

Organic Agriculture and Seed Diversity

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.



- Seeds are a treasure inherited from our ancestors to feed us and future generations; they are the basis of our food production.
- Seeds are more than just food; they capture and express centuries of cultural heritage.
- Organic agriculture relies on biodiversity – genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.
- Organic farmers - often women - serve as custodians, maintaining genetic diversity by on-farm, in-situ conservation of indigenous and traditional varieties and species through farmers' seed saving and seed exchange.
- Organic plant breeding optimizes varieties for organic production conditions, and food and feed quality.
- Through participatory initiatives organic farmers are involved in seed breeding, selection and conservation.
- Organic Agriculture relies only on natural methods and refrains from unpredictable technologies, such as genetic engineering.
- Organic varieties are robust and fit to local, low-input agro-ecological conditions.
- Organic Agriculture contributes to seed security and the viability of plant varieties for the future!

Threat to plant diversity

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that about 75 per cent of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops has been lost in the last 100 years.
- The loss of a diversity of small, regional breeding stations and seed producers by enlargement of multinationals is a threat to biodiversity. Genetic diversity depends on a diversity of breeders.
- The increasingly small genetic base is not only limiting the diversity of food we get on our plate, it makes agro-systems more vulnerable to pests and diseases and farmers more dependant on external inputs.
- Genetic engineering only adds to the problems as it relies on large scale, industrialized agriculture, violating diversity and threatening gmo-free agriculture by its gene flow.



Supporting Organic Agriculture means supporting Seed Diversity

Organic agriculture deserves support, as it is a tool to preserve the world's plant genetic resources.

Therefore:

- Traditional rural knowledge on seed saving and exchange should be revitalized.
- Organic plant breeding programs need more support and attention. To include the farmers' perspective, participatory programs should be encouraged.
- To broaden the genetic base of our food crops the potential of plant genetic resources should be evaluated.
- Organic Agriculture should be protected from contamination with unwanted traits, like GMO.
- Cuisine chefs and consumers should be enabled to rediscover the enjoyment of bio-diverse food.

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OUR GOAL IS THE WORLDWIDE ADOPTION OF ECOLOGICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SOUND SYSTEMS THAT ARE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE.