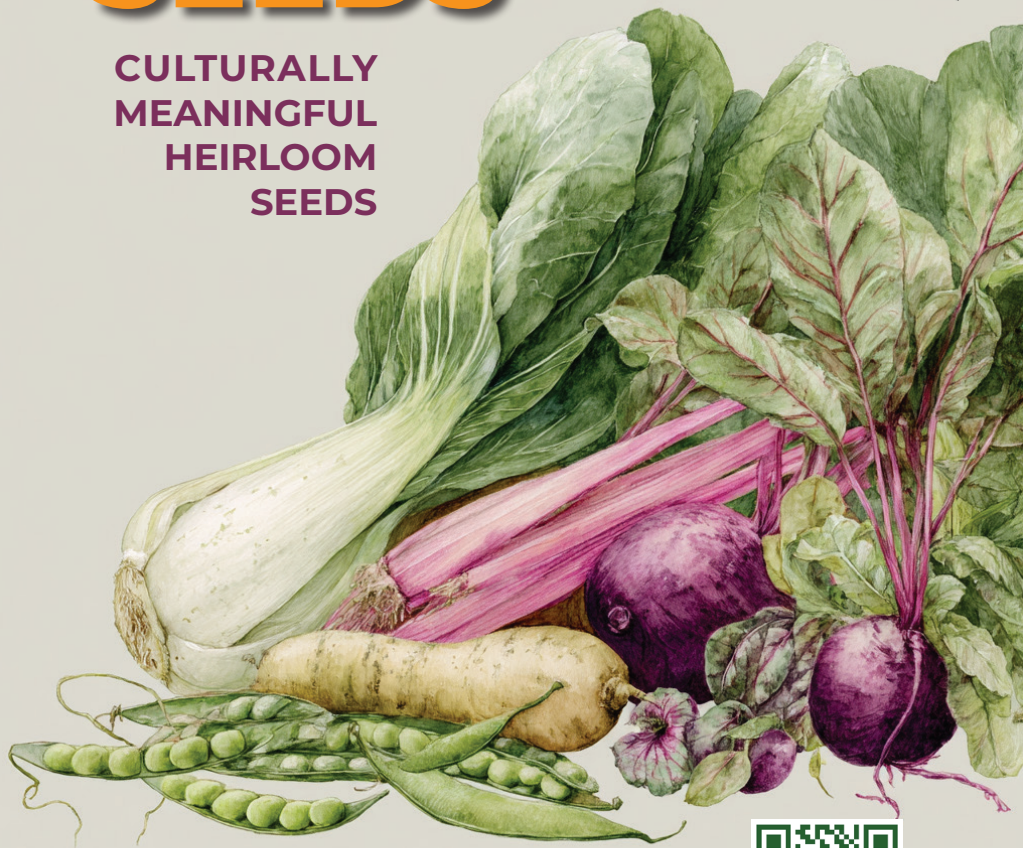


UJAMAA SEEDS

CULTURALLY
MEANINGFUL
HEIRLOOM
SEEDS



VISIT: ujamaaseeds.com



The programs of the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA) serve as vital instruments for both conservation and preservation of culturally meaningful heirloom seed varieties. Because heirloom varieties often have unique adaptations to pests, diseases, and climate stressors, UCFA is tapping into the traditional ecological knowledge and farming practices utilized by growers from diverse cultures, thus contributing to the expansion of agrobiodiversity, and the preservation of global food crop diversity.



U J A M A A
COOPERATIVE
FARMING ALLIANCE



“growing heirloom seed growers”





The **Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance** (UCFA), is a program of the non-profit organization STEAM ONWARD Inc. As a collective, UCFA recruits and supports emergent and seasoned growers from diverse communities who cultivate heirloom

seeds and grow culturally relevant food crops. UCFA recognizes the need for increased diversity in agriculture and in the seed industry specifically. We are bridging the gap between seed growers from diverse communities and heirloom seed companies.

UCFA PROGRAM AREAS

SEED FARMING EDUCATION: Through the Ujamaa Academy, the Ira Wallace Seed School, and public workshops and lectures, UCFA provides growers from historically marginalized communities with *instruction in seed farming and seed saving* via online classes and on-site face-to-face learning. UCFA educators also produce curricula and children's books to promote seed education for young people.

SEED FARMING: In Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and in Camp Springs, Maryland UCFA is converting two organic farms into *seed farming training sites* and nurseries for native trees and shrubs. Through partners such as the Seed Farm at Princeton, The Utopian Seed Project, Experimental Farm Network, as well as partnerships with other universities and organizations, UCFA grows culturally meaningful seed crops and pursues research on the art and science of heirloom plants.

SEED CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION: UCFA works to conserve heritage varieties of culturally important crop species *by keeping them alive*. Through our seed training sites in Maryland, and through UCFA supported seeds hubs across the U.S. *we are preserving the seeds of culturally meaningful African, Asian, European, American, and diasporic food crops by growing them out and distributing their seeds*. Conservation and preservation is also achieved by distributing heirloom seeds to the public through UJAMAA SEEDS via online sales, and at conferences, festivals, community events, and market days. UCFA also distributes free seeds to community groups. Distributing heirloom seeds helps preserve heritage varieties, and contributes to biodiversity, as well as a more resilient and sustainable food system.



Seed farmers grow crops in a way that increases the quality and expands the quantity of plants for the purpose of selling the seeds to other farmers and gardeners. Heirloom seed farming can be an additional revenue stream for farmers, gardeners, and growers as demand far outstrips supply. **On a small plot of land, farmers and gardeners can make a profit from seed farming.** In fact, many folks take up seed growing as a side business, rather than as their sole source of income.

At UCFA we view seeds as more than genetic organisms, but also as vessels of culture. The rise of industrialized agriculture over the past century, has resulted in a 75% decrease in food crop diversity. With the decline in regional food crop diversity, not only are many heirloom varieties becoming extinct, but regional farming traditions, and regional cultural cuisines also risk erasure. Within each seed is life that sustains us, and life that provides us with connections to both our ancestors and future generations.



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