



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 roles these seeds play in the cultures of the American Southwest and northwest Mexico.



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Annual Report

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Seed School Teaches Regional Seed Solutions

by Joy Hought, MSc., Seed School Director

At heart, Native Seeds/SEARCH is an organization committed to regional seed saving. *Saving* seeds, following that humble, thousand-year, hand-to-hand tradition passed down through the ages. Saving the legacy of infinite human hours of care and selection—for beauty, taste, and healthy farming systems. Saving seeds from extinction by industrial agriculture and for future generations of sustainable farmers. But how do seeds become *lost* in the first place? They become lost when they lose their place among human cultures. So for us to fulfill our mission of truly saving seeds, we must save their place among us—in our fields, our gardens, at our tables, in our bellies.

This is the mandate of education. As seeds have been lost, so has much of the knowledge around their uses. Education empowers people to become partners with us in our work to conserve crop biodiversity and develop regional seed sovereignty. Even as the situation for good seed grows dire, more and more people are becoming energized, taking action, and looking for the knowledge and tools they need to rebuild healthy local seed systems.

Seed School is our flagship education program and has been designed precisely to address these needs. Native Seeds/SEARCH co-directors Bill McDorman and Belle Starr brought this pioneering week-long course with them when they joined the organization in early 2011. Since coming on board myself in 2012, I have had the honor of helping it grow and seeing over 200 students graduate. The course carries students along a narrative, from their first basic steps with flower and seed biology, germinating wheat berries, and harvesting seeds from fresh tomatoes, into more challenging and technical subjects such as selection processes and how to carry out simple plant breeding projects. We also cover the history of the seed industry and important legal precedents around patenting and seed sovereignty, so that graduates are informed seed citizens.

Students get exposure to several different models for seed stewardship and engage in group discussion on developing their own projects, such as seed libraries, small businesses, wild seed harvesting, or becoming seed producers themselves. Lively, inspiring talks are integrated with hands-on activities feeling, smelling, touching seeds. We spend one full day out in the field; for courses in Tucson we visit the NS/S Conservation Farm in Patagonia, where students get to problem-solve seed cleaning and storage for different types of

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From Our Retail Manager

At a recent staff meeting, glancing around the table, I thought again how fortunate I am to have the best job in the world. As manager of the Native Seeds/SEARCH Retail Shop, I have the good fortune to work with intelligent, creative, and dedicated people each day. And not only do I get to interact with our amazing staff and volunteers, but I have the opportunity to connect with our entire Native Seeds/SEARCH community—the passionate customers, vendors, members and supporters who make this organization possible.

Well, this constant bragging about my awesome job has not gone unnoticed by my coworkers. They’ve finally called me out to share with you why I feel this way. On a purely practical level, I need to work because I need to eat. But going deeper, the idea of right livelihood is of critical importance to me. I want my efforts to contribute to something beyond the Gross National Product. I look around and see too many hurried and worried people, unhappy about the direction we are heading—climate change, unhealthy food, and isolation. They feel powerless and lack faith in a brighter future.

It has taken me my first 50 years to truly realize that we can only act in the here and now. And here’s the clincher: the future is *created* out of the present moment, not *independent* from it. What we do with this very moment is entirely up to us, and it is what will make a better future possible.

So what does a humble shop have to do with shaping the future? Well, for starters, we aren’t your typical retail store driven by the bottom line. Proceeds from our sales directly support our nonprofit mission to help strengthen local food security and build a healthier, more sustainable world. When our customers shop with us they are personally contributing to this beautiful vision. What’s more, we are able to give back to our community by supporting local artisans and farmers, hosting educational events, and providing a warm and welcoming space for folks to chat and connect with each other.

In the Native Seeds/SEARCH Retail Shop we’ve created a place to slow down and savor the moment. We are here for you. We want to hear about your garden. (*Really, we do!*) We are honored to help you find the perfect gift for a loved one, discover something handmade by local craftspeople, or explore the delightful tastes of the Southwest. You may even meet the person that wove the basket, blended the mole, or wrote the book because they enjoy spending time here, too, and they are a part of the Native Seeds/SEARCH community.

