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Sowing the Seeds of Change



Renee's Garden

FELTON, CA
RENEESGARDEN.COM

For more than 35 years, Renee Shepherd has been scouring the globe for seeds, testing them in her trial garden, and sharing them with her customers. Many credit her trailblazing work with expanding what's available to be grown in American backyards—and consequently eaten in our kitchens. "I look for things that taste terrific," Renee says. "Then it's my job to make sure that the growing experience is successful." Her namesake company, Renee's Garden, has a catalog filled with thousands of varieties—including 26 different sweet peas, 18 zinnias,

almost too many salad greens to count, and an expansive collection of container vegetables. Still, she finds time to write the growing instructions for the back of each seed packet. The company also donates seeds to organizations around the country for gardens at prisons, schools, and communities. In the end, it's all about making gardening approachable. She says, "I'm interested in reaching as many gardeners as we can, trying to light people's fire, and making sure everyone's happy with what they're growing."



Turtle Tree Seed

COPAQUE, NY
TURTLETREESEED.ORG

Behind its catalog of nearly 400 varieties of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and even some grains, Turtle Tree Seed boasts a secret weapon: an entire village of taster-testers and quality controllers. For 20-plus years, the seed company has operated as part of Camphill Village, an intentional community of more than 240 people that works with adults with developmental challenges. Residents live on-site with staff and volunteers (many from around the world) and share their skills to help sustain the community.

While some residents work in the coffee shop or bookbindery, others are a part of the crew that grows, harvests, cleans, packages, and ships Turtle Tree's seeds. "The quality of our seeds is really important to us," says Lia Babitch, co-general manager of Turtle Tree. "We don't want people to buy our seeds just because it's nice to support people with developmental challenges. We want people to buy our seeds because they're good." **Above (from left):** Lia Babitch with team members Ian Robb, Lissie Wormser, Christopher Duffy, Matthias Poynder-Meares, and Robbie Haynes



 BEING IN THE SEED BUSINESS, YOU CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE: