



Seedhead News

A Newsletter for Members of Native Seeds/SEARCH

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San Juan's Day!

San Juan's Day (*El Dia de San Juan*)

by Julie Evans, Director of Operations

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* on June 24. Historically, the celebration of San Juan's Day was one of the most important and colorful events in Tucson and throughout the Southwest. Stories of its origin vary. Some accounts credit Spanish explorers for introducing the tradition in the 1600s while other versions recognize a Mexican priest in Chihuahua who prayed non-stop for rain to end a drought. Regardless of how it began, NS/S believes San Juan's Day is an important planting celebration linked to the natural cycles of the weather to help desert dwellers appreciate the rich heritage of seeds and knowledge from the past.

Please join us on Saturday, June 20 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Native Seeds/SEARCH Conservation Farm in Patagonia for our annual San Juan's Day celebration and blessing of the crops and fields in advance of the gift of summer rains. *See back cover for details.*

Just as crops depend on water to grow, we at NS/S rely on gifted interns to carry on the mission of preserving and protecting the native varieties of our region. This year, we have benefited from having three young scholars contribute to our conservation efforts.

Ashlie West is pursuing her bachelor's in crop production through the University of Arizona's agronomy program. Working as part of the NS/S conservation team, Ashlie assists with processing seed for distribution as well as with tracking the inventory in our seed bank database. Ashlie holds a bachelor's degree in non-profit leadership and management from Arizona State University and one day aspires to establish a home for orphaned children.

Ilana Goldowitz graduated from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, last year with a degree in plant



San Juan's Day, 2005. Courtesy Mark Thaler.

SAN JUAN'S DAY (TUCSON, ARIZONA)

during summer in these latitudes
one disappointment is as good as another

each year when the rains come
we are convinced by the sophistries of water
that the dust will not be back

and each year it returns unerringly
falling upon us
like the patience we have forgotten we possess

—RICHARD SHELTON

"SAN JUAN'S DAY" FROM *SELECTED POEMS, 1969-1981*, BY RICHARD SHELTON, ©1982. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS.

From our director



As I write this, an unusual May storm is gaining strength with the teasing smell of rain. The storm may or may not bring rain, but it reminds me that *El Dia de San Juan* will soon be upon us, the day that marks the coming of the monsoon rains in the Southwest, or the season of “*el chubasco*.” Once a great celebration in the Southwest, *El Dia de San Juan* ceremonies and rituals centered around the importance of water to this region. And, with rivers like the Santa Cruz no longer running freely through our communities, the importance of water, and celebration of it, is all the greater.

Monsoon storms follow the hot, dry, and some people feel, never-ending month of June. In the past year, the economy has mirrored that drought and struggle. Many of our members have felt the downturn’s effects as we have. But just as the gathering of dark clouds in the monsoon season and surging winds can cause anxiety, the bright lining in the clouds comes as the all-important rain. Here at NS/S, numerous bright linings have shone for us this year, many of which you are about to read.

One of the bright linings I am particularly excited about is the great many people returning to growing their own food. The nation has seen a resurgence of Victory Gardens. That, combined with the release of our first-ever full color seedlisting, has resulted in mushrooming demands for the uniquely arid-adapted varieties that we steward. The demand this year exceeded our expectations and challenged our small staff with keeping up, but the reality of so many people planting the seeds in gardens and fields and benefiting from past generations’ selection of them has been exhilarating as people participate directly in our vision of the region’s farms and gardens brimming with the full diversity of aridlands-adapted crops. Because NS/S has always strived to put the “culture” —i.e. people and their relationships to crops — back into “agriculture,” we chose to focus on sharing the human spirit of our work with you in this issue.

Even if you are not planting seeds this year, you can participate by joining us at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia to welcome the coming rains that will help feed the crops in our fields. Since our founding in 1983, NS/S has continued the tradition of celebrating *El Dia de San Juan*. Mark your calendar for June 20th for the annual blessing of the NS/S fields, potluck, and fun working side by side to make a difference. We look forward to seeing you there!

Bryn E. Jones
Executive Director

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.



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San Juan's Day

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sciences. In the fall, she will begin work on her doctorate in plant chemistry at Harvard University. While in Tucson for a six-month volunteer internship with NS/S, Ilana organized and catalogued the NS/S collection of herbs and medicinal plants. She also identified new herbs to add to the collections and created "Herbal Fact Sheets" that highlight cultivation, ecology, and cultural information about each plant to help us grow them successfully and acquire them in the future.