Here in the shop we love to talk about the seed library movement (and our own seed library in the shop) and share our colorful history of seed banking beginning thirty years ago with our precious collection padlocked in our founders’ freezers. We are excited to share our passion for Native Seeds/SEARCH and how our community is building a stronger regional food system starting with local seeds. So, in a nutshell, why is my job the best in the world? Simply put, in the shop we take the Native Seeds/SEARCH Vision Statement to heart—and we’re dedicated to making it a reality *now*:

“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.”

I think you’ll agree that’s a future worth being present for!

Vivian MacKinnon, Retail Manager



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Seedhead News (ISSN 1083-8074)
is published three times a year—Fall, Winter,
& Spring/Summer—by Native Seeds/SEARCH
as a benefit to members. All photos by NS/S staff
and volunteers, unless otherwise noted.
Contents © 2014. Design: Julie St. John.



JOIN US FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR OF SALONS

Over the past year, our monthly Salon series explored a diverse range of fascinating topics from Southwestern cuisine to biotechnology—and everything in between. If you live in Tucson (or are fortunate enough to be passing through), these enlightening community-supported conversations are not-to-be-missed. Come join in the mind-watering discussions!



NS/S Conservation Center is located at 3584 E. River Road, Tucson, AZ 85718

Salons are held every third Monday of the month from 6 to 8pm at the NS/S Conservation Center. If the Salon falls on a holiday, it will be moved to the following Monday.

February 24
(alternate date)

Cooking up Edible Baja Arizona
with Editor and Publisher Douglas Biggers

March 17

Plant Remains and Pre-hispanic Farmers
with Archaeobotanist Karen Adams

Seed School Wants YOU!

Are you troubled by the state of our food system? If chemical-soaked, corporate-controlled industrial agriculture and widespread food insecurity is NOT the future you dream of, *there's something you can do about it.*

Join us at a Seed School and learn how YOU can participate in creating sustainable, local food systems beginning with the seeds at its source! More than 350 students have graduated from this groundbreaking course so far. Seed Schools sell out regularly, so sign up early to guarantee your place.

Upcoming courses are listed below. Visit www.nativeseeds.org for more details.

Just added: One-day immersion...

Los Angeles CA — February 8, 2014

Sold out with a waiting list...

Los Angeles CA — February 9–14, 2014

Tucson AZ — April 13–18, 2014

Shakopee MN — May 11–16, 2014 (*tentative*)

Tucson AZ — August 31 – September 5, 2014

Register online or call 520.622.0830 x100

Cholla Bud Harvesting Workshop

with Martha "Muffin" Burgess

Friday, April 25, 2014, 8–11 am

**\$30 for NS/S members or
\$40 for Non-members**
(includes NS/S membership)

Ethnobotanist and NS/S board member Martha Burgess (Flor de Mayo) will show you how to harvest, process, preserve, and cook with cholla buds, a traditional food of the Native Peoples of the Sonoran desert. Cholla buds are a superfood with high available calcium and complex carbohydrates that help balance blood sugar levels and provide sustained energy.

Workshop begins at NS/S Conservation Center in Tucson, Arizona. Call 520.622.0830 x100 or visit nativeseeds.org for details and registration.

Cylindropuntia versicolor buds.
Courtesy M. Burgess

Seed School Teaches Regional Seed Solutions *continued from page 1*

seeds. NS/S Special Projects Consultant (and former Farm Manager) Evan Sofro has been an inspiring teacher and spokesperson for our work there.

Seed School has attracted interest from across the country and around the world. We have had students come from as far away as Argentina, Canada, and Norway to access our unique format. Our open, collaborative approach is a key aspect of the course and has also brought us into contact with a number of great seed people around the country. Rowen White is the founder of Sierra Seeds Cooperative in California and a well-respected seed educator in her own right; she signed up for the course in 2012 to see what we were up to! An instant connection was made. Rowen has since joined Bill and me in what has been an incredibly productive partnership. She contributes more professional skills and knowledge around basic plant breeding, community seed models, and overall is a gifted facilitator. Students regularly comment on our complementary teaching styles and unique blend of perspectives.

When we have the opportunity we also invite our own staff from the Conservation Center to give presentations. For example our Director of Conservation Chris Schmidt often gives talks on seed banking, and Collections Manager Melissa Kruse-Peeples speaks on historical agriculture in the Southwest. Other local guests are regularly invited to add unique perspectives and expertise. Two Seed Schools are held in Tucson annually in April and September.

