

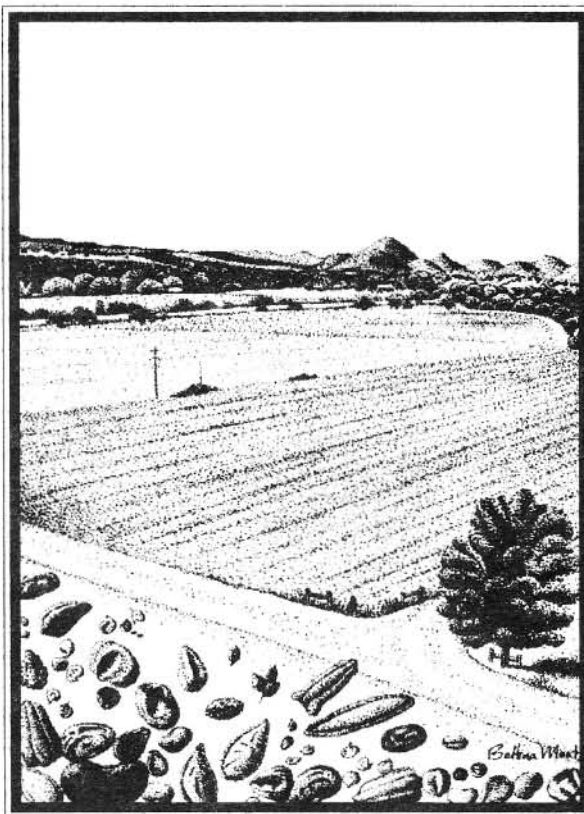


The NS/S Conservation Farm

by Kevin Gaither-Banchoff, Development Director

Call it our great leap forward. After years of countryside-scouring and painstaking legwork, Native Seeds/SEARCH is officially the proud owner and guardian of a Conservation Farm in Patagonia, Arizona. On December 19, 1997, NS/S and The Nature Conservancy jointly purchased the 160-acre historic property. We bought 60 acres of rich flood-plain fields, while TNC acquired the neighboring Sonoita Creek bottom land and adjacent corridor of native Sacaton grass and cottonwoods.

The Conservation Farm provides space to expand and guarantee the survival of our seed collections well into the next century. As Executive Director Angelo J. Joaquin, Jr. recently stated, "The farm will allow us to—on a much greater basis—honor the efforts of those who have gone before. We will be able to ensure that the unique varieties they developed will not disappear in our lifetimes." The selected property may be the only land on the planet that meets the tough criteria NS/S



Drawing by Bettina Martin

The quest for farmland

WE ACTUALLY FOUND A SITE THAT....
...lies close to Tucson, allows for crop and orchard genetic isolation, has been previously cultivated, contains space for pollution buffer zones, and sits between 4000 and 5000 feet elevation.

staff and board developed to guide our search (see box).

The primary purpose of the farm is to serve as a location to grow out the 1,800 collections of endangered heirloom crop varieties in our seedbank (see related story, page 4).

Thirty seven percent of our seeds, or 669 collections, came into our care between 1983 and 1988. Hundreds of these collections are approaching the critical point where they begin to lose viability. Up to now, we mostly depended on small plots at Sylvester House, staff and members' backyards, space around our Albuquerque arm, and the Tucson Botanical Gardens demonstration area to grow out our collections.

This approach, involving dozens of member families, served us well, but as new collections continued to enrich the seedbank, the need for the farm became impossible to ignore.

Second, this property will help us respond to demand for popular seeds by increasing the acreage dedicated to these crops.

continued on page 2

Conservation Farm *continued*

Each of the past three years we have reluctantly removed varieties from our catalog because we could not grow sufficient quantities for free re-distribution to Native American farmers and gardeners. By promoting the use of these seeds in native communities, we help ensure the survival of traditional cultures.

Finally, adding more seed varieties to our catalog increases our ability to support our programs through earned income. Eventually more Conservation Farm-grown seeds, produce, dried foods and items for traditional craft-making will make their way into the *Seedlisting* and store.

In addition to these big three benefits of the farm, we see numerous other ways our new farm will boost our mission. The farm will:

- give us more control over seed quality and purity
- encourage us to experiment with and share new gardening practices
- let us establish both cultivated and wild heirloom perennials such as chiltepinos, prickly pear and agave
- allow us to demonstrate economic potential for ecologically safe, sustainable agriculture in our region
- reduce growout frequency.

