

The Ira Wallace Seed School
presents...

INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL SEED FARMING

Explore the science and politics of seed farming, learn the history of global seed justice movements, and discuss ethical considerations with contemporary practitioners.

Scholarships available!

WHO

Organized by the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance, with Ira Wallace and Nate Kleinman as lead mentors. Primarily BIPOC student body

WHEN

Spring - Fall 2025

WHERE

Online! We'll also help to connect you and other students in your region with local land projects for hands-on experience.

WHY

Increasing seed knowledge. Bolstering BIPOC-led seed justice and bioregional organizing. Reconnecting communities to their cultural foods and practices



Learn more at:
bit.ly/iwschool





STEAM ONWARD
 Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics in Agriculture
 P.O. BOX 1124 BRYANS ROAD, MARYLAND 20616
 steamonward.org steamonward.org@gmail.com
 ujamaafarms.com ujamaafarmingcoop@gmail.com



Introduction to Ethical Seed Farming

by

The Ira Wallace Seed School

Spring-Fall 2025

Instead of buying packets of seed each year, what if your community produced your own seeds?

We invite all farmers, gardeners and lovers of plants — and especially people from communities long excluded from participation in the commercial seed industry — to join us for our 9-month online seed farming course. Facilitated by **Amirah Mitchell, Reggie Blackwood, Veronica Limeberry, and Chris Keeve** and featuring mentors from across the **Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA)** community, this course aims to equip growers with the knowledge and skills necessary to become successful long-term seed stewards

Why Seed Farming?

- Preserve culturally meaningful plant varieties that are at risk of disappearing
- Grow, save, and adapt crops that work well in your bioregion
- Share seeds with your friends, family, and broader community
- Sell seeds yourself or on contract with other seed companies
- Deepen your connections to crop plants and to all they can teach us

Over the last century, millions of culturally important crop varieties have been lost forever. Meanwhile, land access has become ever more challenging, and traditional knowledge of crop preservation has been forgotten or even suppressed. Most farmers and gardeners now expect to buy their seeds every year. Together, we can rekindle the art of seed saving that humans have maintained across the globe for over 10,000 years.

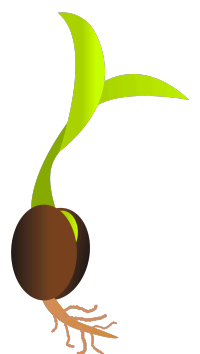


What you will learn:

Intro to Seed Farming
 Crop Planning I
 Crop Planning II
 Soil Health and Fertility
 Pest and Disease Management
 Seed Harvesting and Processing
 Seed Storage and Viability
 Biodiversity and Conservation
 Business and Marketing
 Ethics & Politics of Seeds

SLIDING SCALE TUITION

We expect to be able to handle up to 150 students this year. We can offer need based scholarships, with a base tuition of \$650. We encourage people to apply regardless of their ability to pay. We also encourage those who can afford to pay more to contribute more, so that we can offer more sliding scale and scholarship opportunities.



Racial Equity Commitment

Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance prioritizes supporting BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) as a fundamental part of our mission. Land access and land-based skills have been stripped from our communities across generations, up to the present day. **Our goal is to bring these skills back into our communities.** As such, at least 80% of available slots in this course are reserved for BIPOC participants. (There may be times throughout the course when BIPOC and non-BIPOC students and instructors will gather separately for certain discussions.)

Our long-term goal is for mentors and instructors to be at least 80% BIPOC too, but — given the historic exclusion of BIPOC people from the seed industry — we expect that it may be a few years before we reach this threshold. In the meantime, our goal is that at least 50% of instructors, guest lecturers, and mentors will be BIPOC practitioners.



Course Commitments



Land-Based Activities:

Participate in growing at least 2 seed crops during the growing season. You can do this by yourself, with a group of other students, or in partnership with a farm or community garden.

Students will produce one **“dry-seeded” seed crop**, examples of which include:

- Beans and peas; Okra; Sorghum; Corn

Students will produce one **“wet-seeded” seed crop**, examples of which include:

- Tomatoes; Eggplants; Watermelon; Cucumbers

Students will participate in **processing these seeds, including harvesting, separating seeds from “chaff”, cleaning and drying seeds for storage.**

Students will be expected to take **detailed photos and/or videos and keep notes** throughout the year about the crops they grow.

