

For Immediate Release

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Learn why and how to save seed at weekend workshop

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—October 11, 2012—Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden in Captain Cook is the site for the annual West Hawai‘i seed exchange and a weekend workshop on seed production and seed saving methods coming up in November.

The 10th Annual West Hawai‘i Community Seed Exchange will be from 3–5 p.m. Friday, November 2, at the garden. Attendees are invited to share seeds, ideas, and to get to know the community of “seed” people.

The Seed Basics and Production Workshop for Farmers and Gardeners will be from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, November 3, and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, November 4, at the garden.

Cost for the two-day workshop is \$50, which includes a seed manual and lunch on both days. Five youth scholarships are available for students in grades 11 through college who are interested in agriculture. For workshop registration and to apply for the youth scholarships, visit <http://www.kohalacenter.org/seedbasicsworkshop/about.html>. For information, contact Lyn Howe, Hawai‘i Public Seed workshop coordinator, at (808) 756-5310 or seedproject@kohalacenter.org. Registration deadline is October 15. Camping will be available for workshop attendees on Friday and Saturday night at the garden; contact Howe for reservations.

The workshop is offered by Hawai‘i Public Seed Initiative and made possible through the support of the CERES Trust and The Kohala Center. It is designed to create a practical working knowledge of seed production, botany and biology, techniques for plant selection, how to conduct variety trials, disease issues, seed harvesting, cleaning, and proper seed saving and storage. Presentations and hands-on fieldwork will focus on the examples of growing lettuce and tomato to seed. Propagation of the Hawaiian crops, sweet potato, and taro will be discussed.

Workshop participants will be able to practice harvesting and cleaning seed as well as learn how to select, prepare, and store fresh seed. They will learn strategies to account for differences in elevation, weather patterns, rainfall, and disease resistance, as well as share ideas for creating island seed networks.

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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;
- 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; and
- Paul Massey, president/director of Regenerations Botanical Garden, Kaua‘i, and manager of the Kaua‘i Community Seed Bank.

“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,” Howe said. “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.”

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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*.