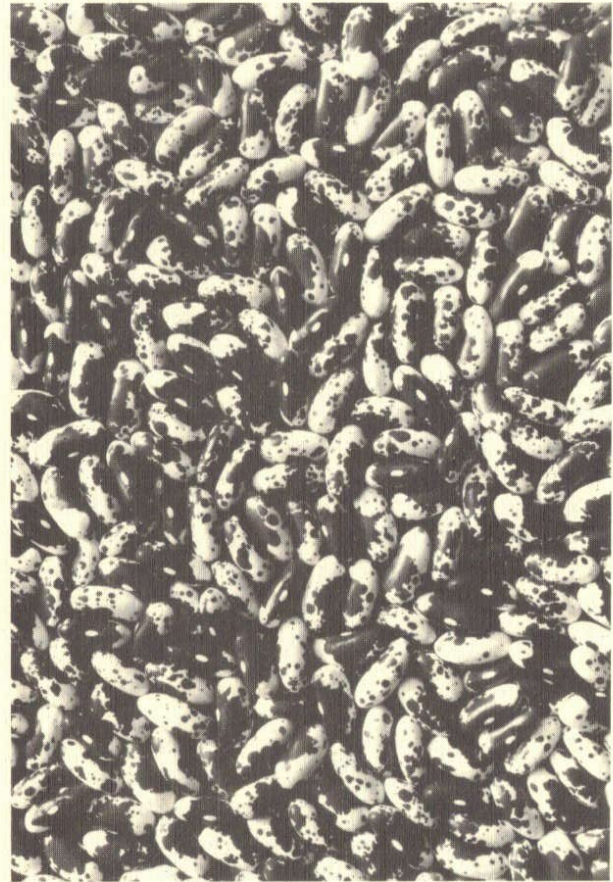


Heritage Seed Program



PRESERVING AND ENJOYING
OUR HORTICULTURAL HERITAGE

HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM
RR3, UXBRIDGE
ONTARIO, L9P 1R3
CANADA



The Heritage Seed Program is a project
of the Canadian Organic Growers



Printed on recycled paper

HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Regular Member \$12 _____ Fixed Income \$9 _____ Supporting Member \$20 _____

U.S. and Foreign \$17 _____ Donation _____

Please print clearly. Membership is for one year. Make cheques payable to the Heritage Seed Program.

Send to HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM, RR3, UXBRIDGE, ONTARIO, L9P 1R3, CANADA.

LOSS OF GENETIC DIVERSITY

Around the world a serious situation is occurring which could threaten the safety of our future food supply. People are abandoning the old varieties that they have grown for generations and instead are choosing modern hybrids. With the extinction of these varieties comes a serious loss in the genetic diversity of our food crops.

The safety of our food supply depends upon maintaining this diversity. If we have problems with diseases or pests, it is essential that we have varieties available which carry a resistance to these problems. Now that man is able to alter the climate of the entire Earth, the situation is even more critical. Scientists are searching for varieties which show resistance to acid rain and high levels of ozone as these conditions are already causing extensive damage to crops in North America. With the possibility of a greenhouse effect, we simply don't know what growing conditions we may be facing in the future.

The loss in genetic diversity is occurring for many reasons. Farmers are abandoning the traditional varieties in favour of new hybrids. There have been great changes in the seed business with a number of companies going out of business or being taken over. This has resulted in the loss of many nonhybrid, regionally adapted varieties. There has also been a loss of heirlooms which have been grown by families for years. Older people no longer find members of the next generation to continue growing their seeds. When these old people pass away, their seeds die with them.



THE HERITAGE SEED PROGRAM

In 1984 the Canadian Organic Growers held a conference to deal with this issue. Out of this grew the Heritage Seed Program, a project dedicated to searching out and preserving heirloom and endangered varieties of food crops. Our members are backyard gardeners, farmers, historical sites, botanical gardens, horticultural historians and interested individuals.

The heart of our Program consists of our network of growers - those members who in their backyards, farms or historical gardens grow out the seeds of endangered varieties, practice the proper techniques to keep the varieties pure, gather and store the seed and make it available to other members for free.

We are different from a seed company in that we do not sell seeds. If someone takes seed from our Program, we ask that they make the commitment to learn proper seed saving techniques, grow out the seed and make some of the seed they gather available to other members. In this way, these vegetables, fruits, grains, herbs and flowers are always being grown and will not become extinct. We are a living gene bank.

BECOMING A MEMBER

Anyone is welcome to join the Program, even if they do not wish to become a grower. Your membership supports our preservation projects. As a member you will receive our magazine three times a year. It contains articles on genetic preservation in Canada and around the world, ways to enjoy our horticultural heritage, seed companies which sell heirloom varieties, the heritage gardens of historical sites, and the backgrounds of some of the wonderful varieties which are a part of our heritage.

In December you will receive the Listing of all the seeds which are being offered by our members. From it you can choose varieties which you are interested in growing and preserving. Information is available which will teach you proper seed saving techniques.

Our ancestors have bequeathed us a rich agricultural and horticultural heritage of vegetables, fruits, herbs, grains and flowers which are beautiful, nutritious, delicious and resistant to diseases. With a little effort we can preserve these wonderful varieties and ensure that they will survive for our children to enjoy.

Your membership contributes towards the preservation of our horticultural heritage. Please consider becoming a part of this exciting project.

