

## **SEEDS OF CHANGE eNewsletter #60, January 23, 2007**

<http://www.seedsofchange.com/default.asp>

100% Organic Seeds and Food

---

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

To view on the web with full graphics:

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue\\_60/dear\\_gardeners.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_60/dear_gardeners.asp)

- Dear Organic Gardeners
  - New Introductions for the 2007 Season
  - Gardening for Nutrition
  - Farm Report: December 2006
  - News & Events
- 

### **DEAR ORGANIC GARDENERS,**

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue\\_60/dear\\_gardeners.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_60/dear_gardeners.asp)

By the time that you read this, you should have received your 2007 Seeds of Change catalog. Our theme this year is "A Feast for the Senses." And, while the theme refers to the innumerable sensory joys of growing an organic garden, this "feast" begins right on the cover with a visually stunning photo collage by catalog designer Zizi Vlaun.

"Creating this was a lot of fun," she says. "It's a bit like planting a garden...with thousands of pictures to choose from, it was exciting to place things together and see what kind of synergies developed that reflect the Seeds of Change experience."

Reflecting that experience, her inspiring digital montage includes pictures of gardeners of all ages, some of the organic seed growers that are featured throughout the catalog, one world-renowned chef, and, of course, some of the gorgeous plant varieties that you'll discover throughout the pages to follow.

In this year's catalog, in addition to hundreds of the finest organic seed varieties from around the world, including twenty-one new introductions, you'll also find everything else you'll need to create your dream garden, from tools and books, to soil amendments and pest controls. If you haven't received your free copy yet, visit us online to have one mailed to you.

Speaking of new introductions, after years of testing and generating sufficient high-quality seed stock, our research staff has come up with some great offerings for 2007. Field Coordinator Kelle Carter tells us about some of her favorites in this issue and also profiles some of the exciting tools and other products that are new for this year.

When I think of organic gardening as a feast for the senses, I also think of a feast for the body. Recent research is beginning to confirm that organically grown food is more nutritious, something many of us have known intuitively for years. But if you really want to pack your diet with nutrition, careful selection of varieties in a diverse organic garden can amp up your garden's nutritional contribution to your diet even more. In my essay, Gardening for Nutrition, I explore some ideas for growing a high-nutrition garden with Seeds of Change varieties.

In our Farm Report this month, Research Director Erica Renaud keeps us up-to-date on the activities of our New Mexico research facility; she also outlines some of the new seed quality initiatives to be put in

place for 2007. And finally, Greenhouse and Pathology Coordinator Emily Gatch shares some interesting news and ideas, from radish carving to rating the sweetness of onions.

As you begin planning your garden for 2007, rest assured that Seeds of Change will be here to help you through every step of the process with more seasonal eNewsletters, an extensive archive of articles from previous editions, and, most importantly, the seeds and supplies you need to make it all happen.

**All the best to you and yours for the New Year and for the gardening season to come,  
Scott Vlaun, Editor**

.....  
**NEW INTRODUCTIONS FOR THE 2007 SEASON**

by **Kelle Carter**

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue\\_60/2007\\_new\\_intros.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_60/2007_new_intros.asp)

You gotta love winter! There are no crops begging to be weeded, no tomatoes that have to be eaten or canned before they make their trip to the compost pile, and your back and knees finally get a rest. Don't get me wrong, I love fresh tomatoes and I do enjoy the zen-like work of weeding; however, it is nice to sit by the wood stove and look out at a garden covered in a white blanket of snow. The best thing about the winter months is planning your garden for next year—a reminder of the ever-changing cycle of life.

We have a lot of new and exciting open-pollinated introductions for the 2007 Garden Catalog, along with a hot-off-the-press Professional Seed Catalog, both of which should already be at your doorstep. In addition to keeping true to our promise of offering open-pollinated, heirloom varieties, this season we will also be providing market farmers with organic hybrid seed, available on our website and in the Professional Seed Catalog. These hybrid varieties have been selected for their combination of superior agronomic traits, adaptability to organic farming conditions, and culinary excellence.

Each season our Research Farm trials all our organic seed offerings in the field for quality assurance. Our farm experiments with sustainable agricultural methods such as composting, cover cropping, and crop rotations, to further our understanding of the organic system as a whole. In addition to our enduring classic cultivars, each season we trial new varieties that expand our current list of offerings to provide you, the customer, with the means to grow the latest and the greatest culinary and aesthetic delights. Increasing biodiversity is at the forefront of our mission statement, which is why we are committed to offering new varieties each year. These introductions incorporate the most up-to-date in organic hybrid breeding, as well as heirloom varieties brought back from the brink of extinction.