Her other project involved an attempt to germinate seeds of the parasitic desert plant *Pholisma sonora* or "sand food" for conservation purposes. This unusual plant was once a Cocopah and O'odham food source in the dunes area. Now it is extremely rare in the United States and its existence is threatened. Ilana experimented with using compounds extracted from the host plant's roots to germinate *Pholisma* seeds, which had not been done before. This project took her to Phoenix to get the *Pholisma* seeds from the Desert Botanical Garden and to Yuma to collect the host plant and tour the sand dunes with the help of botanists there. Ilana also received advice and lab space from scientists at the University of Arizona BIO5 Institute.

NS/S's administration department benefits from the contributions of a non-profit-minded scholar. Kadeon Thomas, a Peace Corps Fellow at the University of Arizona, is assisting with bookkeeping by processing accounts payable and accounts receivable and ensuring appropriate allocation of departmental expenses. Kadeon earned his MBA in May and will complete his master's in accounting in December. Before coming to Tucson, he served two years in the Peace Corps as an International Aid Professional in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Kadeon's future plans include forming a non-profit organization of his own.

As we enter the season of desert rains, we thank these young and passionate interns for sharing their passion, skills, and experience with NS/S and turn our vision to a bountiful future where farms and gardens, kitchens and tables, stores and restaurants are brimming with the full diversity of aridlands-adapted heirloom crops.

From our friends...

Dear Friends,

I consider it a triumph both for me and for Native Seeds/SEARCH that when I received my *2009 Seedlisting* I didn't find any varieties I considered "must have" because I'm already growing and saving seeds of many NS/S varieties.

I recently got a call from a fellow who visited our solar-heated straw bale home a few years ago. He now has built an off-grid passive solar cabin, the design of which was influenced by our passive solar experience. Meanwhile, he remembered I had talked about NS/S and wanted to learn what varieties I've had do well near Bisbee, Arizona. Like me, he harvests rainwater, but, unlike me, he has no other source of water for household use. I garden exclusively with harvested rainwater and used water stored last summer to start this summer's garden. He plans to delay planting until the summer rains so is looking for varieties that can be dry-farmed. I offered to share personal experiences and excess seeds from my collection. He was delighted to get seeds of many of the varieties he wanted to try, some of which are not in the *2009 Seedlisting*. He promised to join NS/S in appreciation of the seeds I sent home with him. I delay planting tepary beans until after we've had a good rain, but I start most things before the rains, and then carefully ration the irrigation water. I look forward to learning what does well for him when planted after the rains start.

Warm regards,

Edna Weigel, Bisbee, Arizona, 4900' elevation

Dear Native Seeds/SEARCH,

Here is my report on growing Tetapeche Gray Mottled Cowpea in Texas.

After 93 days I had bushy plants two and a half feet tall, but some plants did have one short central vine. Those plants only grew three to four feet, but one plant did grow to the top of my bean tepee (eight feet). Seeds are crowded in the pod and are small, speckled with grey. They look a bit like a stone. Pods are yellow with a pink tip. Leaves and stems are very large. Blooms are purple and seem to attract butterflies. They produce for two to three weeks. The plant and seeds look very similar to whip-poor-wills. The Tetapeche seeds are smaller and the plant was a bit taller. They also seemed to tolerate our Texas summer better.

Mary Ogersbok, Lake Dallas, Texas (northcentral Texas near Oklahoma)

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 mail or email your experience and pictures to membership@nativeseeds.org.

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, Adopted April 2008

NS/S Staff Highlights

Meet our 2009 Seed SEARCHers of the Month!

by Julie Evans, Director of Operations

Each month, NS/S employees select one of their peers as the Seed SEARCHer of the Month. This award is presented in recognition of their achievements and accomplishments for the organization. Meet our Seed SEARCHers for the first quarter of 2009.

Administrative Assistant **Sharon McKenzie** (right) was our January 2009 Seed SEARCHer. She discovered NS/S as a volunteer in 2007 after hearing about the organization from another Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) volunteer. Originally from California, Sharon spent several years in the Army before moving to Tucson to attend the University of Arizona where she graduated with honors and earned a bachelor's in geography. She also holds two associate degrees—one in business administration and one in computer information systems. Sharon's calm nature is a plus in a hectic environment and she keeps the logistical end of NS/S running smoothly. When she's not in her office at the Fourth Avenue store, Sharon enjoys movies at the Loft Theater, playing with her two cats—Grace and Phred—and early morning motorcycle rides on her 2006 Honda Rebel.



