

Happy Anniversary!

Number 99

Winter Solstice 2007



the *Seedhead News*

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Native Seeds/SEARCH! According to the 1983 Summer Solstice issue (#2) of the *Seedhead News*, the founding Board of Directors wrote and approved the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in January, 1983. The elected board officers were: Gary Nabhan, president; Barney T. Burns, vice president; Karen Reichhardt, secretary; and Mahina Drees, treasurer. By the Winter Solstice issue of the newsletter (#4), they had received non-profit 501(c)3 status from the IRS. They had also received funding (in the form of grants or donations) from the C.S. Fund, the Arizona Native Plant Society, the National Sunflower Association, and the Tribal Sovereignty Program. Additionally, the C.S. Fund issued a \$2,500 challenge grant to the fledgling organization: if NS/S could raise it, they would match it! Twenty-five years later, our 2008 fiscal year budget is about \$1.4 million!

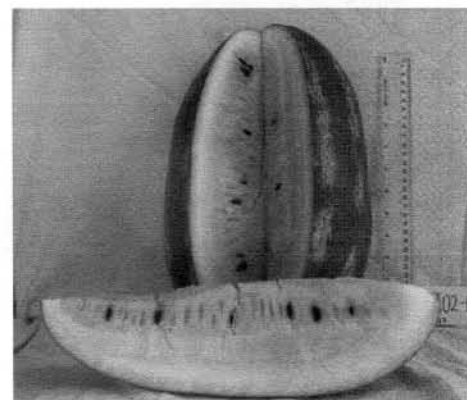
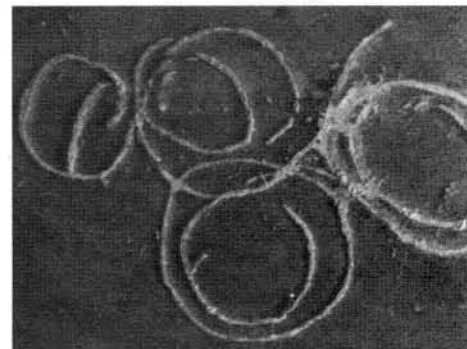
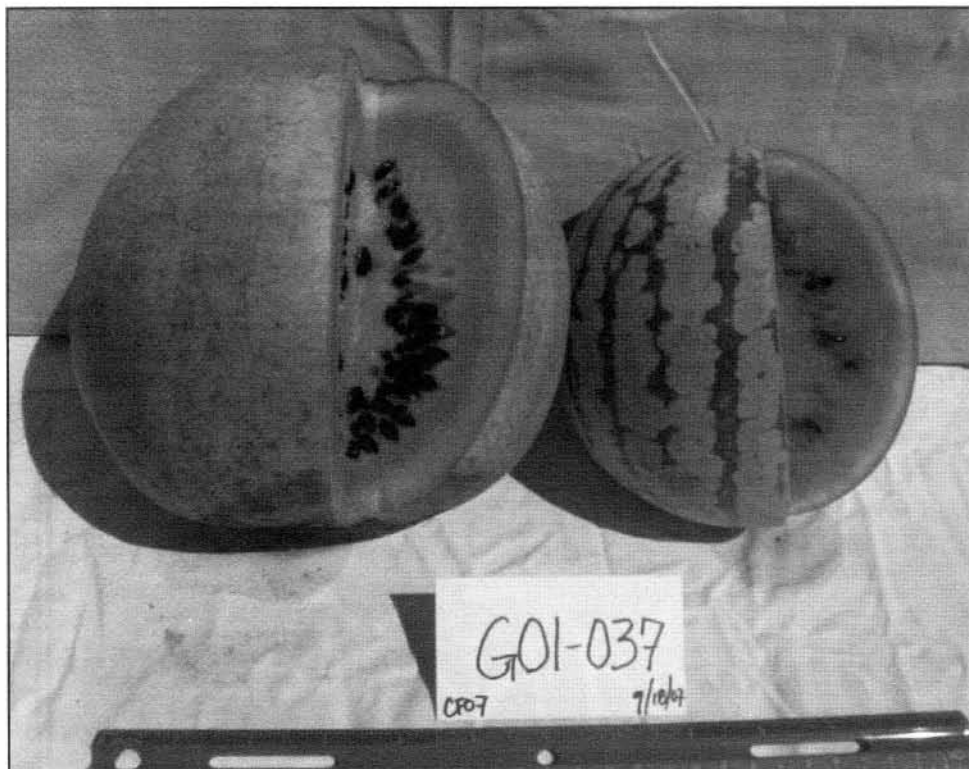
Where we came from...