We trial numerous crop varieties on our own Research Farm, on different university farms, and on farms belonging to our seed growers. These farms are located throughout the country, so we can see how the crops perform in different locations and growing regions. Our Garden Catalog for the 2007 season includes a total of twenty-one new, organic, open-pollinated herb, vegetable, and flower seeds for your enjoyment. The [2007 Garden Discovery Seed Collection](#) includes eleven of our new varietal introductions, a great way to incorporate some exciting diversity into your garden. We also have the addition of a [South of the Border](#) herb and spice seedling collection, which includes six savory mainstays of Mexican cuisines.

Five new, diverse apple offerings are now available in our catalog and on the web. [Gravenstein Red](#) is an heirloom apple with a sweeter flavor than the popular California standard Gravenstein; it matures late. [Pink Sparkle](#) is perhaps our most interesting new apple tree, with its unique upside-down shape. This apple has a red-striped skin when ripe with a deep-pink flesh. [Rhode Island Greening](#) is a classic

American cooking apple that has been traced back to colonial times. [White Pearmain](#), an heirloom green apple that has a red blush on one side, is the oldest known English apple, dating back to AD 1200. And finally, we have [Macoun](#), a McIntosh and Jersey Black cross. This apple stores well and is delicious right off the tree.

Another new crop offering is [Applegate](#) garlic. A rare heirloom softneck garlic, Applegate has large, pure-white bulbs with a slight purple blush. The taste is mild, yet richly flavored—a great garlic for roasting.

The Gardening Catalog has some great new merchandise to ease your work in the garden: durable tools to help you get the job done and organic products to keep your garden healthy and bountiful. We are offering three new sizes of [Efficient High Output Florescent Lights](#) to help you get a jump on the season. Also available are [Biodegradable Pots](#) made of organic rice hulls—a wonderful alternative to plastic. [Grandpa's Weeder](#) is a great tool we are offering; it completely removes those hard-to-pull dandelion roots, without any stress on your back or wrists. For the fashionable, yet sensible, we have a utilitarian [Tool Belt](#) to keep you organized, along with stylish [Gardening Chaps](#) and a comfortable [Gardening Skirt](#). Be sure to register on our website to receive our free [2007 Garden Catalog](#) or the [2007 Professional Seed Catalog](#) if you are not already on our mailing list. If you order online, you can also enjoy a 5% discount.

The new introductions chosen for this season came from multiple discussions with chefs regarding the latest culinary trends. Some of these highlights include a gorgeous red/purple carrot with a deep-orange interior called [Dragon](#), a spicy arugula called [Sputnik](#), and a new purple basil with a mild mint flavor, called [Petra](#). Other farm favorites this season were [Cippolini onion](#), a medium-small, flat yellow onion with an exceptional pungent and sweet flavor, along with a dark-red romaine lettuce, rightly called [Outredgeous](#). My personal favorite this season was the [Amish Paste tomato](#). This paste tomato is a meaty giant compared to our other paste tomatoes. Its full-flavor flesh makes a deliciously thick sauce. I suggest roasting the tomatoes over an open flame until the skin is slightly blackened, then take the now-easy-to-peel fruits and blend them with garlic, olive oil, and fresh basil. The smoky flavor in the sauce makes it irresistible!

Along with tantalizing your taste buds, our new flower offerings will enliven your garden with beautiful colors and fragrances. This season we have added another calendula to our collection. [Zeolights calendula](#) is a unique variety developed by master plant breeder Frank Morton. This compact cultivar can be grown in container gardens or as a garden border. Our gardening hotline receives numerous requests for smaller, shorter growing flowers, so we have added the [Dwarf Thumbelina Mix zinnia](#) to fulfill those customer desires. This zinnia has vibrant double and single blooms that are easy to grow and great as a border or in a mass planting. We are also pleased to offer [Red Flame celosia](#), a scarlet beauty with a classic cockscomb shape. This celosia makes a great compliment to our [Crimson Violet strawflower](#) in a dried flower arrangement.

True to our commitment to biodiversity, we have included additional heirloom varieties within the 2007 Garden Catalog. Hickory King Dent corn dates back to 1875, originating from the hills and hollows of Virginia. This corn was traditionally made into hominy grits and is ideal for grinding into cornmeal. [Cherokee Purple tomato](#) is another Southern heirloom, reportedly of Cherokee origin. The fruits are large with a purple hue that infiltrates throughout the inside of the juicy flesh; this tomato begs to be sliced and eaten with salt and pepper—Southern style.

