



Seedhead News

A Newsletter for Members of Native Seeds/SEARCH

Number 108

Winter 2011

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SAVE
THE DATE:

Sunday, 5–8pm
March 20, 2011

Desert Diamond Casino
Concert Hall

1100 W. Pima Mine Rd.
1-19 & Pima Mine Rd.
Sabuarita AZ

Flavors of the Desert Local Foods. Local Folks. Local Fun.

This year's Flavors will be the best ever with a savory menu of heritage foods prepared to perfection by Chef Ramon Delgado and an evening of fun hosted by emcee David Fitzsimmons, the award-winning editorial cartoonist for the *Arizona Daily Star*. Special musical guests Petey Mesquitey and Kevin Pakulis will sing and play their favorite Southwestern tunes. Plan to join us for Flavors of the Desert, a unique annual event that invites you and your taste buds to celebrate our mission.

Your generous support of Flavors in past years has allowed us to preserve and protect genetic diversity and the cultural heritage represented in the more than 1,800 varieties of agricultural seed we steward. Proceeds from the dinner enable us to support farmers and gardeners in our community and throughout the Southwest who work tirelessly to preserve small-scale, local, and healthy agriculture.

Register now to guarantee your place at Flavors. Tickets are \$75 per person and may be purchased online at www.nativeseeds.org or by visiting our retail store at 3061 N. Campbell Ave. MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express accepted. A portion of each ticket is tax-deductible.



From our Director



Dear NS/S Members,

Each year, in the winter issue of *Seedhead News*, we look back on the last year to highlight what we accomplished and acknowledge you for making a real difference by supporting Native Seeds/SEARCH. Often, we feel there is much more that we'd like to say, and so I want to touch on a few of those things.

First, we recognize the amazing work done by our volunteers, but I feel it necessary to say more because we truly could not accomplish our work without them. During these tough times, NS/S volunteers continue to step up to support the organization in many different ways. You help us at the Conservation Farm, at the Conservation Center, and at the store. We now have a corps of Volunteer Ambassadors who you might call NS/S's troops- they're out there on the ground representing NS/S at community events and making presentations to interested groups. Soon, some of them will be leading monthly tours of the Seed Bank to ensure that the public has plenty of opportunity to see our new Agricultural Conservation Center first-hand and understand why conserving traditional Southwestern crops is imperative. Val Plumlee, one of our longtime volunteers who has been involved in every aspect of our work, has stepped up as our volunteer Volunteer Liaison, and we are grateful to her for coordinating this essential element of NS/S. Every single volunteer, from board members to the groups or individuals who only come once, is critical to our organization and our mission. If we were in a room together, I would ask that you stand and give them a loud round of applause (feel free to do so anyway) because they deserve it!

Then there is our staff—some of the hardest working folks I've ever had the privilege to know. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to one of the Southwest's staunchest seed guardians in December, Suzanne Nelson. Suzanne led our Conservation Program for fifteen years and brought great precision and professionalism to our operations. She assisted in developing cutting-edge projects with Tarahumara communities in the Sierra Madres of Mexico, like the participatory breeding projects that over the next couple of years will result in new local varieties of corn to meet changing community needs in changed environmental conditions. But, as a friend of mine recently analogized, every pot needs to be replanted at some point, and Suzanne's new pot is in the international realm where we hope she will make "seeds" a bigger part of the global food security conversation (see next page).

In this issue, Gary Nabhan, one of NS/S's co-founders and internationally known for his work to conserve our world's food heritage, shares with us NS/S's growing relevance in a time when water supplies dwindle and local food systems grow. And, as the seeds that we conserve take more of center stage, we at NS/S strategize as to how best ensure that these resources are conserved and promoted within our region. Since October, board and staff members have been collaborating to define the organization's forward trajectory during the next several years. And while that is still in process, we all are greatly excited and inspired by the collective energy to share the organization's resources with our communities. Stay tuned for more in the next issue.

To every single individual and organization committed to conserving the Greater Southwest's agricultural diversity, I sincerely thank you.

All the best,



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Mahina Drees
Gary Nabhan
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The mission of Native Seeds/SEARCH (Southwestern Endangered Aridland Resources Clearing House) is to conserve, distribute, and document the adapted and diverse varieties of agricultural seeds, their wild relatives and the role these seeds play in cultures of the American Southwest and northwest Mexico.

We envision the Greater Southwest as a place where farms and gardens, kitchens and tables, stores and restaurants are brimming with the full diversity of aridlands-adapted heirloom crops; people are keeping the unique seeds and agricultural heritage alive; and the crops, in turn, are nourishing humankind. — VISION STATEMENT

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Two New Reports Forecast Food Security Changes in the Southwest: The Role that Native Seeds/SEARCH Plays *by Gary Paul Nabhan, PhD*

Over the last three decades, *Seedhead News* has offered many examples of the numerous cultural, nutritional, and ecological values of place-based, desert-adapted seed crops nurtured by the multi-cultural communities of the Southwest. As a co-founder of Native Seeds/SEARCH, I would like to underscore certain of these values by placing the organization's work in a context shaped by two recently-released publications.

As the first decade of the new millennium came to a close, many of us were stunned by the release of a National Academy of Sciences report suggesting that the irrigation supplies which have brought us water and food security in the Southwest over the last century have passed their peak availability. The report in the Academy's *Proceedings* published in mid-December 2010 noted that "the capacity for water to support cities, industry, agriculture, and ecosystems in the US West is near its limit." The special feature, co-authored by fifteen distinguished scientists from around the West, estimated that the per capita amount of water currently needed to feed the populations of the metropolitan areas of the Southwest are already the highest "water/ food footprints" of any place in the world, and are clearly unsustainable.

The authors suggest in *Proceedings* that farmers and gardeners should immediately begin to cut their water use for food production down to just sixty percent of the level currently used to lavishly-irrigate most commercial crops in our region. To place that proposed reduction in perspective, it has taken farmers the last forty years to increase their per acre water use efficiency just twenty-five percent, so the newly-proposed goal must more than double the efficiency we've gained through applying drip irrigation, laser leveling, and watering-on-demand technologies to Southwestern agriculture.

When National Public Radio's Daniel Kracker recently asked lead author Dr. John Sabo what farmers can do about this dilemma, he said that they needed "a different crop portfolio" to deal with water scarcity, soil salinity, and heat. What Dr. Sabo may not have realized is that Native Seeds/SEARCH has been the primary non-profit steward of that "different crop portfolio" for more than a quarter century, while most agronomists and hydraulic engineers in the Southwest were simply trying to deliver greater quantities of irrigation water to the water-guzzling commodity crops of the Southwest.

In short, a key place to begin to reshape Southwestern agriculture on tribal, public, and private lands so that it can survive impending water shortages and climate change is by making sure a diversity of drought- and salt-tolerant crops —ones able to meet various cultures' culinary and nutritional needs— reach their fields, gardens, and tables. Native Seeds/SEARCH has played, and will continue to play, a pivotal role in the education, research, and

conservation regarding that much-needed diversity with your continuing support.

The other recent publication which underscores the importance of these heritage crops to our food security, agricultural sustainability, and green economy was released on January 26, 2011 on www.saboresfronteras.com. It's called *State of the Southwestern Foodsheds*, and involved more than a dozen food and agriculture experts in assessing the last decade of changes in our regional food system. (It will also be available while supplies last at the Native Seeds/SEARCH store on Campbell Avenue in Tucson.) Without ignoring the facts that Arizona and New Mexico are on the lowest rungs of the ladder in terms of poverty alleviation, farmland loss and agricultural energy costs, it charts the remarkable progress made the last ten years in providing more alternatives in our food system.