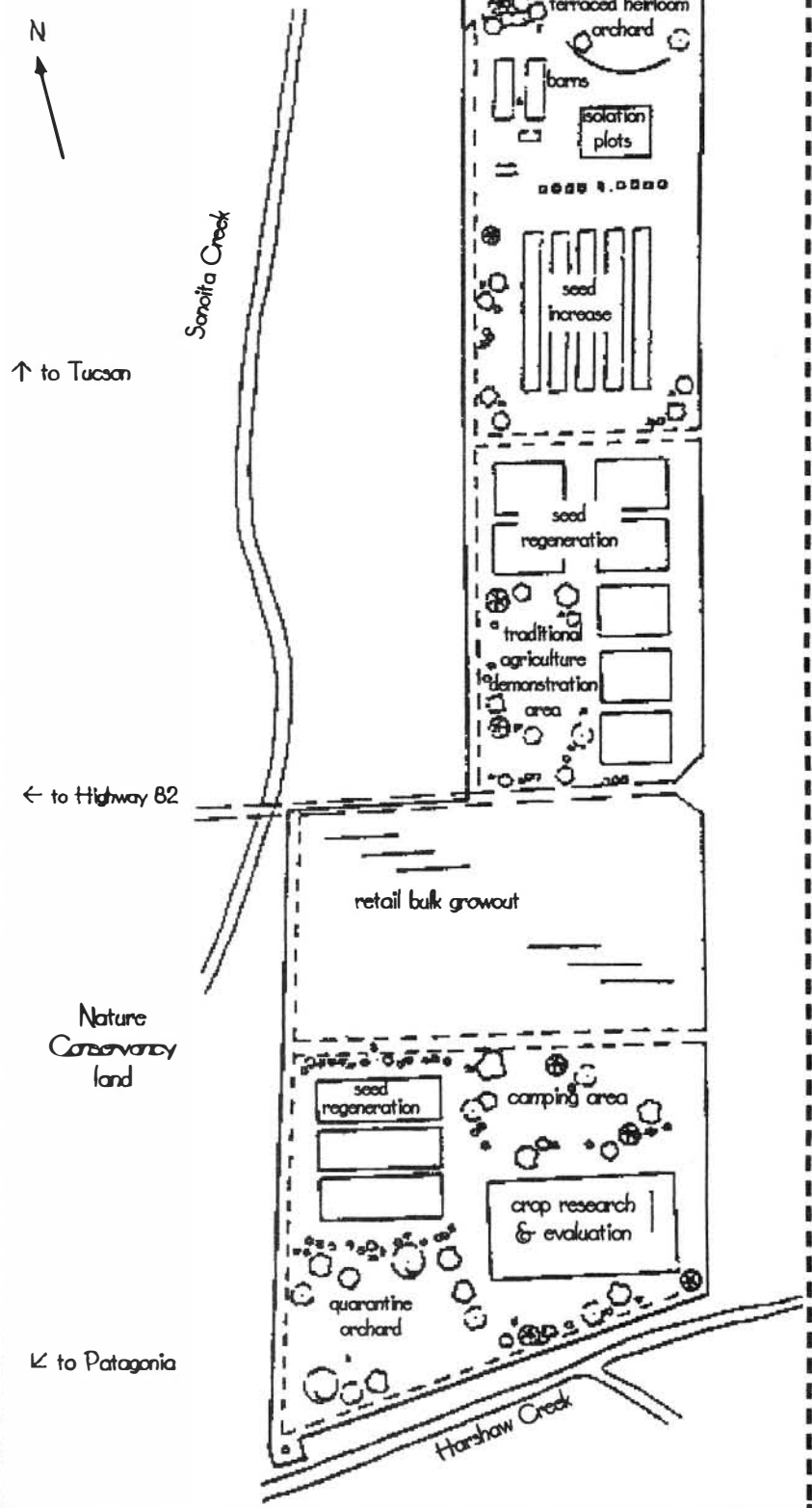
The property will also become the perfect setting for classes, internships, workshops, conferences and festivals.

This year we will finalize a grand design for the farm: where to install gardens, heirloom orchard, seedbank and greenhouse; where to build a residence, conference room and two barns. The scheme shown in this first rendering will be fine-tuned over the course of the year as we hear additional ideas from our new farm manager, architects, staff, and board.

We have big plans. By April or early May, 1998 we hope to have one full acre planted, and be preparing a second acre for the monsoon season (June/July planting).

continued on page 3

Native Seeds/ SEARCH Conservation Farm Preliminary Plan



National organic farming standards comment period

reprinted with permission from PAN

Would you buy organic produce that had been sprayed with pesticides? Grown in soil amended with toxic sewage sludge? Would you buy organic meat that had been fed non-organically grown food? If not, beware. What you think you're getting when you buy "organically grown" may not be what you're getting if the USDA has its way.

According to the Pesticide Action Network (PAN), "The USDA is attempting to redefine organic foods to include foods that are genetically engineered, irradiated, factory-farmed and grown on top of toxic sewage sludge." The USDA recently released their proposed standards for classifying foods as "organic," and under the proposal, "organic" takes on a whole new meaning. USDA also ignored the National Organic Standards Board statutory power to define "synthetic" and "natural" and to determine what is permitted/prohibited under the organic label. Find the full text of USDA's proposed rules at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

But you can get involved. Join SOS—Save Organic Standards Action Network and get your comments heard. Send a letter, fax, or e-mail by April 30 to the USDA demanding that they respect consumers' right-to-choose and maintain strict organic standards by explicitly prohibiting unacceptable agricultural practices. The organic foods industry has come a long way over the last ten or more years, and we'd like to see the progress continue.

Letters to the USDA should be sent to
USDA - National Organic Standards
Docket # TMD - 94 - 00 - 4

Address: USDA, AMS, Room 4007 - S
AgStop 0275, P.O. Box 96456
Washington, D.C.

