

Train the Trainers, Hawaii Public Seed Initiative

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On September 13-15th, 2013, the Hawaii Public Seed Initiative (HPSI) held the last of its series in the 2 year Seed Production workshops. 25 participants from all 5 islands were chosen to attend the “Train the Trainers” held at the Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Gardens in Kona. These participants had either attended one of the previous years HPSI 2 day Seed Basics workshops or had seed saving knowledge or experience. Each individual was asked to make a commitment to help to create a seed network on his or her respective islands.

This 3 day workshop, designed to take seed saving to the next level with a “hands on” approach, focused on seed germination, seed storage, variety trials and record keeping, effects of microclimates on genetic expression, vernalization techniques for biennial crops, bio-security, seed and plant diseases, vegetatively propagated crops and other more advanced seed production topics.

A morning spent at Kawanui Farm in Kealahou demonstrated crop diversity, organic farming methods and an experience of what can be accomplished when crops are selected for their ability to do well in a particular locale and seed from these crops is then saved and grown over generations. Participants were shown the steps required to maintain seed purity in out crossers such as squash and how to successfully hand pollinate and bag flowers for later seed collection. Red Merlot and Little Gem, lettuce varieties that were given to participants the previous year for seed trials were crossed by Russell Nagata (UH Hawai'i CTHAR). This cross pollinated seed was then grown in 3 different microclimates on Hawai'i island and several hundred 6 week old plants were brought to the workshop to demonstrate the effects on color and growth and the wide variation of genetic expression you can expect in an F1 cross. Selection, rouging, lettuce hand pollination and creating new varieties were discussed using these plants as example.

Another major component of the workshop was evaluating various models of seed networks that have been established around



CTAHR's Russell Nagata discussing F1 lettuce cross diversity.

the country. Each island group was then asked to create and present a plan, timeline and determine help required to succeed in creating their island networks.

We look forward to watching these networks unfold and expand. Hawai'i island and O'ahu have already initiated "seed share" stations in several locations. These stations provide free seeds to communities and offer an educational component about seed saving. There are plans to expand these stations into permanent seed lending libraries using successful models existing in other parts of the county. The number of seed exchanges are growing on the islands as a result of this work and Hawai'i island has held it's first "Seedy Saturday" where interested individuals come together to learn more about seed saving techniques and create localized seed networks.

The Hawai'i Public Seed Initiative (HSPI), a program of The Kohala Center made possible with support from Ceres Trust, is designed to help our state's farmers and gardeners select, grow, harvest, store, and improve seed varieties that will thrive in Hawai'i. We are grateful for the help and participation from our presenters Russell Nagata and Glenn Teves (Hawai'i & Moloka'i CTAHR), Hector Valenzuela (UH Mānoa CTAHR), Alvin Yoshinaga (Lyon Arboretum, retired) and Paul Massey (Regenerations Kaua'i).

For more information, upcoming programs and events check out our Facebook page Hawaii Public Seed Initiative or visit our website <http://kohalacenter.org/publicseedinitiative/about.html>



Seed Share Station.

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