Since 2000, more than fifty-eight producers in Arizona and thirty-five in New Mexico have begun to direct-market heirloom food crops and heritage livestock breeds, according to localharvest.org. There are now seventy-three farmers markets in Arizona and sixty-

It is time to reflect upon the importance of Native Seeds/SEARCH in the larger regional food system, for it is helping forge a future that is more sustainable, nutritious, and delicious.

Please support NS/S by sending your donation in the attached envelope.

three in New Mexico. There are currently twenty-nine community-supported agriculture projects in Arizona and twenty-five in New Mexico. Today, at least seventy-five restaurants in the two states feature local foods, as do the thirty-nine urban farms and homesteads in our metro areas. The delicious foods produced from the many desert-adapted seeds held in trust by Native Seeds/SEARCH has helped fuel this astonishing growth of a greener, less wasteful regional food system. CSA farmers

and farmers market vendors like Frank Martin of Crooked Sky Farms—a transplanted Cherokee to the periurban farmscapes of Metro Phoenix—is one of the many farmers who regularly draws upon onions, beans, greens, and squashes made accessible by Native Seeds/SEARCH. While other Metro Phoenix farmers went belly-up when the drought of the last decade required that they cut their water use by twenty-five percent or more, Frank was one of those who survived because of his "different crop portfolio."

We need more farmers like Frank Martin, but we also need to support those who are already at work, as well as the chefs and cooks that draw upon this cornucopia. It is time to reflect upon the importance of Native Seeds/SEARCH in the larger regional food system, for it is helping forge a future that is more sustainable, nutritious, and delicious.

—Gary Paul Nabhan, who calls himself a "cofounder of NS/S," is co-author of a new book on agriculture and climate change due out in March: *Chasing Chiles: Hot Spots on the Pepper Trail*, published by Chelsea Green. See his schedule of upcoming lectures and hands-on workshops at www.garynabhan.com.



clockwise from top left **The new Agricultural Conservation Center. Mole demonstration with Amy Valdes Schwemm of Mano y Metate. The new NS/S store on Campbell Avenue. Rio Mayo Segualca squash. The 2010 Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast.**

Program Accomplishments: October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

Conservation

Native Seeds/SEARCH employs two main strategies in conserving agricultural crop diversity: ex situ and in situ conservation. Ex situ conservation is the conservation of crops outside of their original or natural habitat. Our Conservation Farm and Seed Bank form the basis of our ex situ conservation work. In situ conservation is the conservation of crops in areas where they developed their distinctive properties, i.e. in the wild or in farmers' fields.

☞ The Native Seeds/SEARCH seed collection is now protected better than ever in our new Agricultural Conservation Center, which was completed in June. Located in the Binghampton Rural Historic Landscape and Brandi Fenton Memorial Park in Tucson, the NS/S Agricultural Conservation Center is the first step in a public-private partnership with Pima County to develop a state-of-the-art education center with classrooms, commercial kitchen, demonstration gardens, and heirloom orchards.

☞ During the summer of 2010, we grew out sixty-three of the most at-risk squash and gourd varieties needing replenishment in the Seed Bank, including the rare species or subspecies *Cucurbita ficifolia* (a rare cultivated species) and *Cucurbita argyrosperma sororia* (a wild relative of the cushaw squashes). Keep watching our website as many of these become available to farmers and gardeners

in the next year! We also grew twenty-one varieties that our customers most frequently request.

☞ Last year, NS/S embarked on a new project with the Tarahumara communities of the Sierra Madres. While past gardening, orchard, erosion control, and water harvesting projects continue, NS/S is working with the communities on a participatory breeding project that allows farmers in different communities to select for better adapted corn varieties than what is currently available.

Traditional varieties are being grown together and allowed to cross-pollinate to create new local varieties that perform better in changing environmental conditions.

☞ As a result of the collaborative efforts of NS/S's Native American Committee, an external Advisory Panel, several roundtables in different Native communities, and UCLA's Tribal Learning Community and Educational Exchange, NS/S drafted and adopted a Code of Ethics to guide its work with Native communities. Also coming out of this process, NS/S has created a working draft of an intellectual property rights and benefits-sharing policy.