We hope you are as excited as we are for the upcoming 2007 growing season. Seeds of Change is committed to offering the best in organic varieties of seeds selected for superior flavor, beauty, and vigor. We hope you will join in fulfilling our mission of growing heirloom, rare, and traditional cultivars to

increase and promote biodiversity on your own garden plot. Enjoy your "time-off" this winter, and return to the field with a renewed sense of the limitless possibilities for your backyard ecosystem.

**Kelle Carter**  
**Field Coordinator**

.....  
**GARDENING FOR NUTRITION by Scott Vlaun**

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue\\_60/gardening\\_nutrition.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_60/gardening_nutrition.asp)

Gardens mean many things to many people; for most of us they are places of health and well-being. Whether as a place to calm the nerves after a long day in the office, or a way to get some productive exercise while enjoying a peaceful environment, organic gardens offer a sanctuary for gardeners of all ages. In addition to the physical benefits of gardening, organic gardens can also provide a wide variety of nutritious food that can form the backbone of a healthy diet.

### **Grow for diversity**

Eating foods from a number of different plant groups can go a long way towards providing a healthy balance to your family's diet. There is no reason that much of this food can't be grown right at home. Combinations of corn, beans of all types, and other grains provide a complete protein, while a broad range of vegetables, greens, and herbs, eaten both raw and cooked, add essential vitamins, minerals, and other important nutrients, such as anthocyanin, an important antioxidant, which is found in red-leafed plants. Of course, the size of your gardening space will dictate where you will want to focus your efforts to get the most "bang for your buck," but even the smallest container garden full of things like parsley, chives, bitter greens, and a few tomatoes can give your body a real boost. A half acre gardened intensively could probably provide a small family with most of the food they need for the entire year and still grow most of its own fertility.

### **Vitalize the Salad Bowl**

For me, a nutritious diet begins with the salad bowl. Like many, my early conception of "salad" was a few suspect leaves of iceberg lettuce that was probably a month old, accompanied by some slightly rubbery slices of cucumber, maybe a little shriveled green pepper, and the ubiquitous hard-as-a-rock supermarket tomato. Now, we regularly have salad with a dozen or more varieties of freshly picked leaves, which range from the deepest-green [Tatsoi](#) and iron-rich baby spinach, to protein-rich amaranth greens, and the brightest [Ruby Orach](#) and [Red Oak Leaf lettuce](#). There is probably more nutrition in a single bite than in a whole salad from the bad old days. Add some shredded [Dragon carrots](#) and [Red-Drumhead Cabbage](#), thinly sliced [Rossa di Milano onion](#), a few vitamin C-rich [Peacevine cherry tomatoes](#), and a generous handful of chopped [parsley](#) (often overlooked as a vitamin-rich food source), and you're close to a complete meal.

### **Protein**

Just the word "protein" brings to mind various animal foods, from beef, chicken, and fish, to cheese and eggs. Depending on how they are produced and prepared, these can be excellent sources of this essential building block of life. What many don't realize is that complete protein can also be grown right in the backyard. Seeds of Change offers many protein-rich varieties that, especially when combined, can provide important sources of protein.

Corn, or maize as it is know throughout most of the world, has been an essential food source for many

civilizations. Combined with beans (*Phaseolus* spp.), either fresh or dried and ground, corn can provide endless culinary variety while delivering high-quality protein. Corn and beans with other vegetables in a rich stew, corn tortillas with refried beans, or black beans and cornbread are just a few ways to enjoy this noble combination. Fresh, roasted [Anaheim chiles](#) or dried varieties, such as [Criolla Sella](#) or [Ring-o-Fire Cayenne](#), are often combined with corn and beans in many cultures. While they can add a rich spicy flavor, chiles also offer the health benefits of capsaicin, which is used for everything from lowering blood pressure to fighting infections.

A variety of other legumes can also be important protein sources. [Tepary beans](#) and [soybeans](#), especially when fermented, supply high quality, vegetable-based protein. See [eNewsletter 53](#) for more information on fermenting legumes and making tempeh. Sprouted legume seeds such as [mung beans](#) and [urd beans](#) are also good sources of protein as well as vitamins and minerals. One of the beauties of sprouting is that it can provide vital green food in the lean winter months.

[Amaranth](#) is another great source of protein that can be homegrown. Grain amaranths like [Golden Giant](#) or [Manna de Montana](#) contain 14–18 percent protein with a balanced amino acid profile. They are easy to grow on average soils and provide a majestic addition to the garden ecosystem. Cleaning the tiny seeds from the dried flowers is an art that takes a little practice to master, but once you begin to get the hang of it, it becomes a rewarding experience that connects us to numerous indigenous peoples who, for millennia, have been winnowing seeds for food. See [eNewsletter 38](#) for more on this super grain.