In May of 2013, Bill and I conducted a Seed Keepers program at the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation in Towaoc, Colorado, presenting a more Native-American focused curriculum to a small but dedicated group of tribal members. Later that spring, we were invited to bring our course to a Seed Sovereignty conference hosted by the Navajo Nation. We expected our usual 20 or so students but were surprised to walk into an auditorium of 300! It has become obvious to both Bill and me that the power of Seed School is not so much in bringing new knowledge to people, but facilitating and reconnecting them with knowledge they already possess in their communities.



Rowen White demonstrates seed cleaning using hand-screens.



Seed Schoolers harvest and clean landrace sunflower seeds at the NS/S Conservation Farm.

Also in 2013, we broadened the definition of “our community” to include seed stewards working in other parts of the country. It began when a Grain School attendee from Montana was so impressed by the course that he begged, “What can we do to get you to teach a class here? We need you. No one else is doing this.” And so the “National” aspect of our program was born. For our inaugural event, we partnered with the University of Montana in Missoula in January of 2013. Despite the snow and cold, it was a smashing success. At nearly 40 students, it was also our largest class to date! We learned a tremendous amount about the value and synergy of collaboration with partners at other organizations, and we were even able to offer college credit for university students and obtain USDA funding to help underwrite the tuition costs.

I have consistently witnessed that students have an overwhelming, sometimes emotional, response to getting these “missing pieces” of seed knowledge—especially when doing so among supportive peers. Genuine seed community emerges out of these events. Each graduate becomes a member of Native Seeds/SEARCH and a life-long champion of our work; graduates stay in touch with a robust alumni network on Facebook, and many keep in close contact with our staff. Seed School has tangible, long-range results. We are proud to count among our more than 350 graduates the founding of a dozen seed libraries, 11 seed businesses, and countless educators who are carrying the seed saving torch onward.

So far this year we have completed a sold-out Seed School at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and there are four more courses planned in 2014! While it is Bill and me in the classroom, Seed School is an amazing collective effort of our entire staff who all deserve thanks for its successes. Along with Seed Keepers and Grain School, our Seed Schools are ambitious programs with a broad scope. In fact, we are often asked what Seed School has to do with a nonprofit organization that focuses most of its efforts on a Southwestern seed collection and regional diversity. As a whole, they have been successful ways of engaging our “seed community,” and rallying support for all of the organization’s activities.

With over 30 years under our belts as seed stewards, growers, and educators operating one of the world’s best bioregional seed banks, we feel strongly that we have an obligation to share our knowledge as broadly (and passionately) as we can. There is still tremendous opportunity for more focused efforts in building seed capacity in our region, nationally and globally. With Seed School, we are proud to be leading the way.



VOLUNTEER SALUTE

Meet Janet Taylor

For some Native Seeds/SEARCH volunteers, it's all about the food. Author, nutritionist, and foodie-activist Janet Taylor is one such culinary crusader graciously donating her time to NS/S. For the past two years, Janet has been a fixture around these parts, regularly helping out with the seed packing, mail order, and odds and ends of daily operations at the Conservation Center.

Her enthusiasm for the work of Native Seeds/SEARCH is powerful. Perhaps this is because, for Janet, the seeds we steward are not just beautiful, rare, or culturally important: they grow *healthier food*. "Heirloom crops have more phytonutrients than hybrids or GMOs," she says. "Because they have to survive without pesticides and fertilizers, they're more robust and much more nutritious."

Healthy eating has been a deep passion for Janet since the birth of her eldest daughter. A pediatrician noted high cholesterol levels in the newborn and a hereditary link to cardiovascular disease. "He told me, 'Your lifestyle will be the blueprint for your daughter's future health,'" she recalls. Spurred to action, Janet became a self-taught expert on food and nutrition, eventually penning two popular cookbooks, *The Healthy Southwest Table* and *The Green Southwest Cookbook*.

Janet's devotion to spreading the good food gospel in Tucson dates back to the movement's early days. She was one of the first members of the Food Conspiracy Co-op when the pioneering locavore grocery began in 1971, even volunteering to print newsletters for the new venture. When Native Seeds/SEARCH arrived on the scene, Janet became a regular patron at the 4th Avenue store and fell in love with the unique and healthful offerings. "I especially love the tepary beans," she says. "They're easy to digest, high in minerals and protein, and they require little water to grow—an important trait for our desert environment."