February's Seed SEARCHer was **Lindsay Werth** (left), Collections Manager at the NS/S seed bank. Lindsay joined NS/S in 2008 after earning her undergraduate degree in agronomy and her master's in crop production-physiology and sustainable agriculture from Iowa State University. Lindsay's summer months are busy collecting weekly data from the grow out at the conservation farm in Patagonia, Arizona. During the fall harvest months, she processes the seeds from the farm and sets up new freezer samples for the collection.

Membership and Events Coordinator **Suzanne Jameson** (right) was the March Seed SEARCHer. A Southwest native, Suzanne has a MFA in creative writing from the University of Arizona and a bachelor's in speech communication as well as two years of post-graduate study in American Sign Language. She has directed communications for the City of Tucson, Planned Parenthood, and the UA College of Humanities. She was a KXCI music programmer for nine years and a volunteer facilitator with *Tu Nidito*-Children to Children. Suzanne is obsessed with growing heirloom tomatoes in her garden at the base of the Dragoon Mountains in southeastern Arizona and counts twenty-four different types currently thriving.



Chris Lowen (right) and **Jules Richelson** (left) tied for April's Seed SEARCHer. Chris received a bachelor's in international agriculture from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia and is NS/S's Field Coordinator at the Conservation Farm. His experience in crop production and food production is invaluable to the organization. Jules is the NS/S Volunteer Coordinator and has worked diligently since December 2008 to improve the volunteer program and make it more efficient for volunteers as well as staff. She first joined NS/S as a volunteer and

became involved through her desert ecology and edible harvest classes in college. Jules is a world traveler having visited Hawaii, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, England, and Mexico to study traditional healing methods, languages, culture, and environments.



On the Road with Alex: Southwest Native American Basketry

Baskets serve many purposes; Weavers use various techniques, styles, colors, and materials based on those purposes and available materials. In 2007, when I attended a gathering in Phoenix, a Chemehuevi woman explained her art in this manner: “When we are preparing to weave a basket, special materials are gathered, such as willow and devil’s claw. The devil’s claw strands are boiled in hot water together with pieces of mesquite tree bark.” This technique creates a very dark hue for a devil’s claw fiber.

The Jicarilla Apache women of northern New Mexico weave baskets for gathering berries or carrying foods. These baskets also are excellent containers for flour. Some baskets made with Sumac and willow are prepared for curing ceremonies.

The Pueblo, including Hopi weavers, make baskets from yucca and willow. These baskets are used for many purposes including carrying foods, storage, and as place mats. The Jemez Pueblo women use their yucca baskets for washing wheat. Hopi weavers have beautiful illustrations of animals, eagle, and katsina on their baskets. They also

are astonishingly creative in weaving plaques and producing sculptures of katsina spirits and animals.

In southern Arizona, the Tohono O’odham are fabulous weavers. They use native plants from the Sonoran Desert such as bear grass yucca, and devil’s claw for weaving and designing their baskets. The baskets have been used for winnowing tepary beans, collecting saguaro cactus fruit, and for other important purposes. O’odham elders have done an excellent job in teaching the younger generation how to continue the tradition of basketmaking. Their baskets, usually created for personal use, often are displayed at art galleries throughout the United States.



Alex Sando, NS/S Native American Program Coordinator, travels primarily in Arizona and New Mexico and occasionally to Mexico visiting farmers with small family gardens, community gardens, and larger scale farms. On the Road with Alex is a regular feature in Seedhead News.



Immersion Course in Crop Genetics returns to the University of Arizona by popular demand

by Suzanne Nelson, Director of Conservation

Learning about crop genetic resource conservation in Tucson is becoming easier and easier, thanks to a University of Arizona undergraduate seminar/internship class offered each fall semester. Fall 2008 was the second year the class has been offered and next year’s class was filled to the limit within an hour of the announcement—with a waiting list as large as the class itself!

A great example of academic and non-profit collaboration, the class was developed and taught by UA Distinguished Professor Rob Robichaux and NS/S Director of Conservation Suzanne Nelson and offers students a semester-long immersion into issues related to managing, conserving, and utilizing crop genetic resources, crop origins and domestication, plant breeding, genomics, biotechnology, and *in situ* conservation of crop genetic resources. Students spend time in the classroom and at the NS/S Seed Bank and Conservation Farm, putting into practice the theories and strategies discussed during student-led reviews of the relevant literature. Last fall, students worked with the chile, devil’s claw, melon, and watermelon collections, harvesting chiles and devil’s claw, and producing freezer samples of melon and watermelon accessions.

The enthusiasm of the students in the class—as well as that demonstrated by the number lining up to register—suggests that word is getting out about, and that there is growing interest in, issues related to global food security and the importance of plant genetic resources. NS/S is excited to be leading this movement of up-and-coming agriculturalists in the Southwest.



