



Seed Savers  
EXCHANGE



# Thank You

2017-18

## GRATITUDE REPORT

Your generosity makes our work at Seed Savers Exchange possible, and we want to share our heartfelt appreciation for all the ways you are building a world where the biodiversity of our food and garden heritage is protected and valued.



## **YOUR IMPACT**

This gratitude report is an annual review of what we have done in the last year and where we are headed in the years to come, thanks to the generous support of people like you. At Seed Savers Exchange, we are grateful for our community of supporters who are passionate about keeping heirloom seeds where they belong—in our gardens and on our tables. We are grateful for our partners, nationwide, working to protect and share our heirloom seed supply. And we are grateful for all those who have helped build and sustain a movement, since our founding in 1975.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Supporter,

It is timely to have this report coincide with my first anniversary at Seed Savers Exchange. This year has been an incredible and inspiring time for me to connect personally to our mission and team, as well as a transformative moment in the organization. Your commitment to moving our mission forward has been energizing, as have the dedication and talent of our team on the ground at Heritage Farm. And this enthusiasm and passion are reflected in all that we do.

This includes updating our strategic plan, a project I am currently working on with our board and staff. The personal letters, meetings with supporters around the country during my travels, and warm notes from seed customers demonstrate what a connected and caring community we are part of—and have further strengthened my commitment to our common cause of keeping these seeds where they belong; in our gardens, on our tables, and in existence for generations to come. Your ideas and thoughts matter as we prioritize our work of engaging more gardeners, connecting with more organizations, and moving these rare and adaptable varieties out from our seed bank and into the field, and ultimately into the gardens of others. Whether you engage in this important movement through your work in the garden, your stewardship of seeds on the Exchange, or your involvement as a member, a donor, or an attendee of our events, I am thankful to have you at our side as we work together to preserve, share, and save our collective garden legacy.

Perhaps the most sobering—but also most uplifting—moment for me regarding the work you make possible transpired when I was at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway last February representing Seed Savers Exchange at a global gathering of seed banks. Meeting like-minded individuals from all over the world brought home the importance of protecting the biodiversity of our gardens, farms, and food systems in a manner which continues to inspire me. And we can not do this critically important work without you. For all of this, and all of you, I am grateful.

Sincerely,



Lee Buttala

Executive Director

# YEAR IN REVIEW

Hundreds of rare varieties were regenerated at our headquarters; **41 percent of those varieties were identified by our Preservation team as critically at-risk** due to either low germination rates or insufficient inventory. After the 2017 growing season, the varieties that were considered critically at-risk now have sufficient, high-quality inventory and are no longer in danger. Your continued support ensures that regardless of the condition in which seeds have arrived at Seed Savers Exchange over our 43-year history, these rare varieties will be properly stewarded and cared for in our gene bank so that they can be shared with gardeners nationwide into the future.

*We are proud to have you at our side  
celebrating the following projects and initiatives...*

## SUPPORT FOR TRIBAL FOOD SECURITY AND SEED SOVEREIGNTY

When Ed Spevak of the St. Louis Zoo's Center for Native Pollinator Conservation began working with the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska on issues of food sovereignty, food security, and pollinator health, he knew exactly where to turn for the heirloom corn, beans, and squash the Winnebago—part of the Ho-Chunk Nation—sought.

"I had personally been a member of Seed Savers Exchange for several years," he says. "...I thought the mission of Seed Savers aligned perfectly with what the Winnebago Tribe and the Saint Louis Zoo were trying to accomplish with regard to food security and sovereignty."

Spevak received a swift response to his seed-donation request: Seed Savers Exchange donated 67 pounds of seeds spanning five varieties; 'Glass Gem' corn, 'Johnson County White' corn, 'Cherokee Trail of Tears' beans, 'Hidatsa Red' beans, and 'Waltham Butternut' squash.