Now in the flow of Native Seeds/SEARCH activity, many years later, Janet is as dedicated as ever to the cause. For our Maíz Mágico corn celebration last November, she went above and beyond by cooking and dishing up a delectable vegetarian posole to the delight of all lucky enough to snag a bite. Tasty as this work may be, Janet is quick to point out the bigger picture. "As an NS/S volunteer, it is most important to me that these seeds survive for future generations," she says. We couldn't agree more. Thanks, Janet!

Want to Volunteer with NS/S? Visit our website for details or contact our Volunteer Coordinator: volunteer@nativeseeds.org or call 520.622.0830 x107.



Winter Desert Tepary Bean Salad with Kale

Adapted from *The Green Southwest Cookbook* by Janet E. Taylor

- 2 cups cooked and drained tepary beans, cooled*
- 2 garlic cloves, minced and divided in half*
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1/2" cubes, 2 - 3 cups*
- 1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar*
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion*
- 2-3 tablespoons Key lime juice (reserve zest from 1 lime)*
- 5 - 6 sun dried tomatoes, rehydrate and drain*
- 1 teaspoon oregano, crushed to release flavor or 2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves, minced*
- 2 - 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil*
- 3 cups finely chopped kale leaves*
- 1-1 1/2 cups cilantro, minced*
- 2 tablespoons thyme or lemon thyme leaves*
- 1 or 2 chiltepinos, crushed*
- 1/2-1 teaspoon sea salt*
- Freshly ground pepper*
- 1/4 cup feta goat cheese*
- 1/2 Haas avocado, chopped*
- 2 tablespoons raw pine nuts*

Toss squash cubes in olive oil and sprinkle with pinch of salt, toss again. Spread in single layer on baking sheet or pan. Roast uncovered in a 375 degree oven until done and somewhat caramelized and slightly browned, scraping sheet and turning a couple times during roasting. Add half of garlic and toss, continue roasting for 2 or 3 minutes. Remove from oven, cool.

Soak the onions and garlic in the lime juice for a few minutes to tame possibly strong flavors.

Toss the rehydrated tomatoes and crushed or fresh oregano in the 1 tablespoon of olive oil, set aside. Massage kale with finger tips in 2 teaspoons of olive oil. Then, toss together the kale, tepary beans, lime zest, cilantro, thyme, squash, chile, salt and pepper, the onion/garlic mixture, and the tomato mixture; taste and adjust seasonings as needed. Sprinkle with cheese, avocado, and pine nuts. Splash a little lime juice over the avocado and serve at room temperature.

Delicious diversity! A spread of heritage foods harvested from the NS/S Conservation Farm.

Program Accomplishments (OCTOBER 1, 2012 — SEPTEMBER 30, 2013)

Because of your support, Native Seeds/SEARCH has enjoyed a remarkable 30th anniversary year full of accomplishments and milestones. Every longstanding effort within the organization saw big successes in 2013, from increased seed distribution to exciting new offerings in education and outreach. At the same time, NS/S continues to both adapt and advance its seed conservation mission by developing innovative programs aimed at creating food-secure communities in a rapidly changing world. These inspiring achievements would not be possible without you. Thank you!



Above: NS/S farm apprentice Matt Franz pollinates corn for the 2013 growout.

Below: Our fabulous volunteers enjoy a healthy brunch in the NS/S Conservation Center courtyard—our treat!



Conservation

Over the past year, a number of important developments took place in the Native Seeds/SEARCH conservation program. We received two important new grants from the Gila River Indian Community and the Christensen Fund to fund the development of innovative new programs that will strengthen regional climate change adaptation, access to seeds and associated information, and indigenous seed sovereignty. We will be rolling these programs out over the course of the grants' two-year runs.

Conservation staff traveled to Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico, to engage with Tarahumara communities and to further the study of White Sonora wheat. Staff also visited Native communities in New Mexico to strengthen relationships and identify opportunities for collaboration. NS/S staff also visited Nepal to attend an international workshop on custodian farmers and to lead a course on seed management.

Planning for the 2013 growouts at the Conservation Farm saw the introduction of a new paradigm for managing the NS/S seed bank collection which more efficiently targets the most at-risk and unique diversity for regeneration, the most in-demand varieties for seed production, and greater emphasis on crop evaluation. In total, we attempted to regenerate 61 at-risk accessions, perform distribution seed increases for an additional 24 varieties, and conduct field trials of 50 varieties total of maize, common beans, tepary beans, and cowpeas. This second season of our farm apprenticeship program hosted a dynamic and hard-working team of extraordinary individuals who contributed immensely to the organization's work and received invaluable experience and training.

