

# THE SEED CAST

MARCH 2024, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3



CHECK OUT OUR UJAMAA SEEDS CATALOG

## NEWS BRIEF

The USDA released a statement on the fiscal year 2025 budget.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

From webinars on sustainable farming practices to virtual farm tours, we have a lineup that's sure to inspire and educate. [READ MORE...](#)

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## Small Farm Income Boosters

Written by Kathy Anderson

**The minimum criteria to meet the federal definition of a farm is sales of \$1,000 or more of agricultural products.**

According to a 2022 [farm summary](#) by the US Department of Agriculture, 51.0 percent of all farms earned less than \$10,000 in sales and 81.5 percent of all farms had less than \$100,000 in sales in 2021. Along with feeding their families, farmers must diversify their income streams and increase side hustles to prosper in the wake of adverse consumer trends and high costs associated with land leases and ownership as well as running a farm business. There are many ways to tap into the local farm economy to boost product sales and take advantage of farm real estate. The keys to taking on additional work efforts are to utilize effective time management, limit yourself to five or less business lines, including farming, and get help from family, friends, and volunteers. Below are a few ideas to re-engage an old passion, generate income from a hobby, or try something new.

- Agritourism or Edu-tourism.
- Community supported agriculture.
- Create crop-based value-added products such as herbal teas, paper cards and crafts, potpourri or sachets, skin care cleansers or moisturizing products, and textiles such as dyed crochet or knit wares.
- Farmers market vending or school provider vendor.
- Foraging and hiking ventures.
- Lease space to artisanal creatives and agriculture or healing practitioners.
- Offer agricultural lectures, art affairs, and book clubs as swanky experiences.
- Offer small group festivals, pick-your-own events, elegant tastings, or unique adventures.
- Provide for school and club field trips.

**The best idea of all...become a catalog seed grower for Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance!**

**UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE**

A collective of emergent and seasoned growers  
[www.ujamaafarms.com](http://www.ujamaafarms.com)

**DONATE**

NEWS BRIEF

Secretary Vilsack on Budget

On March 11, 2024, the USDA released a statement on the fiscal year 2025 budget. The USDA budget proposals include to equip farmers, foresters, and ranchers with the information, science, and tools for success, combating the climate crisis through land conservation and protection, and to support a nutrition safety net.

[Statement by Secretary Vilsack on the President's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget | USDA](#)



Bonnetta Adeb with Erica Allen, Dr. Higgins, farm manager, and Candace Clark at the Tuskegee University Urban Agricultural Innovation Center

Order seeds at [ujamaaseeds.com](http://ujamaaseeds.com)

The Germinator - Pea, Fish-Eyed

Written by the Ujamaa Seed Collective

*Vigna unguiculata*



The fish-eyed pea is a key ingredient in Hoppin' John (peas, rice and pork) and part of African-American "soul food" cuisine. It is actually a bean. These "peas" are plump and cream-colored with big, beautiful black eyes that grow 10-15 to a pod on lovely, productive, and vigorous 6' tall vines with white flowers. The tender young pods and leaves are tasty raw or cooked, though this variety is primarily grown for shelling when fresh or dried.

Grandma's Hands

LAUNDRY DETERGENT



Re-purpose a gallon size natural soap container.

- Fill with water  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
- Add 1 cup baking soda.
- Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid castile soap.
- Top off with water.
- Add 10 to 20 drops of organic essential oil, if desired.

Shake before each use. Add about 1 cup of detergent to laundry load. To reduce static in dryer, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup white vinegar to wash load.



# Uninvited Pests

Written by Karen Bowlding | Photos by Kathy Anderson

At the UCFA demonstration seed farm and training ground, we are growing out ultracross collards for a spring seed harvest. Michele Coleman, Rick Carter, Kathy Anderson, and Faith Bishop have been diligently monitoring the collards for pest infestation. The weather changed and the aphids went to work. Michele discovered them in the second week of March.

Aphids are small insects that feed by pulling the nutrients out of the plants. They are under 1/4" long and virtually unseen to the naked eye. They can attack all parts of the plant, even the roots.

