



Seedhead News

A Newsletter for Members of Native Seeds/SEARCH

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A-maize-ing Workshop



HELP CALL THE RAINS TO THE DESERT AT THE *NS/S San Juan's Day Celebration and Monsoon Plant Sales!*

SATURDAY, JUNE 25 — 10AM TO 2PM

The annual tradition of celebrating the onset of monsoon season in the Southwest begins with San Juan's Day or *El Dia de San Juan*. According to legend, Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez Coronado stood on the parched banks of the Santa Cruz River on June 24, 1540 and prayed to St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of water, for rain so the crops would grow. San Juan's Day is linked to the natural cycles of the weather to help desert dwellers appreciate the rich heritage of agricultural traditions from the past.

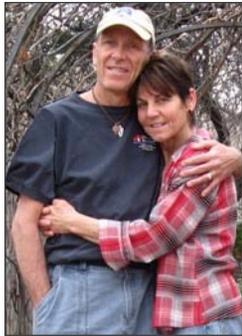
This year we'll celebrate San Juan's Day at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia with a monsoon plant sale and other activities. We'll also have a monsoon plant sale at our retail store in Tucson.

Both plant sales begin at 10 a.m.

Friends are invited to a famous NS/S potluck lunch at the Conservation Farm at 11 a.m. Bring a favorite dish to share. We'll provide the drinks, cups, plates, and eating utensils.

*Celebrate San Juan's Day with seedlings for the monsoon season
and help call the rains to the desert, Saturday June 25.*

From Our Directors



Greetings to all our wonderful members!

Incorporating seed saving into local programs to strengthen genetic diversity, the basis of any truly regenerative agriculture, is the missing link in today's organic and sustainable agricultural movement. But not at Native Seeds/SEARCH. For 28 years our venerable organization has preserved, protected and promoted the rich, cultural heritage of the seeds of the Southwest and the food they produce.

Each unique variety represents *a place, a face, and a story*. Every living embryo is tethered to a lineage of families, tribes, and stewards. Each is connected to songs, traditions, and memories.

Seeds adapt to changing environments in a system as elegant as any on the planet. NS/S was founded on this awareness. We now have the opportunity to expand our educational efforts through a new program coming to Native Seeds/SEARCH called *Seed School* (see article next page).

Thanks to the hard work of staff, members, donors, Board of Directors, funders and others in our community, a solid foundation has been laid, literally and figuratively. Our beautiful Agricultural Conservation Center, home to our Seed Bank and administrative offices, is poised to become an educational center for classes in everything under the sun regarding seeds, food, and culture.

To date, 28 students have graduated from three *Seed Schools* previously held in the Verde Valley. Seed libraries, seed exchanges, and several new seed companies have been the result. *Seed School* represents an opportunity to reclaim our right to seed sovereignty. It is an imaginative six-day immersion into "everything seeds."

Belle and I are incredibly honored to step into leadership positions with NS/S. We both bring a passion for education and inspiration to NS/S. I have lectured on seed saving, medicinal plants, wildflowers, drought-tolerant landscapes and vegetable gardening for 30 years. I started my first seed company in the late 70s in Missoula, Montana when a group of students realized diversity was rapidly disappearing (see article page 4).

Belle launched one of the first national environmental radio minutes in the early '90s. She coordinated recycling and environmental radio public service announcement campaigns in California and Arizona. She co-produced SolFest in Northern California for several years and produced a similar event with the city of Scottsdale called Sun Festival.

We felt like we were coming home in a sense when it became clear we would have an opportunity to work with Native Seeds/SEARCH. We see this as the best and highest work we can do. To say we are excited would be an understatement!

We have many programs and designs on the drawing board. More will be revealed as we get to know each other. Please feel free to contact us and let us know your feelings and thoughts as we move forward. Thank you so much for helping us change the world, one seed at a time!

Bill McDorman and Belle Starr



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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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Design: Julie St. John

Seed School: Teaching Gardeners and Farmers to 'Think Seeds First!'

"It probably isn't a good idea to fight the companies who own and control our food system until we have one of our own in place," exclaims Bill McDorman, new Executive Director of Native Seeds/SEARCH.