NS/S, in collaboration with others, continued to effect a significant restoration of a local grains economy in Southern Arizona funded by a USDA grant through the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. We have been recruiting, training and supporting growers of White Sonora wheat and other local grains, offering Grain School and other educational and networking opportunities, and strengthening market opportunities. What started out as mere handfuls of White Sonora wheat, a regionally-adapted variety with centuries of history of use in the Greater Southwest, has turned into over one hundred acres of production. Chefs, bakers, brewers and millers such as Hayden Flour Mills, Barrio Bread, Borderlands Brewing Company, Pane Bianco, and Avalon Gardens and their new restaurant Food for Ascension Café (among many others) have begun integrating this wheat into their offerings. Regional farmers from Phoenix to Tumacácori are now growing this heritage variety, and Ron Wong from BKW Farms in Marana, Ariz. has obtained organic certification for his White Sonora production and processing operations. These collaborative efforts are connecting the public with local grains and education around their importance. The grant program ends in March of 2014 but the work will continue.

Volunteers

Our wonderful community of volunteers astounded us once again with their dedication to our work, logging more than 4,400 hours during the 2013 fiscal year. This amazing contribution is equivalent to more than two full-time employees, and it places NS/S in high esteem with potential funders that value such strong community engagement. Volunteers made contributions in the following areas: agricultural (farm), fulfillment of web and mail orders, bulk packaging, outreach and events, seed packaging and processing, as well as data and administration.

We are deeply appreciative of their indispensable service.

Distribution

Our seed distribution efforts continued to grow in 2013. We distributed approximately 40,000 seed packets from the NS/S collection, a 25% increase over 2012. Our seed offerings also continue to grow and diversify, and we now offer over 550 varieties of heritage and heirloom seed on our website (nativeseeds.org). This year we also introduced over 30 varieties of native wildflower seeds.

Much of our distribution efforts this year were centered on the sensation of Glass Gem corn. Photographs of this corn went viral in May of 2012 introducing the world to the beauty of heirloom corn and the work of NS/S. To date we have distributed over 6,000 packets of Glass Gem corn and have been overwhelmed by the positive reports and photographs from growers. We have a large supply of seeds and will continue to make this variety available.

The wholesale program is also running strong with NS/S seeds now offered at Tucson and Phoenix area Whole Foods Markets and several plant nurseries throughout the region. Our Community Seed Grant and Native American Free Seed programs continue to grow and reach new people. *Read more about the year's highlights of our Community Seed Grant program on pages 8-9.*



Above: **Glass Gem: the world's most famous heirloom corn.** *Photo by Blythe Pelham.*

Below: **Participants apply mud plaster and install roofing during a Straw Bale House workshop on the NS/S farm.**

Education/Outreach

Raising awareness around seed conservation issues and teaching people to take part in protecting their seed diversity helps strengthen food security and build more resilient communities. NS/S has made great strides in advancing our educational efforts in recent years through our pioneering Seed School training courses, which have now graduated over 350 students from across the Southwest and beyond.

In 2013, this program took another leap forward with the launch of a National Seed School series. Sold-out courses took place in Buhl, Idaho and at the University of Montana, where students obtained college credit for attending. In total, we offered five Seed Schools and two Native American Seed Keepers courses over the year with more than 200 people gaining knowledge and inspiration to create sustainable community seed systems.

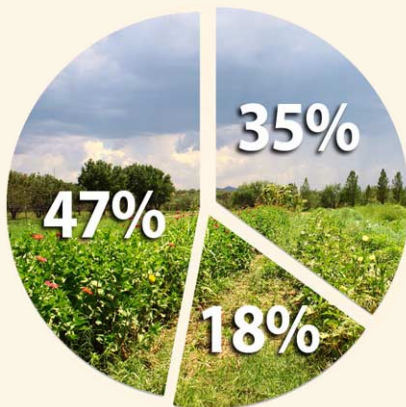


It has been an exciting and busy time for NS/S with many opportunities to share our work with others, both locally and around the world. Most notably, our Director of Conservation Chris Schmidt recently traveled to Peru and Nepal to present at conferences hosted by the prominent sustainable agriculture group Bioersivity International. Back home in Tucson, around 150 people gathered at the NS/S Conservation Center in November for the first Maíz Mágico festival, a cultural and culinary celebration of the Southwest's corn traditions. Two sold-out Straw Bale House workshops were held on the Conservation Farm to construct an outbuilding for our operations, taught by local natural building pioneers Matts Myhrman and Bill and Athena Steen.

