarb(r)
April 1 st – 15 th	Cauliflower, Cilantro(coriander), Cosmos, Long-season Gourd*, Ornamental Grasses, Head & Cos lettuce, Marigold, Morning Glory, Pumpkin, Sage(culinary), Summer Squash**, Winter Squash***, Tomatillo	Broccoli (6" tall, 2-4 true leaves), Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Delphinium, Grapes, Onion, Oriental Poppy,	Arugula, Beets, Kale, Kohlrabi, Onion, Corn Poppy, Radish, Raspberry(r), Rhubarb(r), Spinach
April 16 th – 30 th	Ornamental Grasses, Sunflowers, Melon, Okra, Pumpkin, Summer Squash**, Winter Squash***, Zinnia	Cauliflower, Delphinium, Curly Endive, Grapes, Head and Cos Lettuce, Onion, Pansies, Oriental Poppy, Strawberries	Calendula, Carrot (seed every 2 wks 'til Je 24), Chard, Collard Greens, Slow-bolt Lettuce, Flax, Potato, Radish, Spinach, Turnip
May 1 st – 15 th		Echinacea, Echinops, Head and Cos Lettuce, Marigold, Oriental Poppy, Strawberries,	Artichoke(r), Asparagus(r), Coreopsis, Cilantro, Sunflower, Bee Balm, Potato, Radish
May 16 th – 31 st		Artichoke, Asparagus, Basil, Calendula, Cilantro, Cosmos, Cucumber, Dill, Eggplant, Fennel, Flax, Gourd, Ornamental Grass, Sunflower, Morning Glory, Lavender, Leek, Lemon Balm, Head and Cos Lettuce, Melon, Mint, Bee Balm, Catmint, Nicotiana, Oregano, Parsely, Peppers, Pumpkin, Rudbeckia, Sage, Salvia, Sedum, Squashes, Sweet Woodruff, Sweet Potato, Thunbergia, Thyme, Tomatillo, Tomato, Zinnia	Basil, Beans, Corn, Cosmos, Belgian Endive, Short-season Gourd, Hardy Kiwi (r), Morning Glory, Nicotiana, Okra, Pumpkin, Radish, Summer and Winter Squash,

*Long-Season Gourd (birdhouse, loofah, etc... ** Summer Squash (zucchini, crookneck, straightneck, scallop) *** Winter Squash (acorn, butternut, delicious, hubbard, banana, butternut, and spaghetti). prepared by Lauren Dittman of Northern Colorado Gardenscapes, lauren@nocogardenscapes.com (rev.sh)

Volunteers!! If you have a growing space that fits our criteria, we would love it if you could help produce starts to benefit Grow Food not Lawns and its member gardeners. We

supply organic seeds and medium and trays, you can keep up to 20% of your babies and the rest will benefit our neighbors. Contact: seaheart@olympus.net