Fax: Include Docket # (202) 690-4632

Conservation Farm

continued from page 2

We intend to add more garden space throughout the year, with six more acres ready for planting in early 1999. This year we will plant, nurture, and harvest a minimum of forty heirloom seed varieties for preservation, twelve new seed varieties for the 1999 Seedlisting, and twelve additional varieties in enough quantity for bulk grow-outs in 1999.

The rest of our energy will go toward putting in roads, new irrigation and potable water systems, barns and fences, plus finishing architectural designs for the farmhouse. We expect to have volunteer work parties and workshops later in the year, so warm up those shovels!

It will take \$800,000 over the next three years to develop the Conservation Farm. This winter we have already received significant pledges from the Environmental Support Center, the Sol Goldman Charitable Trust and the Wallace Genetic Foundation. We've also received several generous donations from members, totaling over \$5,000, and two trucks for the farm.

We have a great start on funding for this endeavor, but we also depend on support from you, our longtime members. Your generous and loyal assistance has enabled us to carry out our work for fifteen years, and we look forward to your

partnership with us to accomplish our the goals for the farm. And, if you're ready to preview our peaceful piece of Patagonia, join us during "William Cottonwood Days," hosted by The Nature Conservancy on April 18 (see back cover of this newsletter). We're looking forward to sharing the place with you in the months and years to come.



The Sylvester House crew welcomes Brownie, the farm truck donated by Dewitt Daggett and Julia Brown (l to r: Yajaira Gray, Henry Soto, Anna Osthoithoff, Sarvak behind the wheel). Photo by Suzanne Nelson.

The state of the seedbank (more on why we bought the farm)

by Suzanne Nelson, Director of Conservation and Seedbank Curator

Last year was an exciting year for us. Not only did we move from our longtime home at Tucson Botanical Gardens and into a renovated store-front location in the historic/arts district along 4th Avenue, but we also finally purchased a farm (see front page story)! Both represent significant and related challenges to keeping the NS/S ark afloat.

The relationship between the store and the farm is simple—with an increased ability to distribute more seed locally and through our catalog, we need to maintain larger supplies of seed. Obviously, the farm will allow us to grow larger quantities of any single collection. The farm will also allow us to dramatically increase the number of individual collections grown out each year. While both are important facets of our work at NS/S, it is the latter that cuts to the core of our main mission—conserving traditional crops, seeds and farming methods that have sustained and been utilized by Native Americans throughout

the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico since long, long before Columbus ever learned to sail.

Native Seeds/SEARCH is a seed bank. A seed bank is a repository of seeds guarded in a safe environment for the proverbial "rainy day." In our case, the rainy day is when a crop can no longer be found growing in a farmer's field. Nearly fifteen years ago, Mahina Drees and Gary Nabhan responded to the realization among Tohono O'odham farmers that many of the crops they had known as children couldn't be found growing on the reservation any longer. The happy ending to that story was the reintroduction of some of those "missing" crops to O'odham gardeners and the formation of Native Seeds/SEARCH to systematically conserve endangered heirloom seeds and crops before they were irretrievably lost.

Since then, the seed bank has grown to over 1800 different accessions. An accession represents a specific crop "variety" grown by a particular farmer. For example, Bernabe Salmeron, a Tarahumara farmer in the Sierra Madre, may grow scarlet runner beans, three types of common beans, blue corn, white flour corn, and a yellow flint corn. That makes 7 accessions—4 bean varieties and 3 corn varieties—each separate and distinct from each other. His neighbor, Vicente, grows the same 3 corns, but they are treated as different accessions since his fields may consist of different soils than Bernabe's, harbor a different array of pests or diseases, receive more or less rainfall, or have earlier or later frosts—all of which would tend to result in

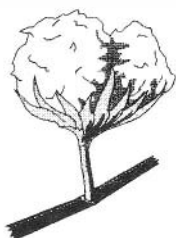
crops adapted to these particular environmental conditions, and not necessarily to those in Bernabe's fields. Thus, Bernabe's crops and his neighbor's might look the same, but differ in their ability to withstand a diversity of biotic or abiotic stresses, i.e., they might be different "landraces" or "farmers' varieties." The implication of that scenario is that regardless of how similar-looking individual accessions might be, they must be preserved and maintained separately.

One of the main challenges presented by maintaining a seed bank is that each accession needs to be grown out periodically in order to generate "fresh" seed. Because seeds only remain viable—able to germinate—for so long, aging samples are taken out of frozen storage, grown out and a new sample taken for storage. The length of time between grow outs depends on the specific crop. For most seeds in the seed bank, frozen samples are replaced every ten years. However, some crops need more frequent grow outs. Seeds of tobacco, chile, and gourds tend to lose their viability in about 3-5 years.