FY 2013, October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013

EXPENSES

- Administration, development, volunteers — 18%
- Distribution — 35%
- Conservation, education, memberships — 47%



REVENUE

- Distribution — 34%
- Grants — 39%
- Direct program contributions, memberships, events, realized assets — 27%





Sharing the Seeds of Community

In 2013 NS/S awarded 48 Community Seed Grants, distributing over 1,200 packets of seeds to community projects, school gardens, and tribal organizations in the Greater Southwest. This popular grassroots program serves as an integral part of our conservation work, helping return the seeds we steward to active use in people's gardens, kitchens, and cultures. Your membership support helps make these inspiring community food projects possible — so, thank you! We are excited to share some of their stories with you.

Applications for the Community Seed Grant Program are accepted each year in January, May, and September based on Southwestern planting schedules. Details and applications can be found on our website at: www.nativeseeds.org/resources/communityseedgrants

Naco Wellness Initiative *Bisbee, AZ*

www.nacowellness.org

Naco Wellness Initiative has used NS/S seeds in 20 gardens in the borderland region to increase access to healthy fresh vegetables to combat obesity and diabetes. The organization is teaching the basics of organic gardening, water conservation, and seed saving to gardeners of all ages.



North Leupp Family Farms and STAR School *Navajo Nation, Leupp, AZ*

sites.google.com/site/leuppfarm | www.starschool.org

North Leupp Family Farms, a community organization of Navajo farmers, is partnering with STAR School in Northern Arizona to provide healthy, unprocessed and culturally relevant foods for their students. Together they are planting crops at the school and farm. NS/S staff recently visited the farm and saw firsthand the amazing work they are doing.

Right: NS/S intern Nicole Yanes examines an ear of Navajo corn with NLFF Farm Manager Stacey Jansen.



Girl Scout Troop 1755 *Apache Junction, AZ*

The Girl Scouts of Troop 1755 established a school garden at Desert Vista Elementary in Apache Junction, Arizona. A “seed” was planted and they are planning on expanding the garden project and hosting seed exchanges at their school.



Gaia Gardens *Santa Fe, NM*

gaiagardens.blogspot.com

Gaia Gardens is a 1/3-acre educational nonprofit urban farm in the heart of Santa Fe, New Mexico. They are dedicated to reclaiming food sovereignty in their community while demonstrating and teaching sustainability and permaculture practices.



Tucson Mission Garden Project *Tucson, AZ*

www.tucsonsbirthplace.org

Tucson has an agricultural history dating back 4,000 years. The Tucson Mission Garden Project is preserving and interpreting this legacy by planting a series of timeline gardens using seeds from the NS/S Collection.



Seeds, Science, and Spirit:

An Interview with NS/S Native American Intern Valerie Martinez

This September, Native Seeds/SEARCH welcomed our first Native American Intern, Valerie Martinez, to the organization. Supported by a grant from the Christensen Fund, the six-month Native American Internship program offers a unique and hands-on learning experience in crop genetic resources conservation to an individual from a Native community. Originally from Minnesota, Valerie is Ojibwe, Nakota and Apache, as well as an indigenous food justice activist. She has been an incredible asset to our work and, in turn, has taught us much about Native perspectives on seeds and beyond. We recently sat down with Valerie to discuss her experience here so far.



What about NS/S made you interested in applying for the Native American Internship program?

I researched Native Seeds/SEARCH a while back when doing some previous diabetes and seed work and it sparked an interest to work here. It's important to me that NS/S is the second largest holder of North America's indigenous seeds. These seeds are linked to more than 50 different tribes within the United States and Mexico.

When we first met you, your passion and love of seeds was clear. Where does this passion come from?

My mother was my best friend and the rock in my life, and she died at the early age of 50 due to diabetes. Diabetes is a curable disease, and it is also one of the leading causes of death in Indian country. I like to believe that this is what brought me to food work—and even more so to seed work. Over the last 10 years I have dedicated my life to the understanding of how diabetes came to Native Peoples. I have done a lot of food justice work for the last few years, but I rarely hear discussion of the important role seeds play in restoring food traditions among communities. Now we are hearing about this movement more and more often. It is inspiring!

