

The Ira Wallace Seed School

Scholarship Fundraiser



OUR FOOD SYSTEM IS UNDER SEVERE THREATS

Over the past century or so, there has been a seventy-five percent decline in agricultural biodiversity, meaning many varieties of edible plants are no longer available today. This is mainly due to the rise of industrialized agriculture. Once lost biodiversity for food and agriculture cannot be recovered.



Of some 6,000 plant species cultivated for food . . . only nine account for 66 percent of total crop production.

"Of some 6,000 plant species cultivated for food, fewer than 200 contribute substantially to global food output, and only nine account for 66 percent of total crop production. . . . Less biodiversity means that plants and animals are more vulnerable to pests and diseases. Compounded by our reliance on fewer and fewer species to feed ourselves, the increasing loss of biodiversity for food and agriculture puts food security and nutrition at risk."



"Biodiversity is critical for safeguarding global food security, underpinning healthy and nutritious diets. We need to use biodiversity in a sustainable way, so that we can better respond to rising climate change challenges and produce food in a way that doesn't harm our environment."

José Graziano da Silva, former
Director-General of the Food and
Agriculture Organization of the United
Nations (FAO) from 2012 to 2019

The IRA WALLACE SEED SCHOOL: Expanding Agrobiodiversity

They call her the godmother of southern seeds. Lovingly many refer to her as Mama Ira. Gardener, author, and teacher, Ira Wallace is notably associated with the cooperative heirloom seed company, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, where she serves in a managerial capacity. Wallace's work extends into the realm of seed conservation, focusing on heirloom and open-pollinated seeds, which are pivotal for biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

The Ira Wallace Seed School ([IWSS](#)), is an initiative of the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance ([UCFA](#)), a program of the nonprofit [STEAM ONWARD](#). The IWSS is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of ethical seed practitioners, with a focus on empowering BIPOC farmers through knowledge, skills, and a moral framework rooted in historical and political understanding of food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture.



Change Starts With Seeds

Seeds are the foundation of our food system. But over the past decades the corporate consolidation of seeds has diminished the agrobiodiversity of our food crops.

Preservation

Preserving a diverse supply of climate adapted culturally meaningful heirloom seeds and crops supports a more resilient food system — one better equipped to withstand climate change and ecological disruptions.

Ecological Adaptations

Heirloom varieties often have unique adaptations to pests, diseases, and climate stressors. The traditional ecological knowledge of BIPOC farmers helps in maintaining and expanding this genetic diversity.



Approximately half of the students enrolled in the IWSS are only able to pay partial tuition. Your donation will help fund full and partial scholarships so that tuition is never a barrier for aspiring seed stewards. For our 9-month course, *Introduction to Ethical Seed Breeding*, the tuition is \$650. In addition, we offer a mini course for \$300 entitled *Seed Ethics*.

Support for BIPOC seed farmers contributes to a more diversified and a more resilient food system.

YOUR GENEROSITY WILL HAVE A PROFUND IMPACT

Please consider making a contribution to the Ira Wallace Seed School Scholarship Fund. We hope you will join us in honoring Ira Wallace's legacy of cultivating a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable agricultural future.

Every dollar you donate to our scholarship fund ensures that a student, committed to the preservation of heirloom seeds and sustainable farming, can receive the training they need to succeed.

DONATE NOW!

And remember, your support doesn't just fund a scholarship—it helps rewrite the future of farming. Thank you for being part of this transformation.

Thank you for considering a gift to support this important work. **Donate directly online at [GOFUNDME.COM](https://www.gofundme.com)**, then type "Ira Wallace" in the search bar.

Or send a check payable to **STEAM ONWARD/UCFA** with "Ira Wallace Seed School Scholarship Fund" in the memo line.



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