A Short History of Mrs. Burns' Lemon Basil

by Barney T. Burns, PhD

My Mom, Janet Ann Burns, and I moved into our first real home in 1951. It was located on Tracy Place in Carlsbad, New Mexico and was one of the first houses constructed on an historic cotton field next to an earthen irrigation ditch. During my first summer at Tracy Place, the front yard weeds were so high and lush that I often stalked imaginary lions and tigers through them. The backyard became the site of Mom's new garden. She consulted with a Mrs. Clifton, one of Carlsbad's most successful gardeners. This remarkable woman sold *The Moon Book*, a small book that guided people's gardening practices according to the phases of the moon. In addition to advising Mom on gardening, Mrs. Clifton gave us lemon basil seed she had saved from her last harvest of this tasty herb.

I never discovered how Mrs. Clifton came to be the steward of this truly unique variety of *Ocimum basilicum*. Some years after we started growing it, Mom learned that Mrs. Clifton had been planting this variety since the 1920s. Prior to the introduction of Mrs. Burns' Famous Lemon Basil in NS/S's Seedlisting, it was generally believed that lemon basil varieties were first introduced to the U.S. public via collections made in the early 1940s by the U.S. Department of Agriculture from Thailand. This widely held belief was first conveyed to me by Thomas DeBaggio and Susan Belsinger, while researching their book, *Basil, an Herb Lover's Guide*. Pat Kenny, a well-known and highly recognized herbalist from the Washington, D.C. area, reaffirmed this idea during an herb workshop sponsored by NS/S in March 2008. Interestingly, in an herb pamphlet prepared for the U.S. National Herb Garden in 1989, she notes that lemon basil was native to northwestern India as well as Thailand. John Parkinson, in his famous 1621 tome, *A Garden of Pleasant Flowers*, notes that lemon

basil was widely grown in England and was, in fact, England's "common basil." John Gerard in his *The Herbal or General History of Plants* also states that lemon basil was present in England prior to 1633. The Laurel Hill Herb Farm, owned by the renowned herbalist Gertrude Foster and her husband Philip, was the first documented U.S. public outlet for lemon basil seed, and/or seedlings, some time after the 1940s.

When Thomas DeBaggio and Susan Belsinger asked me: "Why did this unique and world class lemon basil end up in Carlsbad, New Mexico, and *only* in Carlsbad, New Mexico?" I could not answer their question. Possibly Mrs. Clifton got it from Thailand, India, or England while visiting one of these locales or she could have swapped the lemon basil seed with some other ardent gardener or herbalist. Perhaps, but improbable, another more common form of basil originally grown by Mrs. Clifton was changed over the years by southeastern New Mexico's hot and dry climate into our lemon basil. The answer to DeBaggio and Belsinger's question remains a mystery, while the lemon basil itself is a culinary miracle.

Mom and I continued to plant our basil each spring in our Tracy Place garden during the 1950s and 1960s. Sometime in the late 1950s, Mrs. Clifton called Mom to ask if she had any of the lemon basil seed to share. Somehow, Mrs. Clifton had lost her last viable seed and was devastated. Mom, of course, gladly returned this basil seed to Mrs. Clifton.

Each fall, Mom and I uprooted our patch of lemon basil plants, washed the soil from the roots, and hung bundles of whole plants from the rafters of our front storeroom where they slowly dried. When they were ready, we took down the bundles and removed the

dried leaves from the stiff stalks. The dried leaves were stored in cookie tins to retain the essential oils and aroma of the lemon basil. Every Saturday evening we mixed a handful of crushed up leaves into a bowl of ground beef. Hamburger patties with bits of lemon basil throughout were cooked into “Barney’s Basil Burgers.” Our Sunday noon meal also included dried lemon basil. Mom used it as a “secret herb,” along with salt, pepper, and flour in which to shake our weekly fried chicken. Dried lemon basil was an integral ingredient in our homemade soups and enchilada suppers. Overall, the dried lemon basil became an essential element for the Burns’ cuisine. It even was incorporated into the all too rare homemade pizzas we shared.

In 1963, I entered the University of Arizona as an anthropology major. Several years later, I had my own apartment on Elm Street. As a personal touch, I constructed two small planters out of mahogany wood scavenged from motorcycle crates. As soon as I completed my two three-foot planters, I sowed lemon basil seeds in them—my first solo gardening effort. Sometime in the late 1960s, I received an urgent phone call from Mom. All the seedlings of her lemon basil had been killed by a late frost and she had no backup seed set aside in her storeroom. Luckily, I had extra seed from my last harvest, so I quickly mailed her some, which she immediately planted in her herb garden next to her grape arbor and long asparagus bed.