Getting 1800 accessions grown out within a somewhat arbitrary time period is a chore in and of itself. Add to that challenge the need for keeping accessions of some varieties at arm's length from other accessions of the same variety in order to prevent cross-pollination and one can easily see how complex a task it becomes! Unfortunately, the number of accessions needing to be grown out is somewhat overwhelming. There are currently 566 different maize accessions in the seed bank and approxi-

Catalog omission

The 1998 Seedlisting fails to mention that we can only ship our cotton seeds to Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma (same geographical restrictions apply to okra). There is a USDA quarantine on untreated seed because of the pink boll worm.



mately 280 have not been grown out over the last ten years!

A Native Seeds/SEARCH conservation farm has been a dream of ours almost since the beginning. And rightly so. A place to grow out seeds is a practical reality for a seed bank. It is not idle romanticism, for the real value of seed banks lies with their ability to "bring seeds back to life." The farm will allow us to grow out more crops and in large enough quantities to return the favored squash seeds of Tohono O'odham elders to a new generation of O'odham gardeners, replenish the maize varieties lost after years of prolonged drought among the Mayo, and bring Yoeme crops to a newly settled village on the outskirts of Hermosillo. Saving seeds in banks is only one tool in the fight to stem the loss of traditional agriculture. The ultimate conservation of these heirloom crops lies with their continued use in the fields of the farmers who have stewarded them through time immemorial.

Wish List

With the coming of the farm, this list has grown! If you can help us out with any of these items, please contact Krishna or Kevin at 622-5561. (And one thousand thank yous for your continued generosity.)

- office/desk chairs
- hand truck
- computer (≥ 486)
- computer whiz who loves antiques and would tinker with ours for free!
- printers (inkjet or laser)
- file cabinets
- wall clocks
- space heaters
- window A/C unit
- portable fans
- paper cutter
- credit card machine printer
- conference table & chairs
- utility cart with drawers
- computer workstations
- livable mobile home or trailer for the farm!

10th annual

WAILA FESTIVAL

Friday April 17 & Saturday April 18

at the Arizona Historical Society
949 E. Second Street, Tucson
(just west of U of A, between Park & Euclid)

FRIDAY, 6-11 PM
O'odham Basket Exhibit Opening
Waila Dance Lessons
Joaquin Brothers Concert & Dance

SATURDAY, 5-11 PM
Concert & Dance with Nine Waila Bands
Basketweavers & Artisans
Traditional O'odham Foods

ADMISSION FREE

CO-SPONSORED BY NATIVE SEEDS/SEARCH
Please call 628-5774 for more information.

Devil's Claw (see letter on page 8)

"Boiled Unicorns"

The fruit must be very young to be tender, only an inch or 2 long. Wash under running water, brushing with a vegetable brush to remove as many bristly hairs as possible. Boil in salted water until tender & serve with plenty of butter.

"Unicorn Seeds"

Separate seeds from fully ripened pods & dry in the sun. The Pimas cracked the dry seeds between their teeth & ate them like sunflowers. The Papagos ground the dried seeds for mush. Sometimes "just for fun" the Papagos chewed the fresh seeds & swallowed the juice.

from *American Indian Food & Lore*
by Carolyn Niethammer
(unfortunately out of print)

An appetizing quartet

cookbook reviews by Lois Friedman

The Bean Harvest Cookbook by Ashley Miller

Taunton Press, \$24.95

Over 70 global recipes for the “poor man’s meat.” Whether you’re a cook and/or gardener, you’ll enjoy reading all about the history and lore of this powerhouse of nutrition. This cookbook is a treasure trove of fascinating information with beautiful color photographs (including some of Native Seeds’ own beans) by David Cavagnaro. The mouthwatering recipes have clear, well-written instructions and are divided into five bean chapters—appetizers, salads, soups, sides and main dishes.

Flavored Breads by Mark Miller and Andrew MacLauchlan

Ten Speed Press, \$19.95

The staff of life—sweet and savory corn breads, quick, wholegrain, flat, country-dough, sourdough and breakfast bread plus accompaniments and a chapter on ingredients, techniques and sources from Mark Miller’s Coyote Cafe in Santa Fe. Each chapter and every recipe begins with delightful reading. Cooking procedures are in numerical order. Bread machine instructions are included. Many color photos accompany over 100 recipes as does this award-winning chef’s wish “to bring excitement and adventure to your table.”

¡Cocina! by Leland Atkinson

Ten Speed Press, \$19.95

This chef from Mark Miller’s Red Sage restaurant in Washington, D.C. tells all about the southwestern kitchen, foods, techniques, equipment and recipes. Follow the easy steps to make over 50 recipes from avocado crema to zucchini rellenos. Terrific reading and great color photographs in this award-winning cookbook.

bocaditos by Reed Hearon

Chronicle Books, \$15.95

Try some “little bites” of Mexico. From tasty tidbits to an evening fiesta, this author, also chef/owner of several popular San Francisco restaurants, shares over 40 recipes from south-of-the-border. Creative food adventures and “flights of fancy” are captured in handsome color photographs. The chapters are Botanas—“plugs” to nibble on something spicy, Antojitos—“little whims” of masa, Mariscos—seafood goodies, and Basics. Chatty reading and instructions make for fun cooking.