The Ho-Chunk are a Native-American people whose historic territory includes parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. Today, Ho-Chunk people are enrolled in two federally recognized tribes, the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

"Food defines us—it connects us from heaven to earth—and because traditional foods are unique to different native peoples, they play a huge role in what being Ho-Chunk means," says Hilery Spray of the Winnebago Tribe. "White corn is used ceremonially in the Native American Church as one of the foods that represent life, but lately no one has been growing this kind of corn, so to be able to grow it, through the wonderful generosity of Seed Savers Exchange, is a huge blessing for the Ho-Chunks."

## STEWARDED A COMMUNITY OF GARDENERS AND EMPOWERING SEED LEADERS

The value of sharing is central to our mission at Seed Savers Exchange. Thanks to recent changes to the **Seed Exchange**—our program that shares homegrown, open-pollinated varieties gardener-to-gardener—gardeners, farmers, and plant breeders can better access open-pollinated and replicable varieties through the Seed Exchange. Currently connecting a community of gardeners nationwide, this free grassroots program that facilitates the sharing of more than 16,000 varieties is now available to all gardeners. Recent refinements to the Seed Exchange website make it easier than ever to list or request homegrown seeds. Visit [exchange.seedsavers.org](http://exchange.seedsavers.org).

**The Community Seed Resource Program (CSRP)** continued to grow in 2017, its final year. The 250 new program partners that joined in 2017 brought the total number of participants since the program's 2014 inception to

approximately 720. Funded by Seed Matters of the Clif Bar Family Foundation, this four-year program helped Seed Savers Exchange support community seed-saving groups by providing toolkits, sharing access to a private Facebook group for program partners, and offering guidance to community members.

As the CSRP wrapped up, Seed Savers Exchange launched the Community Seed Network (CSN) to bridge the support that had been offered through CSRP, share access to the Seed Exchange, and implement a dual-language platform for grassroots seed initiatives across North America. Thanks to support from UNFI, this project not only connects individuals and community groups but also offers free resources in both French and English on seed saving and organizational best practices in forming community seed libraries. The CSN protects seed biodiversity conservation across North America and connects a grassroots community of gardeners. Visit [communityseednetwork.org](http://communityseednetwork.org) for more information.

*“We thought, we have a phone number and an email from someone at Seed Savers Exchange—we can do this with that lifeline.”  
Marilyn McHugh, on founding the Cleveland Seed Bank*

## THE CITIZEN SCIENCE CORPS

The Citizen Science Corps (CSC) was implemented to engage and inspire SSE members at all levels of gardening skill and experience to collaborate with our preservation staff in new, exciting ways. Participants help SSE staff to gain knowledge of regional suitability of garden crops, create descriptions for varieties that have not been evaluated by staff at Heritage Farm, and produce seeds that we will preserve and share. CSC contributors can participate in two different programs based on skill level from the beginning gardener to the expert seed saver.

## LEGACY DONOR PROJECT

Through the Legacy Donors Project and support from the 1772 Foundation, SSE seed historians were able to collect data and primary source documents on 485 varieties in the Seed Savers Exchange collection as well as capture personal narratives from nine identified “Legacy Donors.” These nine individuals proved instrumental in the burgeoning heirloom seed movement during the last half-century by preserving exceedingly rare varieties that were at risk of extinction or, at the very least, disappearance from commerce. Their foresight in gathering and stewarding these extant heirloom varieties was critical to the development of the collection that is at the center of Seed Savers Exchange’s mission—without their work, our collection, which is shared with others and stewarded for future use, would not house nearly the genetic breadth that also makes it a significant resource for breeders working to develop new varieties that may become the heirlooms of tomorrow. Learn more about these hard-working gardening masterminds at [seedsavers.org/legacy-donors](http://seedsavers.org/legacy-donors).

## HERMAN’S GARDEN SEED DONATION PROGRAM

Each year Seed Savers Exchange donates more than 60,000 packets of seed to more than 600 people and communities who garden worldwide through the Herman’s Garden program.