Before NS/S, there was the Southwest Traditional Crop Conservancy Garden and Seed Bank. And before that, there was the Meals for Millions/Freedom from Hunger Foundation, a non-profit organization whose goal was to improve the health and nutrition of people in developing communities through a participatory, self-help approach sensitive to social, cultural and economic realities. Housed under the auspices of Meals for Millions, the goal of the Southwest Traditional Crop Conservancy Garden and Seed

Bank was to facilitate the mission of Meals for Millions by helping to ensure "the survival of hardy Southwestern desert-adapted food crops." It wasn't long before the conservancy garden and seed bank simply evolved into the stand-alone organization we all know and love as Native Seeds/SEARCH.

Originally known as "seed searchers", the four members described NS/S as "a new, non-profit organization, the first devoted to the conservation and promotion of native, agriculturally valuable plants of the US Southwest and northwest Mexico. By distributing seeds we increase to the public and to permanent seed banks, and by documenting their cultural, nutritive, ecological and culinary value, we hope to insure that this agricultural heritage persists for years to come." Today, the mission of NS/S remains remarkably true to the founders original vision: 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.

As the year marking our quarter century lifespan, 2008 will be filled with much thanks, many reminiscences and some special events. There is much to learn or rediscover about Native Seeds/SEARCH! Keep an eye out in our newsletters, on the website and in our monthly e-lets for ways to celebrate the year with us!



Conservation Update *by Suzanne Nelson*

The first *Seedhead News* reported on two different projects the newly-established organization was involved with above and beyond their 'basic work', as they put it. One project was focused on finding or producing virus-free tepary beans, as early work by Gary had shown that "the only commercial sources of tepary seed in the US were likely carrying the seed-borne disease, bean common mosaic virus (BCMV)". The other project reported was wild chile conservation.

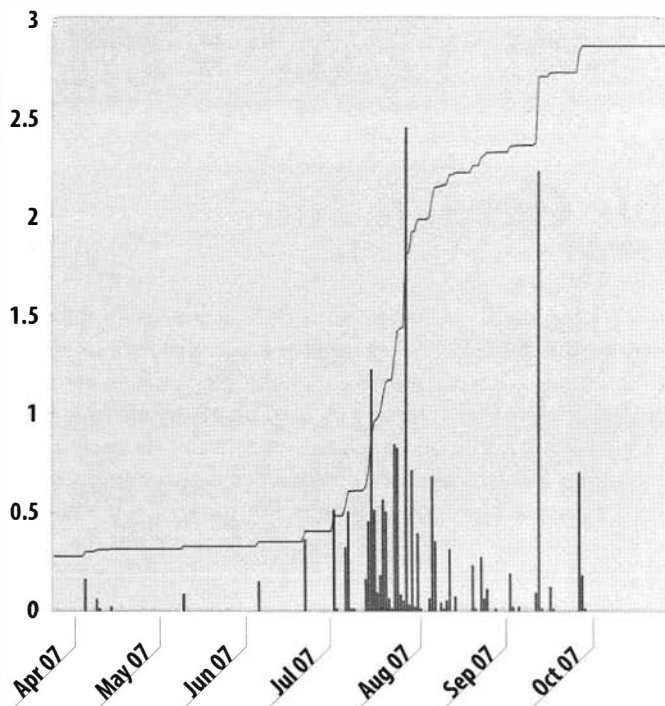
The newsletter reported "Chiltepinos, the wild ancestor of most commercial chile pepper varieties, are also commercial products in their own right. As a perennial shrub growing in scattered locations throughout Latin America, this wild *Capsicum annuum* produces insanely hot pea-size fruit relished by Mexican-Americans, Southwest Indians and a few crazy Gringos (like us!) There are a few natural stands of chiltepinos in the US, in isolated canyons where native Americans once hiked to gather them. However, both these US populations and some stands south of the border are endangered due to overgrazing, overharvesting (needless uprooting), and occasional pests. Remarkably, other wild stands have been found to be sources of virus resistance useful in breeding reduced vulnerability into commercial chile pepper varieties. We have begun to monitor remaining wild stands in Arizona (some of them less than 100 plants), and are propagating cuttings of healthy plants for possible reestablishment in the wild later on. We are also in touch with a Mexican chiltepin propagation project, which one of us hopes to visit in April. Any one who would be willing to volunteer for hiking into Arizonan and Sonoran canyons to stalk the wild chile this summer should contact us for details".