Now on sale at the 4th Avenue store

*’97 Chile Fiesta T-shirts & Aprons
Chile Wreaths & Ristras
Chile & Corn Posters*

**We also have heirloom soup mix back in stock,
all the above cookbooks,
and many specialty food items
not found in the catalog—
beans, jams & jellies, chile items!**

4th Avenue

Spring Street Fair

March 20, 21, & 22

Winter fair volunteers know what a great time we had last December (remember the belly dancers and flaming sword swallower in front of the store?). For anyone who missed out, you have another chance to help!

**Call Mary at 622-5561 to join the fun.
SEE YOU THERE....**

So long and thanks for all the fun (or “As the staff evolves”)

Editor's note: NS/S Administrative Assistant Jan Waterman is moving on this spring. She has been the “glue” holding this organization together for several years—accomplishing countless support tasks that allow other staff to carry on the business of Native Seeds/SEARCH. In her quiet but powerful way, she has been a key force behind the recent move to the 4th Avenue store and the purchase of the farm. It was my great pleasure to work at her side for 3 years as her Chile Fiesta co-coordinator from Tucson Botanical Gardens. I was ever impressed by her organization, determination, diplomacy and warmth. Jan will be missed by all of us connected with NS/S; on the occasion of her departure, we asked her to “say a few words.”

About 8 years ago I started volunteering for NS/S. Five years ago I was hired to fill the shoes of retiring Chile Fiesta Co-ordinator Muffin Burgess. I then became assistant to the Executive Director, Mahina Drees, who pulled together a wonderful group of folks and created a thoroughly enjoyable “corporate culture.” Somehow I also wound up with the responsibility of personnel director and the umbrella title of Administrative Assistant.

Suddenly, it's 1998 and I feel like one

of the luckiest people in the world. I have worked for a fine organization, with people whom I regard highly and enjoy as friends, in a job (or two) with never a dull moment. I'm at a crossroads in my life and to do justice to the opportunity that now exists for me, I'll be embarking on substantial time off at the end of March. As much as I enjoy the prospect, part of me shakes its head—“How can you leave a job you love so much just when we've launched the store and finally found the farm we need?”

Well, I can because NS/S will continue to thrive. I can because Nancy Wilson, current bookkeeper and former everything, will take over my post and do an outstanding job. I can because Anna Ostholthoff has recently arrived to fill the spot Nancy leaves. I can because the door here

stays open to me as a volunteer.

Thank you Mahina, for creating such a strong and delightful organization, for hiring me, and for your dedication, leadership, energy and humor.

Thank you Angelo, for your patience, support and leadership, and for keeping me on as you have. Your kindness and understanding have been precious to me. You've done an incredible job of empowering me and other staff members, both within this organization and in our lives.

Thank you, staff and volunteers I've worked with at NS/S as well as those I've met as a result of my job, like the crew at the Tucson Botanical Gardens and our current newsletter editor. It's been a privilege, and more than that, **it's been FUN!**

Jan Waterman

Now minding the books: Anna Ostholthoff

Anna says: “I grew up among the fields, ponds, forests and creeks of Ohio and Illinois. After college in San Francisco, I traveled to Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, Thailand, Burma, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan, Indonesia and New Zealand. I spent my time with people who were living simply and in harmony with the land. In Sri Lanka I worked on a chile farm.

Returning to the U.S. I became a wife and mother, settling first in rural Oregon, then in northern Idaho, Martha's Vineyard and New Mexico. Gardening became an integral part of my life. When my children started school, I began working for friends as a bookkeeper, and 15 years later here I am at NS/S. It is an honor to be in service with this fine organization.”

Cholla buds galore!

- Sometime in late April or early May is cholla bud picking time—depending on the weather and the chollas.
- This spring NS/S co-founder Gary Nabhan and Conservation Director & Seedbank Curator Suzanne Nelson will host a *Cholla Bud Harvesting Workshop*. We'll send a notice to local members, but you can also call Krishna or Kevin at 622-5561 for dates, cost and location as the time approaches. There will be a limit on workshop enrollment. (P.S. We also buy dried cholla buds. Call Junie at 622-5561 if you have extra.)

Garden Reports: the good, the bad and the unusual

Hello!

I thought you might enjoy hearing about my harvest since you note "we cannot predict your success with these crops outside their area of origin." I live in a city just outside Boston which has a climate about as far removed from your "neck of the woods" as possible—and I have no "garden" except for big pots! I was able to get a wonderful, bumper crop of: del Arbol, Mirasol, Sinahuisa, and Chilaca chiles plus a very beautiful Tohono O'odham chiltepin plant and a modest crop from the Wild Chiapas tomatoes (tasty!). I was less successful with the Zuni tomatillo which grew much too large for the 15" pot I put it in and kept toppling over in the wind. Epazote was a flop and I decided to skip pot space for Chia roja when I realized it was the same thing as a common green "weed" (Chia verde?) that was growing like crazy in the vacant lots nearby.

How to grow chiles in New England

- 1) Start them indoors about March 20th
- 2) Put them out for a couple of days around June 1st to "harden up"
- 3) Transplant into big pots, or if you're lucky, a garden in early June
- 4) Stake 'em or use tomato cages
- 5) Water daily if need be (in pots they need it!)
- 6) Harvest at the end of summer.

