

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Learn to save seed at Kaua‘i workshop

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—September 27, 2011—The first in a statewide series of workshops for farmers and gardeners on seed saving will be held November 6 and 7 on Kaua‘i.

The two-day workshops, funded by a Ceres Trust grant awarded to The Kohala Center, are designed to create a practical working knowledge of seed growing, botany and biology, selection, harvesting, cleaning, and saving. Each workshop will include hands-on fieldwork. Future workshops will also be held on Maui, O‘ahu, Moloka‘i, and Hawai‘i Island.

By learning to save seed, farmers and gardeners can help to halt the loss of diversity in our food supply that we have been experiencing over the last century. 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.

The Kaua‘i workshop begins on Sunday, November 6, in the Kaua‘i Community College Elections Building and includes sessions on:

- History of Seed in Hawai‘i and the Global Perspective on Seed presented by Hector Valenzuela, Ph.D., University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Extension Vegetable Specialist;
- Seed Production Basics—Botany and Biology by Russell Nagata, Ph.D., CTAHR County of Hawai‘i Extension Administrator, and Paul Massey, Regenerations Botanical Garden;
- Maintaining Crop Genetics: Cultivation, Selection, Harvesting, and Storage of Seed by Nagata and Massey;
- Kalo propagation and production with Dimi Rivera and Chris Kobayashi of Wai‘oli Farm and Glenn Teves of the CTAHR Molokai Extension Office; and
- Variety Trials and Trial Log, Valenzuela.

Other presenters include Jill Richardson of Regenerations Botanical Garden and Hawai‘i Public Seed Initiative Coordinator Nancy Redfeather of The Kohala Center.

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On Monday, November 7, the workshop begins at Regenerations Seeds Garden near Kilauea where expert lettuce breeder Nagata will hone participants' knowledge of lettuce biology, growing, selection, and saving of our favorite salad green; and Teves will share his expertise on growing tomatoes to seed. In the afternoon, the group will travel to Wai'oli Farm in Hanalei to meet with Rivera and Kobayashi to discuss kalo production.

An optional tour will be offered on Tuesday, November 8. For details, see <http://kohalacenter.org/publicseedinitiative/about.html>.

Workshop cost is \$50 for both days, including lunches by Chef Keli Ranke, the optional farm tour, and the Seed Basics Manual—Year 1. Five full scholarships will be offered to Kaua'i youth (ages 14–21) interested in agriculture. October 20 is the deadline for both registration and scholarship applications.

The full agenda and directions, registration, and scholarship forms are available at <http://kohalacenter.org/publicseedinitiative/about.html>, or by contacting Jill Richardson at jr@ribg.org or 808-652-4118. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required to have lunch on both days and to receive the Seed Manual.

The Kohala Center is an independent, not-for-profit center for research and education *about* and *for* the environment. The Kohala Center builds local, regional, national and international partnerships that focus on global challenges—energy self-reliance, food self-reliance, and ecosystem health—in a locally relevant and internationally valuable way. See www.kohalacenter.org.