This summer, we grew out our entire chiltepin collection, many of which had been collected during those chile-stalking adventures in the canyons of Arizona and Sonora. Started in pots in early 2006, the plants had been overwintered in the greenhouse last winter and placed into isolation cages this past May. Though a gorgeous potted or landscape plant in their own right, who would

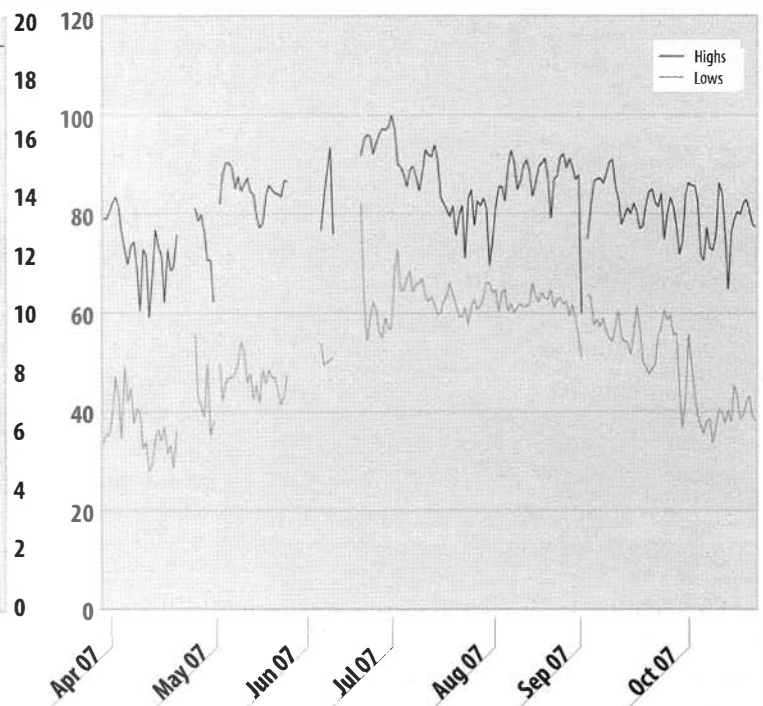
CLOCKWISE, THIS PAGE **Photo-documentation of watermelons. Insect scarring creates fanciful designs on the rind of watermelon. Scrumptious on a hot summer day! Isolation cages damaged in a summer storm.**

NEXT PAGE **A truckload of harvested gourds.**
Photos courtesy NS/S staff.





Rainfall at the Conservation Farm totals nearly 20 inches from April to October.



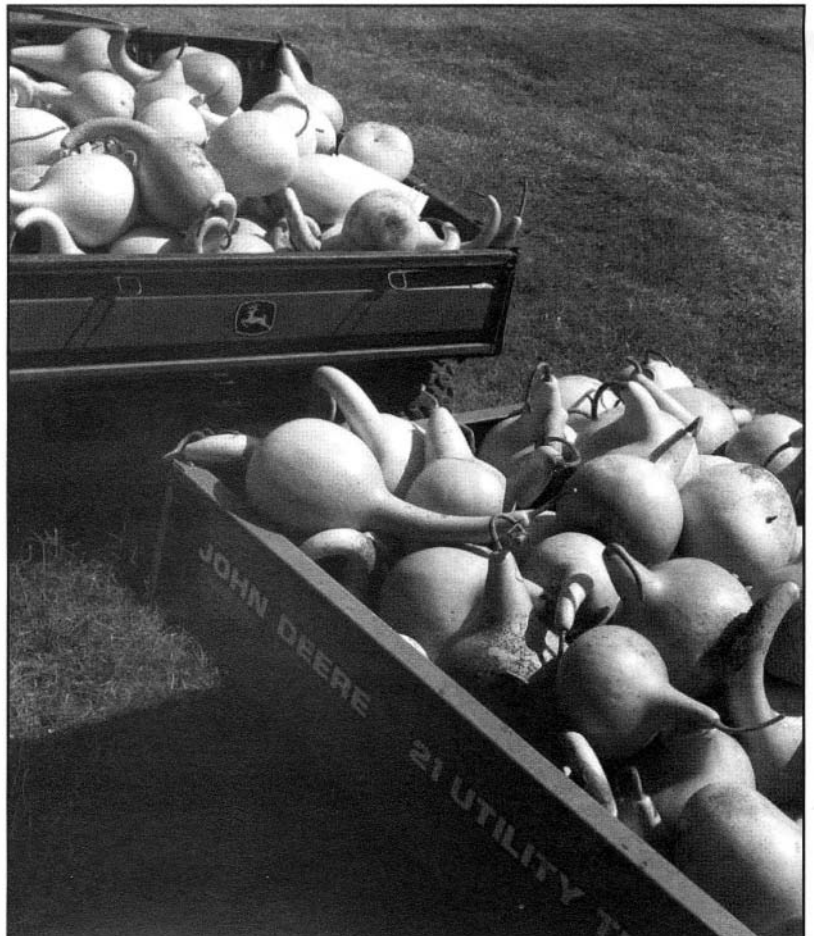
High and low temperatures at the Conservation Farm from April to October.

Conservation Update *continued*

have guessed there could be so much diversity in fruit shape and size among chiltepinos? Afterall, these were wild plants that hadn't been selected by humans for any specific traits of interest. But there was a staggering array of fruit shapes and sizes ranging from diminutive and round, to narrow and pointed, to large and triangular, and finally large and round. It was truly amazing to see how different they could be. Here was raw genetic diversity at its wildest.

Among the most unique was an accession named 'Hermosillo Select' that produced truly gigantic fruit for a chiltepin. This chiltepin had been selected for larger fruit size as part of a project to commercially grow chiltepin in central Sonora — the same 'Mexican chiltepin propagation project' mentioned in the first newsletter! Obviously, someone from NS/S had made the visit in April and collected seeds. And here they were, growing in our field at the Conservation Farm some 25 years later!

Well, we obviously grew a few other items during this past season, but this story says it all. It is the proof in the pudding. It's why we do what we do. Hopefully it's why you support us in what we do. From all of the many NS/S chileheads over the past 25 years, we thank you for that support.



And a wonderful time was had by all... at this Fall's NS/S events!



FROM TOP **Garden sites — Desert Survivors Plant Nursery and BorderLinks.** Photos courtesy Diana Peel.

23 SEPTEMBER 2007

Sustainable Garden Tour

The 3rd Annual NS/S Garden Tour on September 23, 2007 was a successful community collaboration linking Native Seeds/SEARCH with various community partners, all of which grow Native Seeds/SEARCH seeds in gardens of various sizes. Over 200 people visited three major sites, each with a different emphasis on gardening in the desert. Desert Survivors Native Plant Nursery focused on gardening tips, seed saving and included an information booth on buffelgrass eradication sponsored by Pima County. The next stop was BorderLinks for a cooking demonstration featuring amaranth and information on sustainable food programs. For those of you who missed the tour, see the recipe for amaranth cakes below! The final site was the Tucson Community Food Bank which hosted workshops on food security, water harvesting and natural border landscaping. There was even a children's booth called "Bee Free Barbeque" sponsored by Pima County Natural Resources! After the tour, close to 60 attendees enjoyed a native food lunch prepared especially for the Native Seeds/SEARCH garden tour at Delectables Restaurant. Special thanks to all our community partners and presenters including Jim Verrier of Desert Survivors Native Plant Nursery; Ali Traut; Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation; Sara Rickard of BorderLinks; Dana Helfer of Community Food Bank; Katy Goudschaal of Pima County Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation; Scott Calhoun, author of "Yard Full of Sun" and Chasing Wildflowers"; Greg Corman, owner of Gardening Insights and all our wonderful volunteers.

Amaranth Cakes with Wild Mushroom Sauce

Yield: 8 entrée servings

Cakes:

1 c. amaranth grain
2 tbsp. chopped shallots
1 tbsp. minced fresh marjoram
1 1/2 c. vegetable stock
3/4 tsp. salt
1 large egg
2 tbsp. flour
Olive oil

Place amaranth, salt, shallots, and stock in medium saucepan and bring to simmer. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 25 minutes or until grain absorbs all liquid. Put in bowl and cool. Stir in egg, flour and marjoram.

To make cakes: pour thin layer of olive oil in large skillet – heat to medium. Drop in 2 tablespoons of batter. Flatten to form cake and brown on both sides.

Mushroom Sauce:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 lb. assorted mushrooms (portobellos, wild & white), cleaned and chopped
Salt & pepper to taste
2 tbsp. finely chopped shallots
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 c. dry white wine
2 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. chopped fresh marjoram
1 c. shaved parmesan cheese

Heat olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, salt & pepper, and

cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid releases and mushrooms begin to brown. Add shallots & garlic, cook 1 minute, add wine. Cook until only a few tablespoons of liquid remain. Stir in butter and marjoram. Keep warm while making cakes.

To Serve:

Alternate layers of amaranth cakes and mushroom sauce on individual plates, using 3 cakes per serving, topped with mushrooms and shaved parmesan.

Harvest Celebration 13 OCTOBER 2007

An intimate group of dedicated members joined the Native Seeds/SEARCH staff for a morning of harvesting and other projects at our Conservation Farm in Patagonia, Arizona. Much work was completed thanks to those extra helping hands. The staff thanks you! Following the morning's work, everyone enjoyed visiting over a lovely potluck lunch.

9 OCTOBER 2007

Arizona Harvest Dinner

Nearly 75 guests attended the 11th Annual Arizona Harvest Dinner held at Janos Restaurant on the grounds of the Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson. The evening began with hors d'oeuvres served on the terrace while guests enjoyed a balmy evening under the stars. Among the unique appetizers served was duck confit in masa harina tartlet with white scarlet runner beans paired with sangria cocktails. This was followed by an exciting, bold and unique five-course dinner with wine pairings created especially for this event. Guests dined on specialty dishes including Grilled Cedar River Farms New York Strip with Molasses, Coffee and Red Chile Adobado, Mushroom Chilaquiles, and puree of roasted Tohono O'odham squash.

Chef Janos Wilder, celebrated chef and long-time supporter and board member, shared his thoughts, "...without Native Seeds/SEARCH our food wouldn't be flavored with the authenticity of the real ingredients of the region."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Enjoying the fruits of many labors at the Arizona Harvest Dinner — Rameen Ahmed and Tyler Francis; Gabe Vega, Sanjeev Pandey and Crecencio Elenes; and Kellyann Johnson and Inga Simmonds. Photos courtesy Diana Peel.

Molasses, Coffee, & Red Chile Adobado for New York Strip

Yields: 2 quarts

- 1 qt. molasses
- 1 c. lime juice
- 3 tbsp. freshly chopped garlic
- 1 c. Santa Cruz Chile Powder
- 1 c. finely ground Fair Trade coffee
- 1 c. brown sugar

Combine all ingredients. Thoroughly rub into meat and marinate at least 1 day before cooking.

Tepary Bean Refritos

Some of the great flavor of refried beans comes from the lard. Rendered bacon fat can also be substituted. If you are concerned about consuming so much saturated fat, a good substitute which will add excellent flavor is to use oil in which you made tortilla chips. Cut several corn tortillas into eight pie shaped pieces and fry a few corn tortillas in canola oil for about a minute until they are crisp. Drain the chips

on paper towels or a brown paper bag and reserve the chips to dip into the beans. Use the oil which now has a great flavor as a substitute for the lard.

To help keep the beans from scorching, choose a very thick skillet to re fry them in. I like to use a large cast iron skillet because it has plenty of room to work in and it holds heat well and disperses it evenly.

Yield: 1 quart

- 1 qt. cooked tepary beans, drained but reserve their cooking liquid
- 1/2 c. lard
- 3/4 c. Monterey jack cheese, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat the lard in a heavy skillet large enough to easily contain all the beans and still allow plenty of space for stirring and smashing. With the stove on, add the drained beans a little at a time mashing them with a bean masher or potato masher. As the beans are incorporated into the oil, add more beans. When the beans are getting too dry to mash, add a little of their cooking liquid to the pan and work it into the beans while you mash them. Continue this until all the

beans have been added and they have become quite smooth. Lower the heat so the beans don't scorch and stir in the cheese. Season with salt and pepper as needed.

Tohono O'odham Squash Puree

Yield: 1 quart

- 2 lb. Tohono O'odham Ha:l squash
- 4 tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 lb. unsalted butter
- 4 oz. heavy cream
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Cut the squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Sprinkle the halves with the cinnamon. Place cut-side-down on baking sheet and bake for about 1 hour or more until the squash is cooked and soft. Let the squash cool a bit so you can work with it but be sure it's still quite warm. Scoop out the flesh and puree in a food processor or blender and blend in the butter, cream, salt and pepper. Re-heat on stove just before serving.

Your Generosity Keeps Us Growing!

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS FOR SOWING & GROWING THE SEEDS OF SUPPORT

All donations and membership contributions listed were received between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2007. Again, 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.

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Any donor whose name appeared in this issue and wished to remain anonymous or whose name did not appear on the list and should have, please let us know. Thanks!

Many thanks to those who donated goods or services...

Adobe Computer, Greg Mason	Plants for the Southwest Nursery, Jane Evans & Gene Joseph
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Please join us for
the 10th Annual
Flavors of the
Desert
Fundraising Gala



Sunday, April 6, 2008

University of Arizona
Grand Ballroom

Social Hour
5pm to 6pm

Dinner & Program
6pm to 9pm



*This special evening,
highlighting NS/S's
25th Anniversary, will
feature fabulous regional food,
entertainment, and a book
signing by co-founder
Gary Nabhan.*

See www.nativeseeds.org
for more details.

*The Community Food Bank and
NEW ARTiculations Dance Theatre
Present:*

We Are What We Eat

*An Interactive, Participatory Performance
about the Food We Eat and Why*

A collaboration between NEW ART and the Community Food Bank, the project uses modern dance and community stories to reveal how food connects us to each other, our environment, and our everyday lives. Food stories will be shared, gathered, and interpreted through dance in a series of public workshops and performances. Performances will be held in the spring, including a performance on Sunday, April 27 at the Tucson Botanical Gardens.

The project is one in a series of Community Food Bank endeavors utilizing the arts to educate people about their responsibilities as eaters dependent on the food system. Future projects will include digital storytelling, large-scale public art, literary arts, photography, and music.

For more information or to participate in this project, visit www.storiesmatter.org/wearewhatweeat or email WeAreWhatWeEat@storiesmatter.org

We Are What We Eat is supported by the Tucson Pima Arts Council, Punch Woods Endowment Fund, Community Food Bank, NEW ARTiculations Dance Theatre and Dance Loft.

Have you been a member of NS/S for a long time? Are you new to the organization? Either way, take this fun quiz to see just how much you know about us or not! *Answers on page 10.*

- NS/S was founded in:
 - Tanzania
 - 1983
 - a barn
- The NS/S gift shop is located at:
 - La Encantada
 - 4th Avenue
 - Plaza Palomino
- The purpose of NS/S is to:
 - protect biodiversity
 - celebrate the "culture" in agriculture
 - promote food crops of the southwest
 - all of these
- NS/S operates a farm in:
 - Des Moines
 - Fresno
 - Patagonia
- NS/S is a favorite of:
 - gardeners
 - birdwatchers
 - chamber music enthusiasts
- Sonoran panic grass is:
 - an anxiolytic
 - a grain feared to be extinct
 - used in weaving panama hats
- "Wenks yellow hots" is a:
 - lemon candy
 - Martha Stewart paint color
 - chile pepper
- San Juan's Day celebrates:
 - people named John
 - blessing of the growing season
 - islands off the coast of Washington
- Elote is:
 - roasted corn on the cob
 - Hawaiian for goodbye
 - a Mexican herb
- The "three sisters" are:
 - a rock band
 - a mountain range in Nevada
 - corn, beans and squash



NS/S goes to college

Since the beginning of the fall academic semester last August, NS/S has been involved in a new class at the University of Arizona. Focusing on undergraduates, the Conservation Biology Internship and Seminar class is taught by University Distinguished Professor, Rob Robichaux, and NS/S Director of Conservation, Suzanne Nelson. The class is designed to expose students to the importance and use of crop genetic resources, their management and conservation. Students learn about topics such as crop origins, domestication, and evolution; plant breeding and food security; *in situ* conservation of crops and their wild relatives; and the role of genomics and biotechnology in crop genetic resource conservation. Interspersed throughout the semester are hands-on opportunities at the NS/S Seed Bank and Conservation Farm to put into practice what



they've learned in the seminar-style classes. It's also been great for staff at NS/S to brush up on some of the basics (who can remember their last genetics class?), not to mention needing to be on top of things to accommodate 6 students at a time in our cramped Seed Bank space! The first 'crop' of students are: Sara Beckett, Justin Huggins, Victoria Duckworth, Isabel Rivera, Tamara Fahrenreich, Robbie Gonzalez, Harish Anandhanarayanan, Razvan Marc, James Rood, Judy Bevier, Ashley Campbell, and Jared Grinney..

A very small sampling of readings from class:

Gepts, P (2006) Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Utilization. *Crop Sci* 46:2278-2292. Available online at: www.crop.sci.journals.org/cgi/content/full/46/5/2278

Meilleur, BA and T Hodgkin (2004) In situ conservation of crop wild relatives: status and trends. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 13: 663-684.

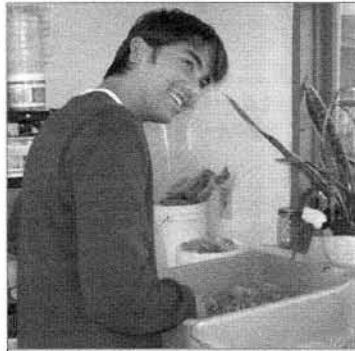
Sairam, RV and CS Prakash (2005) OBPC Symposium: Maize 2004 & Beyond – Can Agricultural Biotechnology Contribute to Global Food Security? *In Vitro Cell. Dev. Bio.* 41:424-430.



*Remember
NS/S in
your will*

You can support the work and values promoted by Native Seeds/SEARCH by including the organization in your estate planning. Your gift will express, in a lasting way, your commitment to our efforts to conserve the agricultural heritage of this region. If you would like to know more about how to designate Native Seeds/SEARCH in your will, please contact Julie Evans, Interim Executive Director at jevans@nativeseeds.org or 520.622.5561.

We would like to thank and recognize anyone who includes NS/S in a will, but we can't unless you let us know. Please contact us so we can appropriately express our gratitude (or answer any questions).