I got tons from about two plants [of each kind]. Will I ever eat them all?! I dried some, roasted and froze a lot of them and pickled a few.

I originally joined Native Seeds/SEARCH because I was pleased with your program and that I could get such a large (and reasonably priced) range of chile seeds (I will probably only need a few next year). I got tired of the futile hunt for chiles in Boston. When I bought a new southwest cookbook and couldn't find most of the ingredients, they listed you as a seed source.

I also love the looks of my chiltepin—tried bringing it indoors for winter, but it didn't like that much. [It] dried out a month or 2 later. True, they are hard to germinate—took me 3 tries and I only got one plant. But! Apparently Boston birds had no idea they are so good to eat and I had no such problems. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Jean Slosek, Somerville, MA



Gentlemen:

I wanted to give you some feedback on the seeds I bought from you in the spring. I live in a temperate valley about 90 miles from the ocean. The climate has some maritime influences and averages up to 100 inches of rain, mostly in winter. The seeds were:

- Acoma misc. gourds—vigorous plants from directly sown seeds (mid-May) with a good crop
- O'odham dipper gourd—most vigorous
- Mrs. Burns lemon basil—grew well from directly sown seed
- Sandia chiles—vigorous plants from seed started indoors; very few chiles matured
- Vadito blue corn—plants grew quickly, ears matured in less than 2 months. I garden in acidic soils, and despite adding liberal amounts of lime, about half the kernels turned out pink. Beautiful!

I was easily able to save gourd and corn seed... I look forward to trying some more seeds next year.

Sincerely yours,

Dianne Robertson, Eugene, OR

Hi,

Thanks for the wonderful golden beans [Amarillos del norte]. They are delicious, hardy and prolific. This is Edgewood, NM, 6600' with alkaline clay soil (limestone is not far down). Will continue to interplant with garlic.

Peter Tallman, Edgewood, NM

Dear Sir:

White tepary virus free does very well here in central California. I harvested an equivalent of 2.2 acre. Beck's gardenville okra does well. The various squashes I've tried require much less water than the other squashes I've purchased elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Stephen Coleman, Oakdale, CA

P.S. How is Devil's claw prepared? It's so bitter it's almost inedible. They grow almost too well here.

A quick survey around here reaped 100% "never tried it" confessions on devil's claw as a vegetable. Because devil's claws are woody, we suggest only very immature fruit of this basket fiber plant are ever eaten, and maybe not as a first choice food (but turn back to page 5 for a recipe from a reputable source!) Most people grow them for their claws, which do contain tasty seed.

Dear NS/S,

... I am sorry to say that my gardening year for 1997 was by all means a failure. The Okra "Nescafe" germinated in approximately 2 weeks (hot water soak method)... Only one [plant] survived to give seed, which I have collected. The plant grew only 4 pods.

My dogs ate the Cilantro, the birds ate the Chiapas Tomatoes to stubs (which, by the way germinated in 10 days as did the Apache Red Sugar Cane). What the birds did not eat was destroyed by leafhoppers. What survived the leafhoppers withered. All of these were planted in the ground. But there is hope. My bathtub was replaced, so I took the old one out to the garden and filled it with manure and compost. All winter it has given forth greens and lettuce (under plastic). So I am raising my beds this year in hopes it will bring me better success.

Included with my order are some Mexican squash seeds. My father-in-law was given some squash (pale green stripes on whitish skin) by a friend of his who grew them in his garden in Mexico. My father-in-law planted the seeds in his garden this last fall. He had so many he brought me over 200 lbs! At one time! They make wonderful pumpkin pies or just split and bake as a hubbard. The seeds taste just like pumpkin seeds when prepared as salted snacks. I hope you will find these adequate for your seed saver program.

Sincerely,

Libby Spieth, Tucson, AZ

Thanks for the seeds, Libby, and thanks to all of you sharing your treasures with us. For your information, donated seeds end up in our seed bank only if they come from traditional communities in the region bounded by Durango, CO (n), Durango, Mexico (s), Las Vegas, NV (w) and Las Vegas, NM (e). Bank seeds also need at least the following documentation: exact collection location, date collected, collector's name, collection source (stored seed, harvested from the wild, cultivated field), crop common name, crop uses.

We do make use of donated seed—for school and community gardens, research projects, demonstrations, displays or as food. All of these uses contribute significantly to the NS/S mission. However, the same outlets may exist in your own community, and we urge you to consider those first. Otherwise, the best place to send heirloom seeds is to Seed Savers' Exchange, 3076 N. Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101.

Dear NS/S,

The summer of '97 wasn't kind to southwestern crops in Baltimore. A drought followed a cold, wet spring. Amaranth, which had grown well in previous years, only got a foot or two tall. Tarahumara purple ojos beans, which were experimental, didn't grow. I have some of the seeds left and I'll try again this summer. The Acoma melon didn't germinate at all.

Hope springs eternal and I'm looking forward to the new gardening season.