The loss of this unique basil variety by both Mrs. Clifton and my Mom demonstrates how a rare plant variety is at great risk. Without a backup source of seed, this unique type of basil would have been lost forever. The sharing of seed with other gardeners or even seed banks helps keep varietal extinction to a minimum.

I helped form NS/S in 1983. One of the first things I did was to get Mom’s—by now—“famous” lemon basil into our newly created seed bank. NS/S soon included it in our small seed listing as “Mrs. Burns’ Famous Lemon Basil.” It quickly became one of our most popular seed offerings. Over the years, it has remained very popular; its name has changed to Mrs. Burns’ Lemon Basil. The responsibility of preserving this rare form of basil now rests with NS/S and its supporters and not just with me.

Interestingly, Rob Johnson of Johnny’s Selected Seed Company recognized the value of this variety of lemon basil and asked NS/S if he could offer it in his seed catalog. We were happy to share it and hoped that his large seed catalog would further popularize a New Mexico heirloom. Apparently, our hope has been realized because the *New York Times* reported that seedlings of Mrs. Burns’ Lemon Basil were available at several farmers’ markets in the New York area. As a result, Rob got a rather large order for the lemon basil from a grower in Europe. The order was so large that Rob contracted with an Arizona farmer to grow out two acres of lemon basil plants. Rob was able to ship 500 pounds of this very small black seed to Europe. Thus, a previously rare New Mexican heirloom has become ever more popular and widespread, even influencing European cuisine.

Mrs. Burns’ Lemon Basil has been grown out at the NS/S Conservation Farm in Patagonia at least twice. Both times other crop varieties planted alongside the basil were attacked by pests, but the lemon basil plants remained untouched by bugs, perhaps because of its unique combination of essential oils. For a photo of leaves of this basil, planting and flowering information, and a description of its aroma and taste please refer to *Basil, An Herb Lover’s Guide*, published by the Interweave Press of Loveland, Colorado. NS/S continues to sell the seeds and dried leaves of Mrs. Burns’ Lemon Basil on their website and in their catalog.

Finally, let me pass on a bit of English elocution often repeated by my Canadian Mom. When responding to someone on the question of the pronunciation of basil, she often said, “Razzle, dazzle, basil; Basil (long a) was an actor.”



Mrs. Burns in 1983.

Fourth Avenue Store

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*Please note the NS/S store will be closed on Sundays from June 14 through August 16.

info@nativeseeds.org

www.nativeseeds.org

Shop at our store or online for seeds, indigenous arts & crafts, books on southwest gardening, cookbooks, chiles, and more!



In the Store:

A longtime and international favorite, Mrs. Burns’ Lemon Basil is grown at the NS/S Conservation Farm and sold in the store and online.

Book Review

The Heirloom Tomato: From Garden to Table Recipes, Portraits, and History of the World's Most Beautiful Fruit

BY AMY GOLDMAN, PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTOR SCHRAGER (NEW YORK: BLOOMSBURY USA, 2008)

Review by Suzanne Jameson, Membership and Events Coordinator

The only thing missing from Amy Goldman's latest book is a scratch and sniff patch on each of the exquisite tomatoes expertly photographed by Victor Schrager. The patch isn't necessary—really. Flip through *The Heirloom Tomato* and the earthy musk of fresh tomato leaves magically wafts up from the book's pages, teasing taste buds to frenzy in anticipation of the first bite of a sun-ripened heirloom tomato. Goldman's book begins with the simple statement: "Tomatoes and I go way back. You might even say they're in my blood." Her love of and respect for heirlooms is highly contagious and spreads like wildfire.

What first appears as a picturesque coffee table book quickly

becomes an invaluable resource with information on identifying, classifying, and preparing 250 of the best heirloom tomatoes available. Goldman acknowledges the book appeals to a wide audience. "There's something for everyone in this book," she said in a telephone interview. "If you're a city-dweller, you can use the book as a reference for what to buy at the farmers' market. If you're an art lover, you will appreciate the book for its aesthetics and photography." The book, however, is so much more. Tomatoes are documented by size and weight; shape; color; soluble solids (Brix ratings to determine sweetness); flavor; texture; best uses; plant habit; leaf type; yield, maturity; origin; synonyms; and seed sourcing. Packed into 258 pages are historical, horticultural, and culinary facts designed to help any one grow, choose, cook, and enjoy some of the best tomatoes in the world.