Part of the internship experience has been to expose you to seed conservation methods rooted in scientific understandings of

biodiversity. Has this perspective challenged you to think differently about seeds?

Yes, I think my knowledge has expanded tremendously. One of the things I've learned is the importance of understanding seeds through both science and spirit. Native Seeds/SEARCH has a heavy emphasis on the scientific and academic understanding of seeds. When learning about conservation methods like in situ, ex situ and Neglected and Underutilized species (NUS) I notice that these are often rooted in Indigenous Communities across the world. These methods often talk about how crucial the role of traditional knowledge is, and many times the people are a key factor in revitalizing the biodiversity of a land base. This is not a new theory for me; it's just presented in a different fashion. Often elders in my community have talked about the importance of our traditional knowledge and its role in preserving the land base, or what we call Mother Earth. This internship has allowed me to become familiar with these different ways to describe this work. It has provided insights on the importance of both science and spirit in the journey of rebuilding our seed traditions.

Read the complete interview at nativeseeds.org



Mi Corazón Red Hot Herb Plant Sale

February 14–16 at the NS/S Retail Shop

3061 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719

9–10 am Members only ✨ 10 am–5 pm General public

Local, heirloom foods and fresh herbs go hand in hand. Spice up your garden (and your cooking) with delicious, ready-to-plant potted herbs from NS/S! During the sale, we will have a flavorful assortment of your favorite herbs, as well as rare Mexican culinary herbs, vibrant chiles, special prices on all flours, and more surprises!

NS/S members take 20% off all plants.

Sign up to be a member at nativeseeds.org or take advantage of our special \$20 membership deal during the sale.



Say seeds! The NS/S staff bundles up for a photo against the Santa Catalina Mountains.

News and Notes

Welcomes and Farewells

We are pleased to welcome several passionate and talented new staff members to the NS/S family. **Wendi Mogul** joins us as Accounting Assistant to help manage the complex world of our financial operations. Originally from Indonesia, she has a diverse background in journalism, radio and television. We are thrilled to have her in our midst.

Our new Assistant Retail Manager **Chad Borseth** is a Southern Arizona native and has been a fan of NS/S for many years. As an avid gardener and desert plant enthusiast, he is an ideal team member at the Retail Shop—and a wonderful guy to boot! It's a pleasure to have him on board.

Gerald Dawavendewa joins us as our newest Retail Associate at the shop. A member of the Hopi tribe, Gerald is an accomplished artist whose work reflects the rich traditions of his culture. He brings a wealth of insight as well as a wonderful warmth and charm to our NS/S family. Welcome, Gerald!

Our Native American Intern **Valerie Martinez** joined us in September and quickly settled in as an integral part of our Conservation activities. An organic gardener and indigenous food justice activist, Valerie has been a great asset and inspiration to everyone at NS/S. Thanks for all you do, Valerie!

We received the sad news that our friend and longtime vendor **Bill Hodgson** has passed away. For many years, Bill supplied NS/S with delicious customer favorites like Chocolate Habanero Fudge Sauce and Prickly Pear Butter. He was a true pleasure to work with and always made sure we had enough stocked for the holidays—even if it meant driving up to Albuquerque himself to get it. He will be missed, and our thoughts are with his family and loved ones.

Nicole Yanes joined the NS/S team in September as an intern to support her studies in Nonprofit Management. Originally from Nogales, Mexico, she is a passionate advocate for sustainable food and has brought much enthusiasm and optimism to our organization. She is also a recent ASU graduate destined for amazing things. Thank you and congratulations, Nicole!

Find us on Facebook and Twitter!



Radiant sunflowers abloom on the NS/S Conservation Farm in Patagonia, AZ.



Native Seeds/SEARCH
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Administrative Assistant Betty Moore *ext 100*
Director of Conservation Chris Schmidt *ext 111*
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Conservation Intern Valerie Martinez *ext 115*
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Conservation Farm 520.394.0227

Farm Operations Technician Benito Gutierrez

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Retail Manager Vivian MacKinnon *ext 5*
Assistant Retail Manager Chad Borseth
Retail Associates Gerald Dawavendewa,
Liz Fairchild, Matt Prieto,
and Nancy Reid

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.