Worries about genetically modified organisms (GMOs), food security and the industrial takeover of modern agriculture have sent people searching for long-term, sustainable gardening solutions. Those solutions can be found in *Seed School*, an innovative six-day program designed to train gardeners, farmers, seed savers, entrepreneurs, NGOs and policymakers to create a new regional and sustainable seed paradigm.

Seed School is Bill's personal response to becoming the mentor he never found 30 years ago when he started his first seed company. Now he is teaching and guiding students who want to develop regional seed companies, create seed libraries or programs to strengthen diversity, keep agriculture local, and support food security. In today's organic, sustainable agricultural movement, this seems to be an obvious missing link.

Classroom time in this permaculture-inspired program will range from an introduction to genetics to modern database management (for those wishing to start a seed business or add a seed component to an existing organization). The curriculum will be balanced with hands-on activities including harvesting, processing, germination testing, and packaging seeds.

Seed School will inspire and teach the detailed information necessary to recreate the genetic foundation for a truly sustainable agriculture. Its focus is to dissect the current world seed situation, take a hard look at the implications, and help students gain the skills necessary to reconstruct practical, new models for both profit making and non-profit institutions. Bring your personal projects. Group work and consulting time with Bill will provide the necessary feedback for the success of your venture.

This groundbreaking course will inspire local foodies, gardeners, and community leaders to think seeds first when focusing on regional autonomy and sustainability. Those concerned with food security, biological diversity, and better tasting food will revel in the magic of seeds that are adapted to specific micro-climates with particular characteristics where people actually live and grow. *Seed School* takes place at the Native Seeds/SEARCH Agricultural Conservation Center in Tucson from Sunday, June 19 through Friday, June 24. In July, Seed School takes place in the Verde Valley from July 10 through the 15. This will be a residency training. Meals and accommodations are provided.



Native Seeds/SEARCH presents:

Seed School

Facilitated by NS/S Executive Director Bill McDorman and guests including Gary Nabhan

Native American and other scholarships available!

In Tucson Sunday, June 19 — Friday, June 24

\$700 Tuition — \$600 *Early Bird Discount* paid by June 1 — \$200 Deposit to reserve your place, balance due June 10

In the Verde Valley (Sedona area)

Sunday, July 10 – Friday, July 15

\$1,500 Tuition — \$1,200 *Early Bird Discount* paid by June 15 — \$200 Deposit to reserve your place, balance due June 25

For more information or to register, please visit **www.nativeseeds.org** or email belle@nativeseeds.org



1903 are no longer available. In the view of some observers, our agricultural story is shaping up to be a Greek tragedy, acted out with hubris on a monumental new genetic scale. Stated John Sorenson in 1999 on Idaho Public Television, “There will be no mistakes. We have the keys to the candy store. We can accomplish quickly what we want now by splicing genes. We can feed the world.”

But the truth is, we all know there will be mistakes. This is, in fact, how nature works. The entire history of agriculture can be characterized as humankind taking advantage of the genetic “mistakes” that improved crops. While genetic engineering may well play a positive role somewhere in our future, intelligence at this point dictates caution. There is one thing of which we can be sure: genetic

engineering in the hands of short-sighted, profit-motivated chemical companies has not been a good idea.

The beginning of the end of public ownership of seeds came in 1883 with the formation of the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA). Recognizing an abundant, untapped market in the world’s biodiversity, the organization immediately petitioned the government to dismantle the USDA seed distribution programs. In 1924, after more than 40 years of lobbying, Congress acquiesced and cut the programs. ASTA also succeeded in convincing government that the proper role of publicly funded institutions like the land-grant universities was to train plant breeders, perform fundamental research, and create raw materials and technologies for private industry to capitalize upon. Private seed companies quickly seized on this, creating proprietary varieties from the inbred lines and breeding stock developed in public universities.

