



Alarming Loss of Edible Biodiversity

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The latest issue of National Geographic Magazine focuses on the challenge of feeding more people with dwindling and compromised natural resources. The graphic above shows the alarming loss of genetic diversity in 10 of the most popular kitchen garden crops. One way for you to be part of the solution is to save some of your own seeds each year and support seed-saving activities and groups in your area.

Here are some US-based groups well worth exploring:

1. [Seed Savers Exchange](#) [1] in Decorah, Iowa, has been pioneering heirloom seed exchanging for over 35 years. "I grow German Pink tomatoes and know that my great-great-grandparents also grew this variety in Bavaria long before I was born," says Whealy.
2. [Abundant Life Seeds](#) [2] in Cottage Grove, Oregon, is an exchange specializing in potatoes like the Austrian Crescent-Fingerling, which is often used in salads.
3. Located in western California, [Bountiful Gardens](#) [3] offers unusual hot-weather heirlooms like Egyptian spinach greens and Madras radish, as well as mushroom-growing kits.
4. [Virginia's Southern Exposure Seed Exchange](#) [4] has a selection of southern heirlooms like peanuts, peas, and cotton, along with cold-hardy perennial onion plants that produce clusters of small onions rather than single bulbs.
5. [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#) [5] has retail stores in Missouri, Connecticut, and California. This season, Baker Creek introduced Rich Sweetness 132, a small, bright-orange tomato said to taste like a pear.
6. [Native Seeds/SEARCH](#) [6] in Tucson specializes in tomatillo and teosinte, among other crops that thrive in the southwestern desert climate.
7. [Victory Seeds](#) [7], an exchange in Molalla, Oregon, sells heirloom vegetables, flowers, and herbs. New this year are the Chinese Curved Snake cucumber and the Kustovaya Oranzhevaya pumpkin.
8. Berea, Kentucky, is home to the [Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center](#) [8], where heirloom beans like the Lazy Wife bean, the Goose bean, and the Big John bean are a specialty.

Source: [National Geographic](#) [9]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.seedsavers.org>

[2] <http://www.abundantlifeseeds.com/>

[3] <http://www.bountifulgardens.org>

[4] <http://www.southernexposure.com>

[5] <http://www.rareseeds.com>

[6] <http://www.nativeseeds.org>

[7] <http://www.victoryseeds.com>

[8] <http://www.heirlooms.org/>

[9] <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/07/food-ark/siebert-text>