OPTIONAL: participation with the regional cohort in your area (where available), which may include in-person meet-ups, farm days, co-growing, volunteer opportunities, etc.



Computer-Based Activities:

Students will be expected to participate in regular online courses, discussions, and Q&A sessions from mid-March through mid-November 2025.

Students will commit to **2-4 hours/month of reading, listening, and watching** videos on your own time, in addition to regular online sessions with instructors.

Students will **need online access and be able to use the apps Zoom, Mighty Networks, and WhatsApp.**

Students **must attend a monthly class session** with their fellow students, your choice of either:

- Third Thursday of the month (7pm - 9pm ET) or
- Third Saturday of the month (3pm - 5pm ET)

Students must **participate in at least 4 (out of 7) opportunities with guest speakers on seed ethics and culture** (dates/times TBD, but mostly evenings – with an option of submitting written or video discussion of the recorded material instead of attending a live discussion on Zoom).

Students must **complete monthly assessments** on their own time, an additional 30 minute commitment per month.

Students have the option of **attending virtual office hours** with knowledgeable seed mentors, including:

- **Ira Wallace** of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange & UCFA
- **Nate Kleinman** of Experimental Farm Network & UCFA

Students will be **required to complete a capstone project** where they take their records for the year and analyze the inputs and outputs of one seed crop.

Students who complete the requirements of the course will receive:

- A certificate of course completion from the Ira Wallace Seed School
- Personalized support in building business connections, including assistance obtaining paid seed contracts for 2025 and beyond.
- A crucial set of skills to bring back to your communities!

COURSE PREREQUISITES

All prospective students will be expected to come to the course with intermediate or advanced understanding of how to grow plants, including experience determining when a crop is ready to be harvested (either for food or seed). This doesn't mean you need to be a professional farmer!

We expect and welcome students with a range of experience, but the Ira Wallace Seed School will not be offering introduction-level growing information, such as weeding or watering, during our 2025 course. However we do hope to offer this course in the future with a special mentorship cohort for beginning gardeners, so please put your name on this interest form if this interests you.

NOTE ON LAND ACCESS: All prospective students will be expected to grow plants during the 2025 growing season. If you are unsure about your access to land next year, please feel free to apply and keep us posted on your land situation — depending on your region, we might be able to assist you in finding a good place to grow.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Community agreements will be drafted and discussed by the Ira Wallace Seed School Committee and shared with students before being finalized. It is understood that students will consent to abide by community agreements and will be removed from the course for any major violations. Student participation will be at the discretion of the instructors.

TO APPLY

[Please fill out the application here.](#)

Or use the link on the UCFA website:
<https://ujamaafarms.com/ira-wallace-seed-school>

Deadline to apply is February 14, 2025



STEAM ONWARD

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics in Agriculture

P.O. BOX 1124 BRYANS ROAD, MARYLAND 20616

steamonward.org steamonward.org@gmail.com

ujamaafarms.com ujamaafarmingcoop@gmail.com



Introduction to Ethical Seed Farming

By the Ira Wallace Seed School

Spring – Fall 2025

We invite all farmers, gardeners and lovers of plants — and especially people from communities long excluded from participation in the commercial seed industry — to join us for our first 9-month online seed farming course. Facilitated by **Amirah Mitchell, Reggie Blackwood, Veronica Limeberry, and Chris Keeve** and featuring mentors from across the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA) community, this course aims to equip growers with the knowledge and skills necessary to become successful long-term seed stewards.

Instead of buying packets of seed each year, what if your community produced your own seeds?

Why Seed Farming?

- Preserve culturally meaningful plant varieties that are at risk of disappearing
- Grow, save, and adapt crops that work well in your bioregion
- Share seeds with your friends, family, and broader community
- Sell seeds yourself or on contract with other seed companies
- Deepen your connections to crop plants and to all they can teach us

Over the last century, millions of culturally important crop varieties have been lost forever. Meanwhile, land access has become ever more challenging, and traditional knowledge of crop preservation has been forgotten or even suppressed. Most farmers and gardeners now expect to buy their seeds every year. Together, we can rekindle the art of seed saving that humans have maintained across the globe for over 10,000 years.