### **Grow Your Vitamins**

Everybody knows that the human body needs a complex array of vitamins and minerals to function optimally. While there are many supplements designed to meet these needs, there is no better source of vitamins and minerals than fresh organic vegetables as part of a balanced diet. Many of the vitamins in vegetables are associated with color. For instance the dark-green leafy vegetables such as [kale](#), [collards](#), and [spinach](#) are rich in vitamins C and E, and in calcium. Yellow and orange vegetables, like [winter squash](#) and [carrots](#), are rich in beta-carotene, a precursor of vitamin A. [Tomatoes](#) can also be an excellent source of vitamin C, and in the case of our Caro Rich variety, can also provide copious amounts of beta-carotene. Most vegetables will supply generous amounts of vitamins and minerals. Even [lettuce](#), with its reputation as lacking in nutrition, can provide a significant amount of vitamins, especially the dark green and red leafy types. Vegetables picked fresh from the garden will provide vitamins and minerals in their most complete and vital form. Some research is beginning to reveal that vegetables grown in nutrient-rich organic soils may actually be richer in certain vitamins and trace minerals than vegetables grown in exhausted soil with chemical fertilizers. And, if we grow them ourselves, we are assured that they are not contaminated with pesticides or other dangerous substances.

It is clear that a diverse plant diet can supply most if not all of our caloric and nutritional needs. There are other plant foods that have unique attributes that may be valuable for the dietary needs of certain individuals. For instance, [yacon](#) is one of the most delicious and least understood vegetables that we know of. It is rich in oligofructose (inulin), which makes it an important food for diabetics because the body does not readily metabolize this form of sugar. Another obscure yet highly valuable vegetable is [purslane](#), a common weed of which Seeds of Change sells two cultivated varieties. Purslane is the highest known source of omega-3 fatty acids, which may be important in preventing cancer. Other vegetables such as [kale](#), [broccoli](#), and [carrots](#) may also be helpful additions to a cancer-fighting diet. Gluten-free grains such as [amaranth](#) and [quinoa](#) can be important to people with wheat allergies.

In the Seeds of Change catalog, each plant group is introduced with a description that, among other information, outlines nutritional attributes of the plant varieties that follow. Having a general

understanding about human nutrition and understanding your own specific dietary needs can help the health-conscious organic gardener to plan a garden that offers not only the rich rewards of flavor and beauty, but also goes a long way to maintaining the health and vitality of the gardener and those lucky enough to enjoy the fruits of her labor.

**Scott Vlaun**  
**Editor**

.....  
**FARM REPORT: DECEMBER 2006 by Erica Renaud**

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/newsletter/issue\\_60/farmreport.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/newsletter/issue_60/farmreport.asp)

With unprecedented warm days, it is not surprising that we are still outside tilling, seeding rye, harvesting leeks, and adding to the compost pile; however, outside activities are not the norm these days. While Emily Skelton leads the team through seed cleaning and quality testing, with the help of Will Emmett and Wade Collins, the rest of us have dispersed to various projects. Emily Gatch is hot-water treating any seed lots with potential seed-borne diseases, while Kelle Carter organizes all of her field notes from the growing season. Joe and Erazmo have continued with outside building projects; they have moved from the pot washing station to replacing the storage shed roof. I am, as usual, pinned to my desk collating research reports and developing plans for 2007 trialing and breeding projects.

The biggest task over the last few months has been the Farm's contributions to the Professional and Garden seed catalogs. Some of you will have already received the new Professional Seed Catalog, which offers the professional grower over 200 varieties that have been trialed on our farm and on working organic farms to determine their appropriateness for larger production systems and a variety of markets. The Garden Catalog should also have arrived on your doorstep. It includes over twenty new varieties and dozens of different tools and books to support you in your organic garden and organic kitchen. The Farm staff propagates and cultivates these varieties to support Seeds of Change in gathering the most accurate data for the catalogs and seed packs.

To enhance efficiencies and capacity, we are preparing for some major changes in our operations in 2007. In order to further develop our seed-cleaning capabilities, we will add a Spiral Separator, a Belt Grader, and an Indent Cylinder. As we enhance our brassica seed production and breeding programs, we have chosen some equipment that will improve our ability to clean these small, round seeds as thoroughly as possible. Both the Spiral Separator and the Belt Grader will be used to separate round seeds from other seeds. This is particularly important if there are any weed seeds that are flat or triangular in a round-seeded lot. The Seed Indent Cylinder will be used to separate plant parts and weeds in carrots, onions, and lettuce seeds as well as in some flower varieties. The Indent Cylinder can also calibrate seeds based on their length to obtain more uniformity in a seed lot that can then be pelletized for production farming.