Volunteer Opportunities:

Contact Diana Peel,
Community Relations
Coordinator, at
dpeel@nativeseeds.org,
520.622.5561 or fill out a
volunteer form online at
www.nativeseeds.org

Regularly scheduled volunteer days:

Monday–Friday

The Conservation Center Seed Bank, 2130 N. Alvernon Way,
Tucson, Arizona

*Seed cleaning, record-keeping, germination tests, data entry,
administrative assistance, and cataloging*

Everyday

Fourth Avenue Gift Shop/Distribution Center, 526 N. Fourth
Avenue, Tucson, Arizona

Package seeds, bag beans, chiles and other native foods

Other volunteer opportunities:

Gift Shop Clerks Weekly Office Assistant Special events support

Conservation Farm in Patagonia:

*Volunteers needed from mid-May through September. Contact
Diana Peel at dpeel@nativeseeds.org to be added to the schedule.*

News & Notes

Muchas gracias!

to **Suzanne Nelson**, who is stepping down as editor of the *Seedhead News!* Suzanne has been diligently trying to keep you informed about what we do at NS/S, why and how for many years. She began co-editing the newsletter with ex-NS/S staffer, Shannon Scott, in the early 2000s, and has been flying solo as editor for the past 4 years. We hope she enjoys all that “extra” time she’ll have now... oops, maybe not, she’ll still be contributing regular conservation updates.

Welcome!

Welcome to **Claire Seesman**, our new Distribution Assistant! Claire’s background includes work in permaculture, gardening and sustainable food security. Please stop by the store and say hello the next time you’re in the area.

We welcome 5 new members to the NS/S Board of Directors! Native American chef **Lois Ellen Frank** lives and works in Sante Fe, New Mexico where she is an adjunct professor at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Enjoying his retirement, **Dr. Pat Reid** previously served as Director of the School of Natural Resources at the University of Arizona. Our newest member from Phoenix, **Bob Sanderson** is the owner of Western Process Computers, Inc., which provides recycled hardware to users of industrial automation computer equipment worldwide. **Bruce Symonds** is a NS/S volunteer and has an extensive background in agricultural marketing, including owning his own agribusiness marketing consulting firm. Finally, **David Tiers** is a long-time Tucson resident and criminal defense attorney with ties to the early years of the most well-known food co-ops in Phoenix and Tucson. Welcome to you all!

Condolences

We sorely miss long-time NS/S supporter and compadre, **Bob Zahner**, who died September 1, just short of his 84th birthday. We will publish a tribute to Bob in the coming issue. Until then, we send our best to his wife, and our dear friend, Glenda.

Wishlist

- ☛ Golf cart — electric or gas; in good running condition
- ☛ 3-wheel ATV — in good running condition
- ☛ Nut picks (not nut crackers, just the picks)

www.goodsearch.com

Support NS/S by searching the Internet

You can support Native Seeds/SEARCH by searching the internet with GoodSearch.com. It is a new search engine powered by Yahoo! that donates half its revenue to charities its users designate. Each search gives one cent (\$.01) to your designated choice. To get started, go to www.goodsearch.com and type *Native Seeds/SEARCH* in the box *Who do you GoodSearch for?* To see how much we’ve generated so far, click on *Amount raised*.

Answers to quiz on page 8 — 1.c.2.b.3.d.4.c.5.a.6.b.7.c.8.b.9.a.10.c.

Sow the Seeds of Conservation

Join Native Seeds/SEARCH, renew your membership, or give a gift membership and contribute to our work conserving, distributing, and documenting 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.

Join, renew, or give online at www.nativeseeds.org, or fill out the form and mail with payment to Native Seeds/SEARCH, 526 N. Fourth Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705.

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the Seedhead News

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Thursday–Saturday, 10am–6pm
Sundays, noon–4pm

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*Celebrate the 25th anniversary
with NS/S all year long!*

In honor of our 25th anniversary, we're celebrating every month of the year. Some events are expanded versions of events we do every year, others were created especially for this year's celebrations. Either way, we hope to see you at any or all of these monthly celebrations. Watch for details on our website or monthly e-lets.

- January* Mole Madness at the 4th Ave. store
- February* Great Bean Tasting at the 4th Ave. store
- March* (TBA)
- April* Flavors of the Desert; 4th Avenue Street Fair
- May* (TBA)
- June* San Juan's Day celebration at the Conservation Farm
- July* Book signing/artist demo at the 4th Ave. store
- August* Cooking demonstration with Chef Janos Wilder
- September* Open House at the Seed Bank
- October* Arizona Harvest Dinner at Janos Restaurant
- November* Harvest Festival at the Conservation Farm
- December* Photo exhibit and wine-tasting

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