The privatization of seeds has its legal origins in the Plant Patent Act of 1930. This landmark bill allowed for plants propagated through cloning to be patented and privately owned, but it specifically exempted seed-propagated crops. This wall was breached in 1970 with the Plant Variety Protection Act, which extended intellectual property rights to plants grown from seeds. A wave of seed company mergers and buyouts followed, but a 1980 Supreme Court ruling (the case of *Diamond vs. Chakrabarty*) opened the floodgates. For the first time, the genetic wisdom in a seed could be held as private property. Shortly after this ruling, more than 1,800 such patents were filed.

Bill first heard about agriculture’s disappearing genetic diversity back in college in the late 1970s. After trying to find seeds for his own garden and having little luck, he banded together with some fellow gardeners in search of heirlooms. Their quest resulted in

The Seeds of Sustainability Preserving the Past One Plant at a Time

by Bill McDorman & Stephen Thomas

“The greatest service which can be rendered to any country is to add a useful plant to its culture!”

Welcome to America—*beautiful America!*—albeit the America of our past. The quote is from Thomas Jefferson, a seed-saving statesman who set the stage for agricultural leadership when he exclaimed that his proudest accomplishment was introducing *upland rice* to the nation’s farmlands. The principles of agricultural diversity and regional adaptability were once the very foundation of this country’s design—and at the root were the seeds. The USDA allocated at least a third of its budget in 1878 to collect and freely distribute seeds. By 1897 the Patent and Trade Office was supplying over 1.1 billion packets of these USDA seeds to America’s farmers, a practice that continued for nearly thirty years. At the turn of the last century no one owned our seeds. They were part and parcel of the public trust. Nearly every farmer and gardener freely received, saved, and shared them.

Our modern agricultural paradigm couldn’t be more different. Today, seeds are private property, owned and sold by an elite group of corporate interests. Only three companies control 56% of the global seed market. Private companies fund most agricultural research, often with the intent to design and patent new organisms for their own gain. Rather than supplying farmers with free, locally adapted seeds, government institutions now make their alliances with the multinational corporations in control of the genetic wealth. Citizens and farmers alike often react with helplessness, anger, and fear.

The concern, many would say, is justified. Diversity is the foundation to the strength of any ecosystem. Once the diversity in our food crops is gone, it is lost forever. As an example of our current plight, 96% of the commercial vegetable varieties grown in

founding a seed company of their own—Garden City Seeds—to make these disappearing treasures readily available again. They weren't alone.

Before long this shared vision began to blossom. In 1985 the Missouri Botanical Gardens and the National Garden Association sponsored a national conference for this emerging generation of seed people. A network of visionary, locally-minded seed businesses and organizations quickly took root across the country. Operating out of Boise, the pioneering company Seeds Blum gained national exposure selling rare heirlooms. The Iowa-based nonprofit Seed Savers Exchange formed to organize individual gardeners to save their grandparents' seeds. Our very own Native Seeds/SEARCH started up in Tucson with the mission to seek out and preserve the seeds from ancient cultures in the Southwest. Many of today's best-known independent seed companies—Johnny's Selected Seeds, Fedco, Territorial, Abundant Life, Garden City Seeds, High Altitude Gardens (another company Bill founded), and Southern Exposure—all rose to prominence during this time, focusing on finding and marketing seeds adapted to their own regions.

By the '90s yet another wave of new seed companies was springing up in reaction to the intensifying industrial storm and rapidly disappearing diversity. Largely under the banners of "organic" and "non-GMO," companies like Seeds of Change, High Mowing and Baker Creek entered the seed market with eye-catching new catalogs and high standards of sustainability. By the turn of the 21st century, the Internet helped to bring down the last barriers between seed savers, growers, and potential customers.

One complicating factor in this return to our agricultural roots is the National Organic Program. Although welcomed for its incentives to get the poisons and chemicals out of agriculture, the long-term effect of organic certification on the overall seed picture is a mixed bag. Organic seed is becoming just another industrial market niche. One-size-fits-all, hybrid organic seeds produced by the multinational giants are now beginning to flood the market. At this critical stage, we have lost entirely too much of the world's agricultural genetic diversity to focus ONLY on organics. We want—and greatly need—an organic agriculture, but we absolutely need the abundant diversity to sustain it. Until this genetic balance is righted, our focus should be on reintroducing new diversity regardless of whether or not it is government-sanctioned organic.