Goldman's prose is engaging and captivating. Whether she's detailing the origin of a Pink San Marzano first catalogued in 1954 or listing seed sources for the White Beauty with its "long, eyelash-

like calyces," she imparts her deep love of tomatoes in a delightful way that continually amuses. Describing the flavor of the Burpee's Globe, a round six-ouncer with an excellent honey, sweet taste, she writes, "This tomato is so good, you'll plotz."

A former child psychologist, Goldman is a gardener, an artist, and an heirloom plant conservationist. When asked how these roles overlap, she responded, "All the roles are complicated. You can't reduce a person to wearing just one hat. I never could have envisioned thirty years ago in graduate school that I would return to horticulture. I never could have predicted it, but it makes a lot of sense."



Are Americans ready to change their relationship with food? "I think they're desperately ready," Goldman said. "There is a real hunger in this country for better nutrition, better food. People are going back to the garden. People have a need to connect with nature and what better way than through a garden."

"We've lost many of the varieties of vegetables that were available in 1902—they're gone. The good news is there's been a flowering of new varieties. The future of agriculture lies not in the fancy hybrids, but in the heirlooms and their wild relatives. We've got to preserve. We have to prepare for the future."

Reading the *The Heirloom Tomato* is just the beginning to tomato success. "Grow your own. Do a little weeding. Get your hands dirty," Goldman advises. She ought to know.

Amy Goldman is the author of The Compleat Squash and Melons for the Passionate Grower, serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for Seed Savers Exchange, and is a long-time supporter of NS/S. Her website is www.rareforms.com

**Native Seeds/SEARCH Members
Now Get a 10% Discount at
Tucson Botanical Gardens Gift Shop**

**Tucson Botanical
Gardens** 

Native Seeds/SEARCH and Tucson Botanical Gardens have formed a partnership to benefit our members. NS/S members will receive a 10% discount at the Tucson Botanical Gardens gift shop (excluding books) by showing your NS/S membership card. Don't have a card? Stop by our NS/S store at 526 N. Fourth Avenue or call 520.622.0830 to have one mailed to you.

Calling Our Customers and Members...

If you have phoned NS/S recently, you've noticed NS/S has a new telephone system. Our telephone directory is listed below to help guide you:

- PRESS 1 For information about our mailing address, store hours, and directions to the store
- PRESS 2 To request a catalog
- PRESS 3 For information about our Native American Free Seed Program (ask for Alex)
- PRESS 4 To speak with a staff member about memberships, donations, volunteering, media requests, or other administrative matters
- PRESS 5 For wholesale customers
- PRESS 6 To ask about the status of an existing order
- PRESS 7 For all other questions

Due to an increased demand for seeds and our desire to respond quickly to your orders, we ask that you place your order by mail, send us a fax, or visit our online store at www.nativeseeds.org. Please also visit our website if you have questions about gardening or seedsaving or contact your local agricultural extension service. We also have many books available online and in our retail store to help guide you in your gardening journey.

Do you work for a large company?

Many companies will match employees' donations to non-profits, but an employee must submit the name of a non-profit in order for them to support the organization. Please consider sponsoring Native Seeds/SEARCH with your company. Call 520.622.0830 for more information.



Experience famous Copper Canyon with Native Seeds/SEARCH co-founders Barney T. Burns, PhD and Mahina Drees

Copper Canyon in Mexico's northern Sierra Madre is known for its vast breathtaking beauty, rugged canyons, impressive railroad, and for the Tarahumara people who call it home. Native Seeds/SEARCH, in partnership with Baja's Frontier Tours, is offering a unique opportunity to join NS/S co-founders Barney T. Burns and Mahina Drees for an unforgettable learning vacation into the land of the Tarahumara.

The nine-day trip begins in Tucson aboard a luxurious U.S. motor coach, and travels a scenic route between Tucson and lovely colonial El Fuerte, Sinaloa, which was founded in 1564 before an overnight stay on the Sea of Cortez at San Carlos, Sonora. Once in the Copper Canyon, the group will travel by train and local transportation to Divisadero and spend the night at the canyon's edge. Then it's on to Creel for three nights, where the group will venture out to Tamahumara villages and learn about NS/S projects. The return trip to Tucson travels along the east side of the Sierra Madre, via Casas Grandes.

Cultural anthropologist Barney Burns will discuss the Tarahumara culture in detail, as well as Yaqui, Mayo, Apache, Mennonite, and Mormon peoples as the group ventures through Sonora, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua. What sets this program apart from any other is the quality of the learning experience and the knowledge and affability of the leaders and interpreters. Participants are always amazed by Barney's vast knowledge and come away from the trip with huge praise for the experience. No hiking is required on this trip; just short walks on uneven ground.