Distribution

We promote the use of Southwestern heirloom crops and their wild relatives by distributing seeds and associated products through our

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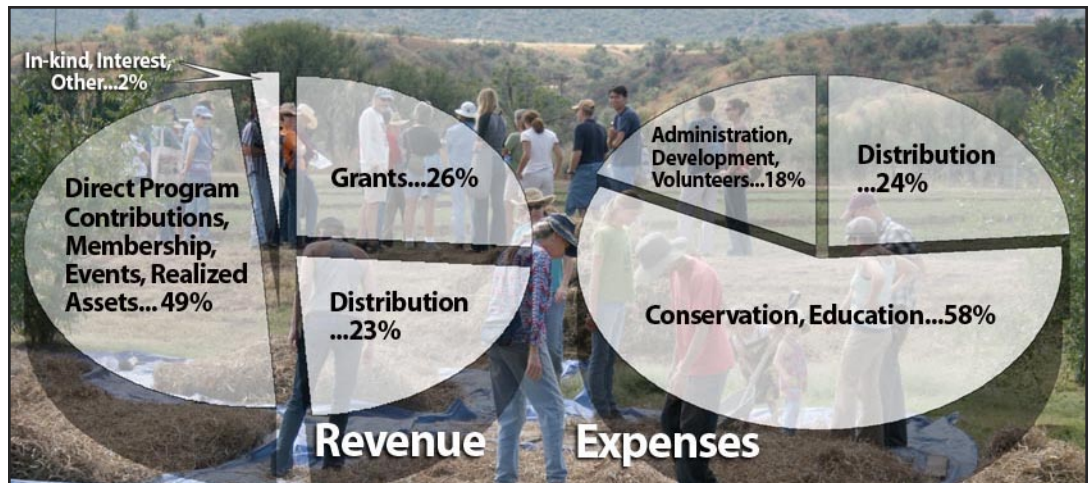


website, annual Seedlisting, retail store, and Native American Free Seed Program to communities, farmers, and gardeners world wide. All proceeds from sales directly support our conservation efforts.

☞ After twelve years on Tucson's Fourth Avenue, NS/S relocated our store to 3061 N. Campbell Avenue, a major thoroughfare from Tucson's northside to central Tucson, and an area that has grown exponentially in its retail opportunities during the past five years. Approximately five miles from our Agricultural Conservation Center, the new venue helps us reach new customers and members and holds great potential for building our retail revenue in future years.

☞ Through our Native American Free Seed Program, we provided nearly 5,000 packets of seed to Native American gardeners/farmers and gardening/community projects in the Southwestern United States during FY 2009-10. Through our new Community Seed Grant Program we donated more than 300 seed packets to the following organizations: Community Gardens of Tucson, Khalsa Montessori School, FARM Flagstaff, Friends of the Ute Museum, United South Broadway After School Program, Host Ranch Conference Center, Tucson Medical Center, Red de Accion Indigena Noroeste, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Tucson Village Farm, Desert Botanical Garden, Casa de Bethel, and Pipa Ahi Macav.

☞ In response to the great demand for the crops we conserve, we held two spring plant sales in the Tucson and Patagonia communities. Record numbers of desert-adapted tomatoes, chiles, and basil varieties were sold.



Audited financials will be available for review upon request after April 15, 2011.

Outreach/Education

☞ Revisions to our website has made more information readily accessible, such as the Southwest Regis-Tree database, PDFs of *SeedHead News* from 1983 to present, applications for our Community Seed Grants Program, and cooking, gardening, and seedsaving information.

☞ In addition to numerous presentations and tours of the Seed Bank and Conservation Farm to school and community groups, NS/S offered workshops on seedsaving, composting with worms, and cooking with traditional crops. We welcomed new and old friends to the Conservation Farm for our annual San Juan's Day Celebration in June and the popular Harvest Fest in October.