Because the bugs quickly multiply, we had to get control of our uninvited pests. The crew is testing soapy water to see if it wipes out the pest population and prevents further damage. So far, we limited the destruction to about 12 plants in one row and some are already recovering. Plan B is in place; hoping for the best. We are going at least 3 times a week to check our work and the condition of the collards. After the plants flower and dry out, we will harvest the seeds and get the germination test done.

To determine if aphids are infesting your collards, look for bumpy clusters of small green insects on the leaves and stems. The plants will appear stressed and have yellowish, misshaped or curled leaves, holes, and stunted growth. Act swiftly to prevent a population explosion and enjoy your collards this spring.



Michele Coleman

## UPCOMING EVENTS

UCFA members will be participating in these upcoming conferences. Join us!

**The Appalachian Seed Swap** Buy-Sell-Trade event will be held Saturday April 6, 2024 9am-1pm at Pike Central High School, 100 Winners Circle Drive, Pikeville, Kentucky. This heirloom seed and plant event attracts farmers, seed savers, and vendors from across the United States and features books, farm produces, handcrafted gifts, and agricultural and conservation resource agencies. Pike County Extension office: 606.432.2534.

**Soul Fire Farm 2024 Braiding Seeds Fellowship** Application opened March 1, 2-24 and applications are due May 1, 2024. Soul Fire Farm, in collaboration with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, will provide beginning farmers with mentorship, professional development, and resources to support their livelihood on land.

**University of Vermont AgroTek Innovation Program** applications are due April 7, 2024. This program for 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> graders will include opportunities to conduct experiments using an inquiry-based approach to explore innovative agrotechnology curricula: culturing cells for healthier soils, shifting the waste to value paradigm, and using virtual reality for more precise agriculture. [AgroTek Innovation Program for 7th-11th Graders | 4-H and Youth | The University of Vermont \(uvm.edu\)](#)

# Why Heirloom Seeds

Written by Kathy Anderson

**A**n heirloom is defined as a ‘valuable object that has belonged to the same family for many years’. One of the most important items passed through are seeds. Heirloom, in reference to seeds, is generally defined as any cross or self-pollinated open fertilized plant variety produced in cultivation that has been around for fifty years or more. Open pollination can occur naturally through bird, insect, or wind activity. These historic seeds develop into plants that retain their characteristics, flavors, and traits. Heirloom seeds are exceptional for all levels of the food chain and the ecosystem. Below is a list of a few reasons for planting, harvesting, and sharing heirloom seeds.

- Connection to our ancestry and cultural heritage
- Crop and horticultural diversity
- Crop nutritional density
- Heirloom plant produced seeds can be saved and replanted
- Historic preservation
- Human and wildlife survival
- No genetic modification or engineering
- Not intellectual property
- Presentation of well-balanced full bitter, salty, savory, sour, and sweet flavors and taste fusions
- Preservation of endangered and rare plant species
- Regional adaptation and resiliency to pressures of disease, pests, temperature, and weather
- True to type of the parent plant
- Vibrant coloring and unique shapes

Our favorite thing about heirloom seeds is the wonderful seeds stories shared when they exchange hands. Be sure to purchase seeds at [ujammaseeds.com](http://ujammaseeds.com) and cultivate a story for future generations.



Purple Tomatillo

## For the Culture

### EGGPLANT, THAI ROUND

The Thai Round has a long history of being grown in a particular region of coastal Karnataka state in India, specifically a village called Mattu (or Matti), in the Udupi region. It's believed to have been a local specialty there for over 400 years, but it is also popular in Thailand and Vietnam.



## COLLARDZ 4 KIDZ

Through the **COLLARDZ 4 KIDZ** project, youth learn the basics of seed breeding by starting with the nutrient dense green vegetable crop known as collard greens. The project starts at the beginning of the school year with the planting of the collard seeds. In May or June, the youth will harvest and save seeds from the collard of their choice. To demonstrate the amazing biodiversity that exists in this amazing crop, their packet includes six varieties of heirloom collards.