Just \$3395 per person, double occupancy, which includes a \$500 donation to NS/S. Limited private rooms are available at an additional \$655.

Call Piet and Mary Van de Mark's Baja's Frontier Tours LLC at 520.887.2340 for a detailed brochure.

Remembering...

Alice Hannah Brown

1915–2008

NS/S lost a dear friend when Alice Hannah Brown passed away peacefully at age 92 in July 2008. Alice grew up in the Greenbrier River valley of the Blue Ridge Mountains where she developed a lifelong fondness for nature and cared deeply about preserving the land, plants, birds, and animals alike. She attended Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she majored in biology. After her marriage to William L. Brown, Alice and Bill traveled five continents for his genetic seed research projects, but always looked forward to each spring when their labor of love produced a vivid display of hundreds of naturalized daffodils on their own property.

Alice's insatiable quest for knowledge led her to support many local, national, and international organizations. Her passion and commitment to biodiversity was recognized in 2006, when the Suri M. Sehgal Foundation and the Danforth Foundation established the position of the Alice H. Brown Curator of Economic Botany at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri.

We will remember Alice's generous spirit, simple values, fierce intelligence, boundless curiosity, quick wit, and her deep faith in the miracles of nature. We are grateful to her for including Native Seeds/SEARCH in her legacy.

Volunteer Highlight

Meet Peadar Hoard, Master Bean Cleaner

by Jules Richelson, Volunteer Coordinator

Peadar Hoard has volunteered at the Native Seeds/SEARCH Seed Bank for more than five and a half years. A lifetime gardener who loves the heat of the Southwestern desert, he became curious about the NS/S Planting Man sign on the Sylvester House at Alvernon Way and Grant Road and stopped in one day. A new chapter of his life began when he joined NS/S, and the mysteries of seed conservation, germination testing, and bean cleaning were revealed.

When Peadar came aboard, he was greeted with years' worth of beans to sift through. Since then, Peadar's role has been steady—he is our resident authority on bean cleaning. He claims he was tasked with this because he doesn't have a degree in botany, biology, or agriculture, but, in reality, Peadar has a knack for this meticulous job. In fact, he's developed his own science and can tell which type of beans are the easiest to sort through and which are the hardest. It can take Peadar four hours to get through one quart of white teparies, but he can clean five quarts of pink beans in the same amount of time. Pintos, on the other hand, are the worst! He examines imperfections and discards any bean with a cracked outer skin. In addition to filtering out rocks and twigs, Peadar is able to determine which beans won't cook or those that may germinate at a different rate from the rest. Peadar attributes this skill to personal experience—he does the job for himself every time he sorts through three pounds of beans to make a pot of home-cooked chili.

He likes volunteering at the seed bank because it is "laid back" and often works at an outside picnic table with music playing, enjoying the Arizona weather. Peadar's favorite thing about volunteering on Wednesdays is the group of unique individuals he has met. Peadar feels that volunteering at NS/S has enriched his life because he can contribute to the organization.

Peadar moved to Tucson 15 years ago. For more than 40 years, he owned a restaurant and bar in Rhode Island and worked on Frances Farms, the largest seafood farm in the world. This is where he acquired his fix for good, authentic clambakes. After retiring, he was ready to escape the cold, snowy winters of the east so he sold his house and moved west. He picked Tucson so he could get to know his "long-lost" siblings. Peadar also contributes his time to Comin' Home, another Tucson-based nonprofit that provides housing and case management for veterans trying to move back into the mainstream of life. Peadar is a wonderful NS/S ambassador, often encouraging many of the veterans to join our efforts. Peadar's help and company are valuable additions to the NS/S team. Thank you, Peadar, for all that you do!



Remember NS/S in Your Will

You can support Native Seed/SEARCH by including us in your estate planning. A planned gift will continue your legacy and further NS/S's efforts to conserve the agricultural heritage of this region. If you want to know more about how to designate NS/S in your will, please contact Robert Traub at rtraub@nativeseeds.org or 520.622.0830.