Racial Equity Commitment

Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance prioritizes supporting BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) as a fundamental part of our mission. Land access and land-based skills have been stripped from our communities across generations, up to the present day. Our goal is to bring these skills back into our communities. As such, at least **80% of available slots in this course are reserved for BIPOC participants**. (There may be times throughout the course when BIPOC and non-BIPOC students and instructors will gather separately for certain discussions.)

Our long-term goal is for mentors and instructors to be at least 80% BIPOC too, but — given the historic exclusion of BIPOC people from the seed industry — we expect that it may be a few years before we reach this threshold. In the meantime, our goal is that **at least 50% of instructors, guest lecturers, and mentors will be BIPOC practitioners**.

We encourage you to sign up along with friends and family, and especially other growers in your bioregion — as mentors will be assigned based on regional expertise and we want at least a few growers from each bioregion.

Course Commitments

Land-Based Activities: Participate in growing at least 2 seed crops during the growing season. You can do this by yourself, with a group of other students, or in partnership with a farm or community garden.

Students will produce one “dry-seeded” seed crop, examples of which include:

- Beans and peas
- Okra
- Sorghum
- Corn

Students will produce one “wet-seeded” seed crop, examples of which include:

- Tomatoes
- Eggplants
- Watermelon
- Cucumbers

Students will participate in processing these seeds, including harvesting, separating seeds from “chaff”, cleaning and drying seeds for storage.

Students will be expected to take detailed photos and/or videos and to keep notes throughout the year about the crops they grow.

OPTIONAL: participation with the regional cohort in your area (where available), which may include in-person meet-ups, farm days, co-growing, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Computer-Based Activities: Students will be expected to participate in regular online courses, discussions, and Q&A sessions from mid-March through mid-November 2025.

Students will commit to 2-4 hours/month of reading, listening, and watching videos on your own time, in addition to regular online sessions with instructors.

Students will need online access and be able to use the apps Zoom, Mighty Networks, and WhatsApp.

Students must attend a monthly class session with their fellow students, your choice of either:

- Third Thursday of the month (7pm - 9pm ET) *or*
- Third Saturday of the month (3pm - 5pm ET)

Students must participate in at least 4 (out of 7) opportunities with guest speakers on seed ethics and culture (dates/times TBD, but mostly evenings – with an option of submitting written or video discussion of the recorded material instead of attending a live discussion on Zoom).

Students must complete monthly assessments on their own time, an additional 30 minute commitment per month.

Students have the *option* of attending virtual office hours with knowledgeable seed mentors, including:

- Ira Wallace of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange & UCFA
- Nate Kleinman of Experimental Farm Network & UCFA

Students will be required to complete a capstone project where they take their records for the year and analyze the inputs and outputs of one seed crop.

Students who complete the requirements of the course will receive:

A certificate of course completion from the Ira Wallace Seed School

Personalized support in building business connections, including assistance obtaining paid seed contracts for 2025 and beyond.

A crucial set of skills to bring back to your communities!

COURSE PREREQUISITES

All prospective students will be expected to come to the course with intermediate or advanced understanding of how to grow plants, including experience determining when a crop is ready to be harvested (either for food or seed). This doesn't mean you need to be a professional farmer!

We expect and welcome students with a range of experience, but the Ira Wallace Seed School will not be offering introduction-level growing information, such as weeding or watering, during our 2025 course. However we do hope to offer this course in the future with a special mentorship cohort for beginning gardeners, so [please put your name on this interest form](#) if this interests you.

NOTE ON LAND ACCESS: All prospective students will be expected to grow plants during the 2025 growing season. If you are unsure about your access to land next year, please feel free to apply and keep us posted on your land situation — depending on your region, we might be able to assist you in finding a good place to grow.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Community agreements will be drafted and discussed by the Ira Wallace Seed School Committee and shared with students before being finalized. It is understood that students will consent to abide by community agreements and will be removed from the course for any major violations. Student participation will be at the discretion of the instructors.

SLIDING SCALE TUITION

We expect to be able to handle up to 150 students this year. We can offer need based scholarships, with a base tuition of \$650. We encourage people to apply regardless of their ability to pay. We also encourage those who can afford to pay more to contribute more, so that we can offer more sliding scale and scholarship opportunities.

TO APPLY... [Please fill out the application here.](#)

Or use the link on the UCFA website: <https://ujamaafarms.com/ira-wallace-seed-school>

Deadline to apply is February 14, 2025