Volunteers

☞ Native Seeds/SEARCH could not accomplish our work without the great commitment of our volunteers and in 2010 we honored almost one hundred volunteers at an Appreciation Breakfast for their 5,600 hours of time contributed at the Seed Bank, retail store, Conservation Farm, and at many community events. That's the equivalent of nearly three full-time employees!

Thank you for making the NS/S Agricultural Conservation Center possible!

\$50,000 and above

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Thank you for your support!

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO NATIVE SEEDS/SEARCH

All donations and membership listed were received between October 1, 2009, and September 30, 2010. Thousands of supporters made gifts under \$100. We wish we had the space to acknowledge each and every one of you and deeply appreciate your contributions.

\$25,000 and more

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Volunteer Highlight



Meet Karen DeLay *by Suzanne Jameson*

Trained in mathematics, Karen DeLay has spent most of her working life solving problems scientifically – using logic and reason to sort out possibilities and evaluate outcomes. Once a programmer for the Voyager spacecraft, Karen supported ultraviolet spectrometer experiments to determine the composition and structure of the atmospheres of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and several of their satellites. At Native Seeds/SEARCH, she loves what she calls the “people factor.”

“We have a fantastic staff here and our customers are a delight to work with,” she says. “NSS is such a beloved organization, I knew I wanted to be part of it. I like being involved with an organization I can be proud of.”

Karen’s interests are as diverse as her background. Food politics, environmental and Native American issues, yoga, gardening, cooking, and sewing all vie for her time when she’s not busy with her Reiki practice or conducting architectural history research or creating costumes for Tucson’s Rogue Theatre. A Tucsonan since 1972, Karen dotes on her sixteen-month old twin grandbabies, Theo and Isabelle, and makes frequent trips to visit them in New Jersey.

At the NS/S store on North Campbell Avenue, Karen responds to e-mails about orders, gardening questions, and Seedlisting requests. She helps Betsy Armstrong fill mail orders and re-stocks shelves when seeds or books or baskets get low. “The store is a wonderful, magical place,” she says and smiles as she glances around at the Tarahumara folk art and brightly colored wildflower seed packets. Karen recently joined our Ambassador Program, and looks forward to giving presentations in the community and staffing outreach events to promote NS/S mission.

“NS/S is important to the community and to the world,” Karen says. “When I volunteer somewhere, I want my time to matter.”

Thank you, Karen, for giving your time and talents to NS/S. We appreciate all that you do.



¡Adios Amiga!

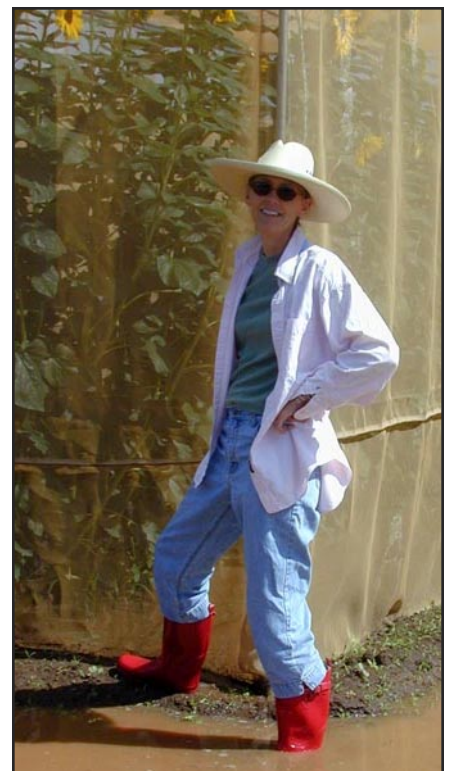
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Suzanne Nelson Retires to TANGO

Suzanne Nelson helped usher in more growth and refinement of our organization's seed conservation efforts than any staff member in the quarter century legacy of Native Seeds/SEARCH. With an agro-ecologist's eye and an oral historian's ear, she has given context to the seed collections that will enrich us for many years to come. Congratulate her as she tangos away to do other good deeds.