Every farmer or grower can then easily expand diversity under the organic label in one or two seasons by organically growing and saving the seeds from as-yet uncertified crops.

We hold the keys to our own candy store. Once a farmer allows nature to act upon his crops in countless, unknowable ways, by saving the resulting seeds he begins to harness the power of nature's elegant built-in genetic feedback system.

When a farmer saves his own seeds from plants that flourish on his particular farm, he carries the best results of one growing season into the next. He is investing in his own unique interface with the environment. The investment is not merely compounded—it is exponential. And as an added bonus, it enhances the overall genetic diversity and durability of our agricultural system.

We are relearning the powerful potential of saving our own seeds. Just as the resilient and adaptive plants we tend, we are doing what we have always done best: turning crisis into opportunity. The challenges farmers face today are a clarion call to change the way they think about seeds on their farms. Fortunately, many already know how to make this kind of change. It requires the same kind of holistic and integrated thinking that ushered in the transition to organic agriculture—and like the organic movement, it has the revolutionary power to change the world as we know it.



Bill McDorman is the new Executive Director of Native Seeds/SEARCH and founder of Seeds Trust (High Altitude Gardens), founded in 1984. He has more than 30 years experience in the bioregional seed business and has started three seed companies and two non-profits. McDorman is author of Basic Seed Saving.

Stephen C. Thomas is an itinerant writer originally from Atlanta. He is a contributing editor for RealitySandwich.com, where he covers the environment, culture and consciousness as ST Frequency.

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OSA provides education through publications and workshops, research through participatory plant breeding projects with farmers, and consulting with direct technical assistance.

www.seedalliance.org

Seed Saving Books

Principles of Plant Breeding, Robert Allard, Wiley, 2nd Edition, 1999.
Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties, Carol Deppe, Chelsea Green; 2nd edition, 2000.
The Resilient Gardener: Food Production and Self-Reliance in Uncertain Times, Carol Deppe, Chelsea Green Publishing; 1st edition, 2010.
Seed to Seed: Seed Saving and Growing Techniques for Vegetable Gardeners, Suzanne Ashworth and Kent Whealy, Seed Savers Exchange; 2nd edition, 2002.
Basic Seed Saving, Bill McDorman, Seeds Trust, 2nd edition, 2010.
Return to Resistance: Breeding Crops to Reduce Pesticide Dependence, OR. Robinson, IDRC Books, 1995

A Short History of Panic Grass

by Barney T. Burns, PhD, Co-founder of Native Seeds/SEARCH

Panic grass, *Panicum sonorum*, was domesticated in either Arizona or Sonora sometime during the prehistoric period. Evidence of panic grass being grown by the Hohokam Indians has been found in several archaeological excavations in Arizona.

Panic grass plants produce large quantities of very small seeds that occur at the ends of panicles, small branches that flare out irregularly from the tops of each of the plant's stocks. The fact that the tiny seeds contain a large amount of lysine, a protein normally or usually found in animal products, is a recent discovery and holds great promise for the future.

The modern distribution or occurrence of panic grass was so limited that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refused to put it on the endangered species list. They believed that the grass was extinct and, therefore, not eligible for designation as endangered. One of the last, or perhaps the last, sighting of this rare cultivar was made by Dr. Howard Scott Gentry in the 1930s at the remote Warihio Indian village of Guaseremos, Sonora in far eastern Sonora, Mexico, north of Alamos and close to the Chihuahua state border west of Chinipas, Chihuahua.

In 1980, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, knowing of Dr. Gentry's report, asked Gary Paul Nabhan (one of the four NS/S founders) to see if he could collect a viable seed sample of the grass since he was already doing research in Sonora. Gary asked me to act as driver and guide, as I knew the Alamos area of Sonora. We were accompanied on our search by Tom Sheridan, at that time an anthropology graduate student at the University of Arizona, who was also familiar with Sonora.