Anna Stoll, Baltimore, MD

Dear Friends,

... I fantasize about someday volunteering garden space for growing out seeds, but my garden... has suffered many setbacks. Javelina raided my first garden (transplanted beets), so we fenced a small "starter" garden. Unfortunately, the fence didn't keep out the mice who enjoyed everything (except for a few herbs) unless I protected it with screens mounted on scrap wood. And even screens didn't keep out ravenous harvester ants.

My cat eventually extended her hunting territory to include the garden area, and I placated the ants with hand-picked mesquite blossoms so I had a modest garden growing when the summer rains arrived. Then multitudes of grasshoppers moved in. Starting with the spinach and beans, they didn't stop until they had stripped everything I had planted. They even ate through the fabric I wrapped around an apple tree. As a last resort, they started in on native plants. I gave up on the outside garden, planted salad greens on window sills, and looked forward to cold weather killing the grasshoppers.

We'll start building a straw bale chicken house on January 31 and plan to install lots of fencing before spring. I realize chickens aren't the best garden companions, but they can't possibly be more destructive than hordes of grasshoppers, and they should be easier to control with fences.

I would be interested in hearing from any NS/S gardeners who have experience with plagues of grasshoppers, ravenous harvester ants and poultry in the garden.

Sincerely,

Edna Weigel, Sierra Vista, AZ

We've heard Guinea fowl are hard on grasshoppers. Readers?



Keep those cards, letters and garden reports coming

NOTES FROM NEW MEXICO

The Further Adventures of Brett Bakker, Seed Collector Extraordinaire

Tales of the old time seed collectors feature mule-back forays over cliffside trails or dodging gunfire in revolutionary villages. I've gotta say that my experiences are much tamer; in fact, the biggest danger I face is continually being invited in for a bowl of red chile or cup of coffee. I can recall being fed at least three meals, given gifts of apples, piñon nuts, chicos (dried sweet corn), offered mula (homemade corn whiskey), and asked to hold the baby... oh yeah! And getting over two hundred pounds of beans, corn and squash for seed—and that in one village alone!

One morning, I arrived at a pueblo hours after a successful deer hunt. When offered some meat, I wasn't led to the kitchen but to the living room where the deer, placed on Indian blankets, was sprinkled with ceremonial cornmeal and wore strand upon strand of turquoise around its neck. A knife was placed in my hand as I was told just where and how to help skin the animal. For ceremonial reasons, the liver is eaten first raw and fresh from the deer. Guess who was offered the first bite? Besides driving home with seeds later that day, an entire front haunch of venison complete with hoof was on the front seat.

Seed collecting is no mere business transaction. It's gaining trust of people who are literally sharing their community heritage with NS/S and by extension, our customers. San Felipe Pueblo farmer Bernie Sanchez and his family sold me enough melons to fill half my pick-up and invited me to visit their home for more seed next season. Bernie and Karen were out when I arrived but their little boy DeHaven was glad to find a buddy. While waiting, we tossed around a football, played with the dogs and walked over to the cross-roads store for ice cream. Later, we rounded up a couple of stray sheep with his folks and big sister. Besides the gunnysacks of corn, ristras of chile and piles of melons, I went home with some new friends—and almost with DeHaven who was ready to go along for the ride back to Albuquerque.

Continued on page 11

News & Notes

A Foundation of Trust. Since our last newsletter, we have received a myriad of grants and grant pledges from foundations all over the country, including: *Environmental Support Center, Virginia Howard Foundation, Kuyper Foundation, Patagonia, Inc., Sol Goldman Charitable Trust, Turner Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Vanguard Public Foundation, and Wallace Genetic Foundation.* Thanks for the votes of confidence.

A Special Thanks to LIFE MEMBERS Dewitt Daggett & Julia Brown of Colorado, for donating "Brownie," their 1979 Ford half-ton pickup for the farm.

In The News! Short stories or notices about the new NS/S farm will be appearing in several national magazines this spring, including: *National Gardener, National Gardening, Plant Talk, and Wild Garden.*

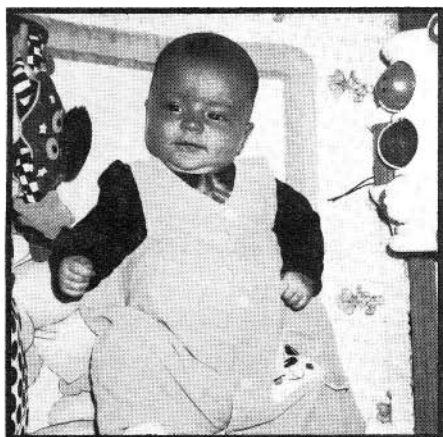
Welcome! Native Seeds/SEARCH has expanded its **Board of Directors** to sixteen, fifteen voting. Co-founder Gary Nabhan returns to the board after a well-deserved rest. Staff gardener Henry Soto brings his extensive knowledge of native crops and gardening to our planning for the farm. Ten-year NS/S member Pam Hyde-Nakai is a clinical herbalist, founder of the Sonoran Herbal Institute and on the board of the Arizona Ethnobotanical Research Association. We thank our three newest members (and the rest of the board) for giving their time and attention to NS/S.