— Gary Paul Nabhan

After fifteen years as NS/S' Director of Conservation, Suzanne Nelson has "retired" to a new position with TANGO International (Technical Assistance to N.G.Os). The Tucson-based organization is dedicated to providing long term institutional support to organizations engaged with the ongoing struggle to alleviate hunger and poverty. Their clients include the British Red Cross, Department for International Development, Heifer International, and the United States Agency for International Development. The establishment of the Conservation Farm in Patagonia and the fruition of the new Seed Bank are only two examples of Suzanne's lasting influence. We wish her the best in her new endeavors.



¡Mil Gracias y Buena Suerte!

Congratulations Community Seed Grant Recipients!

Supporting educational, food security, and community development projects in the Greater Southwest through targeted donations of seeds.

Native Seeds/SEARCH is pleased to offer small donations of our seeds to eligible organizations in the Greater Southwest region. These Community Seed Grants are designed to support the work of educators and those working to enhance the nutritional, social, economic, or environmental health of underprivileged groups in the region, while simultaneously keeping locally-adapted crops varieties alive and in active use in farms and gardens.

After careful review, the following eight organizations were awarded Community Seed Grants for the spring planting period. Approximately 150 packets will be donated.

Mountain Elementary School – Flagstaff AZ
PROJECT: Garden program for first and second graders

Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona – Tucson AZ
PROJECT: Dirt Divas urban agriculture program

Earthcare Food Cadre – Santa Fe NM
PROJECT: Student gardens

Manzo Elementary School – Tucson AZ
PROJECT: First Bloom Heritage Garden

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Environmental Programs Department – Towaoc CO
PROJECT: Educational curriculum

DouglPrieta Works/DouglPrieta Trabaja – Douglas AZ
PROJECT: Community seed bank in Agua Prieta

Ecoversity – Santa Fe NM
PROJECT: Demonstration garden

New Moon Lodge Residential Treatment Facility – Santa Fe NM
PROJECT: Holistic therapy with traditional Native American farming techniques

Please visit www.nativeseeds.org/seed_grants for detailed information on eligibility requirements and application procedures. Applications are due May 6, 2011 by 5pm MST for the summer planting period.

FROM FURROW TO FIRE



RECIPES FROM THE NATIVE SEEDS/SEARCH COMMUNITY



Compiled by
Mary Ann Clark & Shannon Scott

NS/S Cookbooks Are Back!

You asked and we deliver! Back by popular demand, we're proud to bring you *From Furrow to Fire: Recipes from the Native Seeds/SEARCH Community* (\$13.95). We'll have copies for sale at the Tucson Festival of Books, March 12-13.

Originally published in 2005, *From Furrow to Fire* contains almost 100 recipes that were inspired by the products and seeds we sell (and are available to you) in our Tucson store at 3061 N. Campbell Ave. and through our catalog and website at www.nativeseeds.org. You'll also find recipes created from wild plants of the Sonoran Desert.

The recipes are categorized into six chapters: Breakfast, Beverages, Appetizers and Soups, Sauces, Salads and Sides, Breads, Main Dishes, and Dessert. The appendix is a list of ingredients that includes both cultivated and wild foods from the Southwestern United States and northern Mexico. A glossary provides explanations and descriptions of terms that may not be familiar.

Pick up your copy and start cooking today!

To Contact NS/S Staff

Agricultural Conservation Center 520.622.0830

Executive Director Bryn Jones, ext. 104

Director of Finance & Operations Tracey Martineau, ext. 103

Membership & Events Coordinator Suzanne Jameson, ext. 105

Administrative Assistant Maureen Moynihan, ext. 100

Seed Bank Director Chris Schmidt, ext. 111

Seed Distribution Coordinator Dawna Gravley, ext. 114

Farm Operations Technician Benito Gutierrez

Retail Store and Mail Order 520.622.5561

Director of Distribution J.P. Wilhite, ext. 5

Distribution Coordinator Betsy Armstrong, ext. 6

Bulk Foods Associate Laura Jones

News & Notes

Farewells

We bid farewell to Director of Conservation **Suzanne Nelson**. After fifteen years of service with NS/S, she has taken a position with TANGO International. We thank her for her dedication and commitment to NS/S (see page 9 for more). Best wishes to retail assistants **Vivian MacKinnon** and **Elaine Terrell**, as they leave NS/S for other pursuits. Their marketing insight and retail knowledge will be greatly missed.