We drove in my yellow Chevy Blazer over Sonora's narrow but paved highway to Alamos. At that point, we turned northward on a graded dirt road that cut through Sonora's tropical deciduous forest to the town on San Bernardo made famous by Dr. Gentry's research. We proceeded north and then east, winding and climbing up to the level of coniferous forests. We were allowed to stay at the Byerly family stone ranch house at Rancho Quemado just west of El Trigo, Sonora. Mr. Byerly helped us secure burros and a local guide. The owner of the burros was too busy to guide us himself, but since our journey to and from the village of Guaseremos was only a sixty-five mile round trip, his twelve-year-old son would serve as the perfect guide and animal handler.



The next morning our guide showed up with our burros. He suggested that we could save time if we took a shortcut into the Arroyo Lemon rather than taking the main trail out of El Trigo. We agreed to the shortcut and were soon riding our lurching burros as they clambered from one large boulder to the next down a dry ravine on the south side of Arroyo Lemon which turned out to be 3,000 feet deep. At the bottom of the arroyo were the remains of an old ranching hacienda owned by the rich and powerful Russo family of southern Sonora. We rode downstream past several Warihio Indian farmsteads and were soon joined by a local man named Rene, whom we had met at Rancho Quemado the previous evening. He was going to his family's ranch, Rancho Pitayvo, to celebrate his birthday with his parents.

We climbed out of the lush bottom of the canyon on its north side and eventually reached the level of the oak forest which sheltered a few pine trees. Reaching Rancho Pitayvo just before sunset, we were surprised that the rancho was home to a large herd of dairy cows being used by Rene's family to produce hundreds of pounds of white ranch cheese that they flew out of the mountains in a small bush plane for sale in Navajoa, Sonora. Gary still talks about the fabulous, but simple, ranch dinner Rene's mother prepared for her son's "North American amigos."

Early the next morning our twelve-year-old guide helped us saddle our mounts for the ride across the mountain village of Guaseremos. We bade farewell to Rene and his family, thanking them for their outstanding hospitality. At one point, along the narrow trail, we thought we spotted a patch of panic grass. Upon closer examination the plants turned out to be Johnson grass. We finally reached the scattered small farmsteads making up Guaseremos and began asking the astonished Warihio Indian families if anyone had any panic grass seed. Finally we were directed to a local farmer who had some extra

seed that we could purchase. We were ecstatic with our good luck! He persisted in growing this rare cultivar because he could grind up the small seeds and add them to his tamale dough for a tasty and nutritious corn tamale.

We soon left the isolated and truly remote village with its numerous corn fields, many of which were carved out of the forest on sloping forty-degree hillsides. The trail led us back down into the Arroyo Lemon and up its south flank. The final leg of our two-day odyssey was completed in moonlight since sun had long set. We reached the small Mexican town of El Trigo and were warmly greeted by our twelve-year-old guide's family. They invited us to dine of freshly cooked peach tamales, the best flavored tamales I have ever eaten. It turned out that the owner of the burros had promised his wife to help prepare dozens of the peach tamales and that was he could not guide us to Guasaremos himself. We walked back to the two-story stone house at Rancho Quemado thanking our lucky stars for such a safe and successful trip.

Panic grass was not extinct! It was one of the rarest of cultivars, but because of the traditions of the Warihio farmers it had persisted for forty years since Dr. Gentry last saw it. Our small sample was delivered to the USDA Seed Bank in Fort Collins, Colorado and eventually was included in Tucson's NS/S Seed Bank. The potential value of this lysine rich seed is still being evaluated, but its value will surely be great. What a chain of discovery! Dr. Gentry – the USDA – a 1969 Blazer nicknamed the 'yellow canary' – an American rancher

whose family left North Dakota during World War I – a twelve-year-old mountain and barranca cowboy – a family of Mexican cheese makers – an elderly Warihio Indian farmer – and three graduate students from the University of Arizona. This rediscovery of panic grass would have been highly unlikely or even impossible if any one of the chain's links had been missing.