In 2007, we will also be focusing on the efficiency and quality of our pathology and testing program. As we expand our Professional Seed Program, we are simultaneously working to address disease concerns of professional growers in the regions in which we sell seed. Part of that program has been to screen our varieties in any crop groups that we know to be at risk of contracting any diseases. This project will improve and expand the capacity of Seeds of Change's Quality Program by providing the equipment necessary to hot-water treat seed lots that have tested positive for seed-borne diseases.

A professional seed company must be able to assure its customers that seed-health safeguards are in place and that both preventative and curative measures are taken to ensure the absence of seed-borne diseases.

A small hot-water treatment system was devised in 2005 as a predecessor to a full-scale seed treatment operation. The new seed disinfection unit that we will install in 2007 will have the capacity to increase treatment to 33L per batch compared to the 0.3L we were able to treat previously.

We do hope you are enjoying a restful winter break. Have confidence that we are carefully cleaning, testing, and trialing our seed for your gardens and farms. We want to encourage those of you with unfrozen ground to keep sowing your winter cover crops, as we continue to do. It may be the eleventh hour, but winter rye, even planted at this late date, will still help protect our soil from erosion and, in the spring, will offer fertility to our organic soils.

**With best wishes for the New Year,  
Erica Renaud  
Research and Farm Manager & the Farm Staff at Seeds of Change**

---

## **NEWS & VIEWS**

[http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue\\_60/news.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/enewsletter/issue_60/news.asp)

### **UC Davis and The Davis Farmers Market are Joining Forces**

UC Davis and the Davis Farmers Market are joining forces to provide local produce to college students as an alternative to the typical fast-food fare that fuels this demographic. The Department of Agriculture's Farmers Market Promotion Program awarded a \$41,000 grant to the Davis Farmers Market to create a market on the UC Davis campus every Wednesday, with approximately ten area farmers participating. Ramen noodle suppliers everywhere are watching this trend with anxiety!

Read more about the project at <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/news/0609cpr.htm>

---

### **Who Owns The Word "Sweet"?**

The world of onion production just got a little more dramatic. The Supreme Court of Georgia ruled that Vidalia onion growers are allowed to add extra labels to their onions to certify their sweetness, as determined by the National Onion Lab. According to 1986 legislation, any onions sold as Vidalia must be produced in one of the twenty Georgia counties in which soil conditions are supposedly responsible for the legendary sweetness of this variety. The National Onion Lab has now made a testing service available that rates onions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the sweetest. Customers can now be assured of the sweetness of their onions, but is "sweet" now off-limits to those who don't want to send their product to the Onion Lab? This writer simply wants to know how one would go about getting a job at the Onion Lab, because then her parents would be forced to explain their daughter's employment to a chorus of giggles.

For more details, see <http://www.producenews.com/storydetail.cfm?ID=6451>

---

### **Radish Night**

For those in need of a new holiday tradition, join the residents of Oaxaca in their December 23rd celebration of La Noche de Rabanos (Night of the Radishes), when the town center becomes a stage for

elaborately carved radish sculptures representing religious and cultural scenes. The event has its origins in the centuries-old tradition of the Christmas-vigil farmers market, for which vendors began creating the imaginative displays to attract customers. It's not too early to mark your 2007 calendar, and it certainly will take quite a few rashishes and a lot of practice!

For more photos visit [http://www.si-oaxaca.com/noche\\_de\\_rabanos%202005.htm](http://www.si-oaxaca.com/noche_de_rabanos%202005.htm)

.....  
Please send letters regarding this eNewsletter to [editor@seedsofchange.com](mailto:editor@seedsofchange.com).  
Letters should include your full name and location and may be edited for purposes of clarity and space.

Subscribe to our Garden Help Forum here:  
[http://www.seedsofchange.com/digging/garden\\_forum.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/digging/garden_forum.asp)

Subscribe or Unsubscribe to this eNewsletter at:  
[http://www.seedsofchange.com/cutting\\_edge/enewsletter.asp](http://www.seedsofchange.com/cutting_edge/enewsletter.asp)

To visit our homepage click here: <http://www.seedsofchange.com/default.asp>  
Copyright 2007 Seeds of Change. All rights reserved. 1-888-762-7333