NS/S Receives Grants

NS/S was awarded grants from the Wallace Research Foundation, the Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation, the G.A. Binney Conservation Fund, and the Patagonia Regional Community Foundation.

Find us on Facebook!

Join almost 3,000 other NS/S fans on Facebook and get the latest news and event information.

Store Hours Monday through Saturday: 10am–5pm; Sunday: 12–4pm

Visit our Tucson store for the latest in Southwestern crafts, foods, and books, all-in-one convenient location. Our experienced staff can answer your questions about cooking with regional products and offer suggestions for the best time to plant.

(Avoid traffic delays during construction on Campbell and Ft. Lowell by taking Hedrick east from Mountain)

From our friends...

NS/S friends are widespread around the globe. Our website and Facebook page have tracked log-ins from visitors in countries as far away as the Czech Republic, Vietnam, Liberia, Mexico, Greece, Singapore, Dominican Republic, India, Argentina, Ireland, and Taiwan. Thank you for sharing the following with us:

Thank you for the very important work that you do! In an age where heirlooms and traditional food crops are disappearing as fast as replacements can be made in the scientists' labs, your efforts are critical to the preservation of our seeds! *Haji Warf, Upper Lake, CA*

I am a fan from Australia and am so happy there are groups like yours out there doing such vital work and sharing such love for the planet and its people. *Shakti Grace, Melbourne, Australia*

I think the importance of your work is growing and is having a global impact, as well as regional, in the Southwest and Mexico. Keep up the good work. *John Phillips, Snowflake, AZ*

Your love, your work brings laughter to my heart, a smile to my face, and courage to my own work! For twenty years I try rain gardening with seeds of old sorts. *Rainer Wolf, Lehrte, Germany*

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE! Have you had fun and success growing NS/S seeds? We love hearing your stories and would like to highlight them in our newsletter. Please email your experience and photos to membership@nativeseeds.org



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Coming Up in 2011

Saturday, March 5

NS/S Spring Plant Sale: Free! (Begins at 10am)
and *Wormshop: \$45 per person* (Time TBD)
3061 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

Sunday, March 20, 5–8pm

Flavors of the Desert 2011: \$75 per person
Desert Diamond Concert Center, Sahuarita

April (Date, Time TBD)

NS/S Cooking Demonstration: Free!
3061 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

Tuesday, April 26 (Time TBD)

NS/S Spring Plant Sale: Free!
Patagonia

June 19–24

Seed School: \$1,500 per person
(visit www.seedstrust.com for details)

Saturday, June 25

San Juan's Day Celebration: Free! (10am–2pm)
NS/S Conservation Farm, Patagonia
and *NS/S Summer Monsoon Plant Sale: Free!*
(Begins at 10am)
3061 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

Who Uses Native Seeds/SEARCH Products?

Many of you have asked which restaurants use NS/S products in their cuisine. Here's a partial list of those eateries that support biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

Angelica Kitchen *New York, NY*

Canela Bistro *Sonoita, AZ*

Desert Diamond Casinos *Tucson, AZ*

Dos Silos *Tubac, AZ*

Downtown Kitchen + Cocktails *Tucson, AZ*

Frontier Grill *Chicago, IL*

Hacienda del Sol *Tucson, AZ*

Hash House a Go Go *Las Vegas, NV*

Janos *Tucson, AZ*

Kai at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort *Chandler, AZ*

Pastiche *Tucson, AZ*

Stables Ranch Grille *Tubac, AZ*

Tonto Bar and Grill *Cave Creek, AZ*