Besides the USDA grow out of the Nabhan/Sheridan/Burns original collection, NS/S has obtained four or five other collections from four other sources. One collection was actually made in 1976 by R. Aguerre of the University of Sonora from a Warihio local. Eric Powell, an American missionary working among the Warihio, collected panic grass seeds that he shared with NS/S. The most recent panic grass accession was obtained by French Canadian J.B.E. Faubert while visiting Warihio families near San Bernardo, Sonora. He was the prime mover in obtaining Mexican government official tribal recognition for the Warihios. Knowing of Gary's and my interest in panic grass, Faubert put out the word to his Warihio friends and in 1980 he was able to share another collection of panic grass with the Meals for Millions pre-NS/S Seed Bank created by Gary and Mahina Drees, another founder. Just prior to the actual founding of NS/S, Gary sent the USDA Seed Bank four different collections of Warihio panic grass. He sent them in November of 1982, hoping that sharing them with a second seed bank would ensure that this valuable seed stock would not be lost to the modern world's growing needs for a variety of different domesticates.



This May Be You!

NS/S Collection Apprentice

Your passion for the unique diversity and cultural heritage of the Native Seeds/SEARCH seed collection will be used to expand our important work.

The Native Seeds/SEARCH Collection Apprentice will work with NS/S staff to enlarge the collection of Southwest crop diversity, assist with summer grow-outs, and be involved with other projects depending on the apprentice's interests and abilities. *Through this position, the apprentice will learn the diverse skills required for the curation and management of a regional seed bank.*

The NS/S collection, housed at the new Native Seeds/SEARCH Agricultural Conservation Center in Tucson, consists of more than 16,000 distinct seed samples from nearly 2,000 unique accessions. It contains over 100 plant species and represents the agricultural and ethnobotanical legacy of more than 50 indigenous groups from the Southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.



The apprentice will work closely with the NS/S Seed Bank Director and will also be involved in developing innovative new database and web tools to broaden the management of the collection and will assist with the completion of the NS/S Digital Photo Library. A six-month to one-year commitment is required. Please contact Chris Schmidt at chris@nativeseeds.org for more information.

Thank You NS/S Volunteers!

Each year, NS/S staff and board members celebrate the organization's volunteers at a special appreciation breakfast. This year, the party was held at our Agricultural Conservation Center in April. Volunteers are the lifeblood of NS/S and perform essential tasks at our retail store, our state-of-the-art seed bank, at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia, and out in the community.

We love our volunteers!



Dig into the Dirt: Become a Conservation Farm Volunteer!

Want to get your hands dirty? Become a volunteer at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia. We need help planting, weeding, monitoring, pollinating, and harvesting crops. Transportation to and from the farm can be provided on Fridays (*leaving the Native Seeds/SEARCH Agricultural Conservation Center at 7 a.m. and returning by 4 p.m.*) and possibly other days. We can use help immediately through the end of October. You'll feel better and learn something too! Contact Chris at cschmidt@nativeseeds.org.

Volunteer Highlight



Meet Val Plumlee *by Suzanne Jameson*

Val Plumlee has served as an educator in extremely diverse environments—the dry Arizona deserts and in the rugged mountains of Albania. “To me, education is - a universal value,” she said. “Life is all about new opportunities to learn new things.”

Originally from Twin Falls, Idaho, Val moved to Arizona with her family in 1961. She earned her bachelor's degree at Arizona State University and taught middle school in Mesa for seven years. Raising her son and daughter in Prescott, she eventually became a counselor through Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, using this skill at Heritage Middle School in Chino Valley.

“I've always been a bird watcher and a nature lover,” she said and after retiring from teaching, she decided to “work with the world.” Val and her husband Harry moved to Albania and taught all levels of students at the international school there. “Albania is a fascinating place. It's modern and old fashioned at the same time.”

In September 2007, Val discovered Native Seeds/SEARCH and began volunteering. “I love working here. It's a social outlet with great people, but I'm also doing something worthwhile.” Val volunteers in the store and at the seed bank, helps with special events, and recently became NS/S's volunteer Volunteer Liaison. She's also one of the NS/S Ambassadors and represents the organization at speaking engagements and public events.