For Lower Columbia School Gardens in Washington State, those seeds have helped empower a community by connecting kids and families with real food and experiential learning:

*“More than 4,000 students were engaged in dynamic, hands-on cooking, science, and nutrition activities in our school gardens this year,” says Hillary Jensen. “Demand for school gardens is growing nationwide, but implementing a successful and sustainable program requires a combination of expertise, community support, and material and financial support—Seed Savers Exchange’s generous donation of seeds goes such a long way toward our continued growth.”*

# FINANCIALS

In 2017, 72 percent of our spending directly funded our mission to preserve our heirloom seed supply and distribute open-pollinated and replicable seeds to gardeners and farmers nationwide, work which keeps cherished varieties where they belong—in our gardens and on our tables.

## Total Revenue

Sales and Shipping	\$3,985,475	70%
Corporate Contributions	\$492,227	9%
Donations	\$312,013	6%
Foundation Grants	\$405,010	7%
Membership	\$304,015	5%
Conference and Events	\$86,109	1%
Investment Income	\$60,952	1%
Other Income	\$27,781	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,673,582</b>	

## Total Expenses

Program	\$3,972,661	72%
Management & General	\$1,492,080	27%
Fundraising	\$82,147	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,546,888</b>	

# OUR LEADERSHIP

## Board of Directors-Officers

**Rowen White, Chair of the Board**  
North San Juan, CA

**Neil Hamilton, JD, Vice-Chair of the Board**  
Waukee, IA

**Larry Grimstad, Secretary/Treasurer of the Board**  
Decorah, IA

## Board of Directors-Members

**Oona Coy**  
Northampton, MA

**Rosalind Creasy**  
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Chillicothe, IL

**Rob Johnston, Jr.**  
Albion, ME

**Beth Lynch, PhD**  
Decorah, IA

**Jovan Sage**  
Brunswick, GA

**Sean Sherman**  
Minneapolis, MN

## Special Advisors to the Board

**Amy Goldman Fowler, PhD**  
Rhinebeck, NY

**Diane Ott Whealy**  
Decorah, IA

# OUR SUPPORTERS

Amy Goldman Fowler  
 Amy P. Goldman Foundation  
 Maria and Geoff de Lesseps  
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 Douglas and Alice Rimer Foundation  
 Clif Bar Family Foundation  
 Curzio Caravati  
 The GPK Foundation  
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 Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
 Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation  
 Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance  
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 Oona Coy and Ben James Funds  
 Robert and Donna Hjort Memorial Fund  
 Barbara Schilling  
 Schlinger Family Foundation  
 The Seattle Foundation, Anonymous  
 Seed Matters  
 Seeds of Diversity-Canada  
 Silos and Smokestacks  
 Southern Global Seed Bank  
 Southern Exposure Seed Exchange  
 Slow Food USA  
 Sustainable Economies Law Center  
 Svalbard Global Seed Vault  
 The 1772 Foundation  
 The Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust  
 The Livestock Conservancy  
 Travel Iowa  
 Trouts Unlimited  
 UNFI  
 University of Wisconsin-Madison  
 USDA, National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation  
 USC Canada  
 The Vervane Foundation  
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 The William Wishnick Foundation  
 The Yardi Foundation

# OUR SPONSORS

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 Oneota Food Co-op  
 Root River Farm  
 Rubaiyat Restaurant  
 Seward Co-op  
 Sno Pac Foods  
 Wold Strawberries  
 Your Place

## OUR MISSION

We conserve and promote America's culturally diverse but endangered garden and food crop heritage for future generations by collecting, growing, and sharing heirloom seeds and plants.

## HOW TO GIVE

To support Seed Savers Exchange's work or to learn more about a specific program, contact Cindy Goodner at [cgoodner@seedsavers.org](mailto:cgoodner@seedsavers.org) or donate online at [seedsavers.org/donate](https://seedsavers.org/donate).

### Seed Savers Exchange

3094 North Winn Road  
Decorah, IA 52101  
(563) 382-5990 M-F 9am-5pm CST  
[seedsavers.org](https://seedsavers.org)

### VISIT

Lillian Goldman Visitors Center  
3074 North Winn Road  
Decorah, IA 52101

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