To Contact NS/S Staff

Conservation 520.881.4804

Director of Conservation Suzanne Nelson
Curator of Collections Chris Schmidt
Collections Manager Lindsay Werth
Farm Operations Technician Benito Gutierrez
Field Coordinator Chris Lowen
Conservation Assistant Ashlie West
Native American Program Coordinator
Alex Sando

Distribution 520.622.5561

Director of Distribution J.P. Wilhite
Distribution Coordinator Betsy Armstrong
Retail Assistants Vivian MacKinnon, Lissa Hastings, Kieran Connor

Administration 520.622.0830

Executive Director Bryn Jones
Director of Operations Julie Evans
Director of Development Robert Traub
Membership & Events Coordinator
Suzanne Jameson
Volunteer Coordinator Jules Richelson
Bookkeeper Inga Simmonds
Administrative Assistant Sharon McKenzie

Going Greener

Would you like to join our efforts to minimize our impact on natural resources? Now you can receive your tri-annual *Seedhead News* by email. Send your email address with "newsletter request" in the subject line to membership@nativeseeds.org and go green!

You can also sign up to receive our once-a-month *Seed News* electronic newsletter informing you of our latest events and news.

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. We count on your ongoing support to ensure 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 development@nativeseeds.org if you need assistance. Thank you.

News & Notes

Farewells and Welcomes

We say goodbye to Conservation Assistant **Laura Davis** and to Retail Assistant **Brenna Franco** and wish them both well in their new endeavors.

Ashlie West joined NS/S as an intern in January and now serves as Collections Assistant with the Conservation Department while working on a degree in crop production at the University of Arizona.

We are pleased to welcome **Vivian MacKinnon** as our new Retail Assistant. Vivian brings many years of non-profit expertise and most recently worked at the Audubon Society of Tucson's Agua Caliente Nature Shop as well as a field tour guide.

Chris Schmidt is NS/S's new Curator of Collections. He holds a doctorate in evolutionary biology and entomology from the University of Arizona where he performed a genetic and taxonomic study of a major insect group and databased a diverse research collection. Chris also is involved with Desert Harvesters, a local organization that promotes the use of native Sonoran Desert plant foods.

On the board... **Lydia Breunig** and **Michael McDonald** have joined the Board of Directors in January and both currently serve on the NS/S Development Committee. Lydia has a doctorate in geography from the University of Arizona with a concentration on nature-society relationships and Latin American studies. She is an Assistant Director of Development for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the UA and is responsible for cultivating donor relations and establishing fundraising priorities. Lydia has been intimately involved with Tucson's conservation and community organizations and has been serving as a member of our Development Committee for the past year.

A third-generation Tucsonan, Michael McDonald is Habitat for Humanity's Chief Executive Officer in Tucson and a former NS/S Executive Director. Michael holds a master's in international business management from Thunderbird-The American Graduate School of International Management. Among his many volunteer and community-based activities, Michael is a board member of Southern Arizona Land Trust and a member of the Capital Campaign Advisory Committee for the Benedictine Monastery, Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

Wishlist *Call 866.622.5561 for details*

Portable electronic cash register ♦ **New computer** with a minimum of 2GB of RAM ♦ **Digital camera** with a minimum of 6 megapixels

We Were Recognized!

Charity Navigator, America's largest independent evaluator of charities, has awarded Native Seeds/SEARCH a coveted 4-star rating for our sound fiscal management. Receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that NS/S excels, as compared to other charities in America, in successfully managing our organization's resources in an efficient and effective manner. Visit www.charitynavigator.org to view NS/S's rating page and know that your financial support is always fully invested in our work.



**CHARITY
NAVIGATOR**
★★★★
Four Star Charity

Native Seeds/SEARCH was included in *Bon Appetit's* May 2009 Best of the U.S.A., the annual coast-to-coast guide listing the best recipes, restaurants, and ingredients in America. The *Smithsonian* magazine mentioned NS/S and Gary Nabhan in reference to the Wild Chile Botanical Area in an April 2009 article about chile peppers.



Tour the farm, help with a project, and see what we're growing this year! Take part in the centuries-old tradition of asking for and celebrating the coming rains.

WHAT TO BRING:

A dish to share for NS/S' famous potluck lunch (drinks, cups, plates, and eating utensils will be provided) sturdy close-toed shoes, a hat, sunscreen, a water bottle, and a friend or two new to Native Seeds/SEARCH to enjoy the day.

HOW TO GET THERE:

Directions to the NS/S Conservation Farm from Tucson: Take I-10 east for 25 miles, exit at Highway 83, the Sonoita/Patagonia exit. Continue south for 25 miles. In the town of Sonoita, turn west toward Patagonia onto Highway 82. After 12 miles, look for the green "Patagonia" sign. Take the next left on to San Antonio Road. The sign above the entrance reads Red Mountain Ranch. Drive across the wash. The large, green barn will be on the right. Volunteers will direct you where to park.



Native Seeds/SEARCH
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