When Val isn't packaging seeds or running germ tests, she loves to hike, camp, bird watch, read mysteries, garden, and take stunning photographs of nature. Val is a dedicated volunteer who makes the daily operations of NS/S run much more smoothly. “I love NS/S. Even when I'm entering data, I'm having fun!” Thank you, Val for all your service and your commitment to biodiversity!



A Fantastic Flavors!

The fastest draw in the West—David Fitzsimmons.

NS/S friends celebrated the 2011 Flavors of the Desert in style at the Desert Diamond Center in Sabuarita, Arizona in March. No one was safe with editorial cartoonist and comedian emcee David Fitzsimmons who hosted the evening's program and kept everyone laughing throughout the night. Chef Ramon Delgado prepared a savory menu of heritage foods and special musical guests Petey Mesquitey and Kevin Pakulis even managed to get Big Jim onto the dance floor. Special thanks to all our supporters who helped make the evening a success!



Thank you to our Flavors of the Desert

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Mary Ann Clark

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Arizona Jet Mail (*in-kind*)
Betts Printing (*in-kind*)
Diversified Design and Construction
Mahina Drees and Barney Burns
Kim and Celestino Fernández
Hayden Flour Mills
Plants For The Southwest (*in-kind*)
David Tiers and Sue Ann Breems
The Architecture Company



Petey Mesquitey.

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:

Just wanted to thank you for the super fast order processing and shipping. We ordered seed packets on your website last weekend and received them two days later! Thanks!

Julie Draper, Roy UT

Please accept this in support of your work. I am a long-time vegetable gardener and am concerned about genetic diversity and feeding our world's growing population. Your work is tremendously impressive. I was heartened by the article on worldwide seed preservation. I found your organization in my search for a different cotton variety. My husband and I are enjoying our small patch and are trying to make thread.

Cathryn Schiesser, Friendswood TX

Two weeks after planting my Native Seeds/SEARCH seeds, mostly the Three Sisters, and after last week's rains, life begins anew as the first leaves sprout.

David Abie Morales, Tucson AZ

Glad you guys are still going strong!

Lynne Carter, Newport WA

Biodiversity three cheers!

Audrey Cook, Indio CA

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 or post your comments on our [Facebook](#) page.

To Contact NS/S Staff

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Distribution Coordinator Betsy Armstrong, ext. 6

Retail Assistant Bill Ziebell

Bulk Foods Associate Laura Jones

Donate Online

Visit our website at www.nativeseeds.org and donate online. Now it's even easier to support Native Seeds/SEARCH on our secure website. Go to Support and select how you'd like to make a donation. Your ongoing support ensures the precious agrobiodiversity of the Southwestern U.S. and northwest Mexico given to us by past generations remains available to current and future generations.

Please email donate@nativeseeds.org if you need assistance. *Thank you.*

News & Notes

Farewells & Welcomes

We wish **Bryn Jones** all the best as she transitions out of her position as Executive Director to chart a new course and spend more quality time with her husband Ken and ten-month-old son Griffin. During Bryn's tenure, NS/S has increased capacity to steward the region's precious crop diversity and greater visibility in the community. Thank you, Bryn!

In turn, we're happy to welcome **Bill McDorman** and his wife **Belle Starr** who will serve as Executive Director and Deputy Director. Both are passionate and knowledgeable seedspeople who make a tremendous team. Bill and Belle come from Seeds Trust/High Altitude Gardens, their bioregional seed company in Cornville, Arizona. Bill and Belle will broaden NS/S's educational and outreach programs to ensure its rightful place as a leader in seed sovereignty, local agriculture, and food security.

Special thanks to longtime board member **Ofelia Zepeda** for her service as she leaves NS/S.

Retail Assistant **Bill Ziebell** joins our store staff bringing with him many years of retail and sales experience from food cooperatives in Arizona.

NS/S Wins Talk of the Town Award

NS/S recently won the 2011 Customer Satisfaction Award from Talk of the Town, a customer satisfaction tracking company. Based on customer-review websites and blogs, social networks, business rating services and other award information, NS/S received a four-star rating!

Have You Seen NS/S in the News?

We need your help. Please send us any news articles and stories that include NS/S from your local publications for our archives. Make sure you note the publication's name and date. Thanks in advance!