On February 7, 1997 NS/S co-founder Dr. Barney Burns gave a wonderful **Mayo Weaving Presentation** at the **Arizona Historical Society**. Over 65 people turned out to learn about Mayo history and culture, and view beautiful slides of blankets, Mayo country, and the Mayo people. We wish to thank both **Barney Burns and Mahina Drees** for their many years of dedication to the Mayo crafts project (and to NS/S!), the Arizona Historical Society for lending us their auditorium, and Ed Severson of the Arizona Daily Star for writing an article on the event. Mayo crafts and blankets are always available at our retail store in Tucson.

Wanted: an auto engine aficionado willing to volunteer a little time to tinker with our (donated) old Datsun pickup. Please call Nancy at 881-4804. Thanks.

Thanks to Gina Siler for donating a printer—in addition to many hours of her time! Thanks and good luck in your new life.

Remember to use the new address
NS/S, 526 N. 4th Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85705



Latest NS/S gift membership recipient, Alexandra Gaither-Banchoff.

Photo by Dad.

Gift memberships

If you are looking for a way to honor a cherished friend, pay tribute to a momentous occasion or preserve the memory of a loved one, consider a gift membership or donation to Native Seeds/SEARCH. Or if you can afford it, think about renewing your own membership at a higher level. You'll feel virtuous, and the farm and all our projects will benefit.

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Native Seeds/SEARCH

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Open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, noon - 4 p.m. through April

New Mexico Office:

P.O. Box 4865, Albuquerque, NM 87196
(505) 268-9233

Open Thursday, 9:30 - 3:30 or by
appointment at 144 Harvard SE

Board of Directors: *Chairman*, Mahina Drees; *Vice Chair & Secretary*, Barney T. Burns; *Treasurer*, Don Falk; Ed Hacskeylo, Phyllis Hogan, Pam Hyde-Nakai, Angelo Joaquin, Jr., Peter Q. Lawson, Ed Mendoza, Gary Nabhan, Simon Ortiz, Enrique Salmón, Henry Soto, Ricardo Tapia, Gail Tierney, Anita Williams, & Nancy Wilson.



Staff: *Executive Director and Native American Outreach*, Angelo Joaquin, Jr.; *Administrative Assistant*, Nancy Wilson; *Bookkeeper*, Anna Ostholthoff; *Director of Conservation & Seed Bank Curator*, Suzanne Nelson; *Development Director*, Kevin Gaither-Banchoff; *Development Assistant/Events Coordinator*, Krishna Raven-Johnson; *Diabetes Project Coordinator*, Felipe Molina; *Distribution and Retail Department*, Junie Hostetler, Betsy Armstrong, Otehlia Kiser, Mary Sarvak, Marilyn Klepinger; *Volunteer Coordinator*, Mary Sarvak; *New Mexico Field Manager*, Brett Bakker; *Office Manager*, Kathy Oldman; *Seed Technician*, Otehlia Kiser; *Database Operator*, Yajaira Gray; *Gardeners*, Henry Soto, Sean Burtlew; *Native American Intern*, Kelina Lobo; *Newsletter Editor*, Brooke Gebow.

New Mexico Report

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Sometimes, seed collecting is a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Entering San Luis, Colorado for the first time, I was clueless as to where to find farmers with heirloom seeds. I halfheartedly asked the young girl behind the counter at the local store (who clearly had no idea what I was talking about). As I was about to leave, the next customer in line spoke up, directing me to a grower a couple miles down the road. After loading up on concho corn, bolita beans and habas (fava beans), he sent me to his sister and husband. Although they were the only ones in the village with any squashes after that year's extra dry season, they wouldn't hear of me leaving without one and had to be persuaded to accept even a little bit of cash for the rare pumpkin (the one that had been promised to some relatives!).

We admit we've already used Brett's piece in some fund-raising pleas, but it's worth enjoying again in the more relaxed context of the Seedhead News!

NS/S Membership Form

Check one: ☐ Renewal ☐ New member ☐ Gift

☐ Associate (\$20 per year)

☐ Low income/student (\$12 per year)

☐ Family (\$35 per year—memberships at this level receive our NS/S logo tote bag)

☐ Sustaining (\$100 per year—at this level or above, you'll receive Gary Nabhan's "Desert Legends: Restorying the Sonoran Borderlands")

☐ Patron (\$250 per year)

☐ Lifetime (\$500)

☐ Native American (free; please provide tribal affiliation _____)

☐ Additional contribution (\$ _____)

☐ Check here if you do not want your name exchanged with other groups.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment method: ☐ check ☐ money order

credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover/Novus

Card No. _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____



March 20, 21 & 22
4th Avenue Spring Street Fair
see page 6

April 17-18
10th Annual Waila Festival
see page 5

April 18
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
during William Cottonwood Days
Sonoita Creek Preserve

Join The Nature Conservancy in Patagonia on a glorious spring day to celebrate the return of the birds. Scheduled events include story readings, guided bird walks, natural history presentations, and an introduction and afternoon field trip to the NS/S farm. Bring the family and come enjoy a day with our new partners in conservation. Call the preserve (520) 394-2400 for more information.

Native Seeds/SEARCH
526 N. 4th Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85705-8450

Return Service Requested

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