

For Immediate Release

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Learn why and how to save seed

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—April 24, 2012—A workshop for farmers and gardeners on why and how to save seed will be held Saturday and Sunday, May 19 and 20, at Noho‘ana Farm in Waikapu and Kupa‘a Farm in Kula with an optional farm tour on Monday, May 21, at The Maui Farm in Makawao. The registration and scholarship application deadline is May 11.

The two-day workshop is designed to create a practical working knowledge of seed growing, botany and biology, plant selection, seed harvesting, cleaning, and saving. It is offered by the Hawai‘i State Public Seed Initiative and funded by a Ceres Trust grant awarded to The Kohala Center.

The workshop includes lectures and hands-on fieldwork so participants can practice harvesting, selecting, cleaning, and storing fresh seed. Fieldwork focuses on growing lettuce and tomato and on seed and taro propagation. Strategies to account for differences in elevation, weather patterns, and rainfall will also be discussed.

Among the presenters sharing their knowledge are:

- Hector Valenzuela, Ph.D., College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Relations (CTAHR) Extension, vegetable specialist;
- Russell Nagata, Ph.D., CTAHR County of Hawai‘i Extension administrator, lettuce propagation and seed production specialist;
- Glenn Teves, CTAHR Moloka‘i Extension Office, taro and tomato propagation specialist;
- Paul Massey, president/director of Regenerations Botanical Garden on Kaua‘i and manager of the Kaua‘i Community Seed Bank;
- Nikki Duncan, certified GrowBiointensive instructor through the non-profit Ecology Action, master gardener, and owner of Orr Creek Farm;
- Hōkūao Pellegrino, cultural resource specialist, *kalo* farmer, and owner of Noho ‘ana Farm;
- Gerry Ross, co-owner of Kupa‘a Farms; and
- Nancy Redfeather, program director of the Hawai‘i Public Seed Initiative and the Hawai‘i Island School Garden Network, and co-owner of Kawanui Farm on Hawai‘i Island.

“By learning to save seed, farmers and gardeners can help to halt the loss of diversity in our food supply experienced over the last century,” said Lyn Howe of The Kohala Center and Hawai‘i Public Seed Project assistant.

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“A 1983 study conducted by the Rural Advancement Foundation surveyed 66 crops and found that 93 percent of varieties are extinct. More than 300 varieties of corn existed 80 years ago; now only 12 varieties remain. Tomato varieties have dwindled from 408 to 79; peas from 408 to 25—and the list goes on. Large corporations have bought out many seed suppliers; and this consolidation of seed, combined with the loss of knowledge of seed-saving practices, has resulted in the disappearance of thousands of varieties of heirloom, open-pollinated seeds,” Howe said.

The cost of the workshop is \$50 for both days and includes a seed manual, a catered lunch of local farm fresh foods on both days and the optional farm tour. Space is limited to 45 participants. For more details and registration information, visit <http://www.kohalacenter.org/seedbasicsworkshop/maui.html>.

Five youth scholarships will be offered to grade 11 through college level students who are interested in agriculture. Contact Howe at (808) 936-7040 or seedproject@kohalacenter.org for more information on scholarship opportunities.

Also available on the above registration Web site are the agenda, directions to workshop locations, and photos from workshops held on Kaua‘i in November and on Oahu in March. For a firsthand account of the November workshop on Kaua‘i, see “The State of Seed” in the Hawai‘i Homegrown Food Network newsletter at <http://hawaiihomegrown.net/reports/288-thegardentalks-the-state-of-seeds>.

Paul Myers, a home gardener who attended the Kaua‘i workshop, said, “The Kaua‘i seed workshop demystified the basics of gathering my own seeds and empowered me to imagine a greater involvement with our garden. Bringing this knowledge and these friendships back to the garden has invigorated our daily work with enthusiasm and the knowledge that we are not doing this alone.”

Workshops are planned for Moloka‘i in August and for Hawai‘i Island later this year.

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[photo caption for Harvesting Seed]

Kaua‘i workshop participants harvest brassica seeds grown at Regenerations Garden in Kilauea.

[photo caption for Kauai Workshop Taro]

Cutting taro for *huli*