We're Going Paperless!

Beginning this fall, two of our three annual newsletters are going to an electronic format. In addition to saving trees, this measure will allow us to channel more resources into valuable NS/S programs. If you cannot live without your hard copy, please check the *Keep 'em coming* box on the enclosed return envelope and we will continue to mail a hard copy of *Seedhead News* to you. Remember to give us your name and address. By visiting www.nativeseeds.org, you can always read all issues of the newsletter right on your computer screen!

The Buzz at the Conservation Farm

Dr. Stephen Buchmann's Pollinator Habitat Demonstration Project selected the NS/S Conservation Farm as one of two Southwestern sites to study pollinators. Various native bees that come to flowering species at the farm will be observed and monitored by aerial netting and supplemental "bee condos" will be placed in existing nest burrows in dead trees, dead branches, and fence posts. In January, Dr. Buchmann planted six species of wildflowers at the farm and set up "bee condos" in April. Formerly a research entomologist with the USDA Carl Hayden Bee Research Center in Tucson for almost 22 years, Dr. Buchmann is active in pollination research, international conservation, and policies to protect the world's pollinators and their plants. Eventually the data from this project will be available to a mix of agency representatives, landowners, ranches/growers, utility managers, conservationists, and policymakers.

NS/S Cookbook Now Available Online

From Furrow to Fire, NS/S's popular cookbook now is available online at www.nativeseeds.org. Originally published in 2005, *From Furrow to Fire* contains almost 100 recipes that were inspired by the products and seeds we sell. You'll also find recipes created from wild plants of the Sonoran Desert. Order yours today and start cooking!

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

Visit our Tucson store for the best and only selection of indigenous, Southwest seeds grown at our farm in Patagonia, Arizona. You will also find 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. Or you can shop anytime by going online at www.nativeseeds.org!



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A-maize-ing Workshop



"It's not farm to table. It's table to farm" is Glenn Roberts' life creed. Miller, seedsman, and historian, Roberts is founder of South Carolina's Anson Mills and a savior of near-extinct varieties of heirloom corn, rice, and wheat. His philosophy is that rediscovering the recipes from our past will inform us of the crops we should grow in the future. Roberts visited NS/S in April and joined Hayden Flour Mills' Jeff Zimmerman to present "Eat It to Save It: A Heritage Corn Workshop."

While in Tucson, Roberts also led an exchange with regional growers, cooks, and others to discuss the revitalization of Sonoran White wheat, currently being grown at the NS/S Conservation Farm in Patagonia. NS/S is collaborating with Sabores Sin Fronteras, Hayden Flour Mills, Anson Mills (who are kindly donating two tons of Sonoran White seed toward our efforts), and a number of area restaurants, breweries, and farmers to bring heritage varieties of wheat and corn back onto farms and tables in southern Arizona, and ultimately the Greater Southwest. We are excited about the possibilities engendered by this initiative, as local grains are key to our regional food security.

Later this year, we hope to entice Roberts back to the desert to help teach an intensive Grain School course at NS/S. For more information about the class, contact Belle Starr at belle@nativeseeds.org.



Coming Up in 2011

Wednesday, May 11 7pm
 Going to Seed Lecture
 Agricultural Conservation Center
 3584 E. River Road
 \$10 donation requested

Sunday-Friday, June 19-24
 Seed School - Tucson
 (www.nativeseeds.org for details)
 \$700 per person — \$600 Early Bird Discount
 if paid by June 1 — \$200 deposit to reserve
 a place with balance due June 10

Saturday, June 25 10am-2pm
 San Juan's Day Celebration: Free!
 NS/S Conservation Farm in Patagonia AZ
 & NS/S Summer Monsoon Plant Sale
 NS/S Retail Store (Begins at 10am)
 3061 N. Campbell Ave., Tucson

Sunday-Friday, July 10-15
 Seed School - Verde Valley
 (www.nativeseeds.org for details)
 \$1,500 per person — \$1,200 Early Bird
 Discount if paid by June 15 — \$200 deposit
 to reserve a place with balance due June 25