Each COLLARDZ 4 KIDZ project participant will receive:

- Lesson plans
- 6 Varieties of collard seeds
- The *Heirloom Collard Seed-Saving Guide*,
- *COLLARDS*, an 84-page full-color booklet.
- An 11" x 17" COLLARDZ 4 KIDZ poster,
- Access to Seed Links for uploading growing data
- Online gatherings with other project participants



# PRODUCER PROFILE

Written by Kathy Anderson

**Roots 'n Earth** is the name of the family farm where Roxanne Masters and her Jamaican-Mexican family practices ancestral farming and gardening using sustainable practices and creates artisan crafts, fiber art, woodworks, and digital art.



**What is the meaning behind your farm name?** My husband is from Mexico and he grew up around farming. My Dad grew up around farming and moved to New York and could not farm. We moved to Oregon to practice permaculture. We soon realized that it was indigenous practices commodified. We decided to take it upon ourselves to get back to our roots. It is us getting our roots back to the earth.

**What seed do you cultivate that is important to your birth culture and your family's cultural heritage?** Gungo peas (pigeon peas). We only got them on special occasions because they were hard to find in California. We used kidney beans instead, For Christmas we'd have Gungo peas. I am growing the northern adapted pea since the native Jamaican pea doesn't flower here.

**What is your thinking about justice in farming?** There's so much injustice in terms of the labor that is used in farming, the food that is grown, and how hard it is to make a living as a farmer. I want people to get back to growing their own food in community, where different people can focus on things they love to grow, even in small spaces. Some don't realize how empowering it is to grow your own food and seed and provide for themselves. Too many people know of each other, but are not doing things together. We need to unite and do things on a bigger scale to help more people. This won't necessarily solve injustice, but on a community level it can allow us to be more resilient and united.

<https://rootsandearth.weebly.com/>

## Little Harvests: Spring Gardening with Children

Written by Karen Bowlding

Ah, spring is but a few weeks away. The flowering bulbs are popping up and managing to remain during the last few days frost. It's time to make your garden plan. What will you grow? What will the children eat? How can they help? First, check you state's planting schedule and hardiness zone for guidance on which vegetables grow well in your area. If you don't know the frost date for your zip code, you can find it online at:

<https://garden.org/apps/frost-dates>.

**What will you grow?** Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collard, onions, pepper, radish, spinach and tomatoes can be sown in early spring. Ujamaa Seeds has Golden Acre Cabbage, Roman Cauliflower, Cherry Belle Radish, Spotlight Bell Mix Peppers, and more.

**What will the children eat?** When children participate, they will most likely eat what they grow. Ask them to

choose at least four vegetables and think about the meal they could easily prepare after harvest.

**How can they help?** Select an area in your garden and work with children to prepare the bed by removing old leaves, grass, and weeds. Once the ground warms up a bit, the children can help add more soil and compost and mix using small garden tools. Buy a watering bucket and non-toxic paint suitable for gardening use and have the children paint their own buckets or make plant tags using popsicle sticks and permanent markers. The children can record what and where they planted and the harvest dates in their garden journal.

Happy gardening!



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# UJAMAASEEDS.COM

Check Out Some of Our New Seeds for 2024



**MUSTARD**  
Osaka Purple



**BEAN**  
Scarlet Runner



**WATERMELON**  
Stone Mountain



**BEAN**  
Winged



**GOURD**  
Birdhouse Bottle



**GREENS**  
"Folong" Amaranth



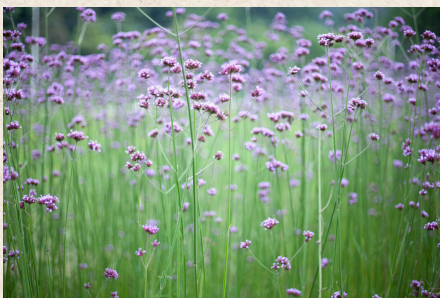
**SOY BEANS**  
Chiba



**PEPPER**  
Cubanelle



**HERB**  
Sweet Marjoram



**FLOWER**  
Purpletop Vervain



**HERB**  
Tulsi (Holy Basil)



**COLLARD**  
Purple Selection