

SEEDS
FOR LIFE



The Seedling

SUMMER 2025

Newsletter of the Creston Community Seed Bank Society

We respectfully acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Ktunaxa Nation.

PLANT SALE SUCCESS!

40 hours
50 hours
15 hours
100 hours
=

**Many happy
gardeners and
\$3600 raised for the
Seed Bank**

Seeding from diverse collection of food seeds

Transplanting to pots ready for your garden

Labelling each one of those pots for easy ID

Watering and monitoring for healthy plants

**Thank
You**

**Volunteers and the
Creston community!**

We currently have 22 home growers who are growing selected crops and will later collect their seeds to help us maintain our long term storage of heirloom seeds. Thank you home growers!

Mission Statement

**To steward a diverse collection
of seeds and knowledge that
contributes to a resilient
regional food system.**



Dress Up Your Greens

By now your garden is likely brimming with all those delicious greens you bought from our Seedy Saturday or Spring Plant Sale. Regardless of which varieties you planted, you might be wondering how to dress them up to compliment the unique flavours of each one.

Laurel's Frilly kale was a featured item at this year's plant sale. It's a mild kale perfect for salads, smoothies and stews.

Use a bold dressing like creamy Caesar or lemon-tahini for your kale salad. Quick tip: if you massage the kale first (yes, really) it softens it up and makes it tastier. Arugula is known for its robust flavor and is excellent with olive oil, garlic and tomatoes. Two of our popular varieties of arugula are **Adagio** and **Astro**.

Adagio has a more pronounced peppery and nutty flavor while **Astro** is milder and tender. Ready to try adding something new to your salad mix? Try **Mizuna**, a mildly spicy, Japanese green with a subtle mustard flavor. Soy based dressings, a lemon vinaigrette, or a sesame dressing are all good choices for mizuna. When it comes to leaf lettuce, **Red Sails** and **Ralsielane** are Seed Bank favorites. Delicate and mildly sweet, leaf lettuce has a light, airy vibe so keep your dressing simple with oil and vinegar, citrus vinaigrette, or an herby yogurt dressing.

Recipe :

This simple dressing is bright and zippy and goes with almost any green:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or orange for a sweeter twist)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
- Pinch of salt and pepper

Whisk it all together (or shake it up in a jar), taste and adjust to your liking, and drizzle away. Fresh, simple, and way better than store-bought!



Gardener Highlight - John Krul

We shine a spotlight on a true connoisseur of tomatoes — a figure well-known among Seed Bank members. John Krul, a longstanding member of the Seed Bank and one of the go-to tomato experts at the annual plant sale, tends to his passion for paste and beefsteak tomatoes with the meticulousness of a seasoned horticulturist. This year alone, he is cultivating an impressive 31 tomato varieties in his expansive Erickson Garden.

Upon entering John's garden, the depth of planning and craftsmanship is immediately evident. The thoughtfully designed garden, now encompassing 5,000 square feet under cultivation, began with just three raised beds in 2017, the year John and his wife relocated to the valley from Chilliwack.

Today, the garden boasts more than a dozen raised beds, robust fencing with spring-loaded gates to deter deer, sophisticated drip irrigation segmented into six unique zones, chip pathways, and overhead trellis systems for pole beans, peas, and tomatoes. The result is a remarkably efficient and productive vegetable-growing operation.



While many Seed Bank members are familiar with John, fewer know that he maintains a private collection of seeds — 204 varieties in total. Every year, he personally grows out 30 to 50 of these tomato varieties to ensure their ongoing viability. His collection of heirloom seeds, which include not only tomatoes but also corn, pumpkin, potatoes, beans, and garlic, have been sourced globally over the past decade. By his definition, these are non-commercial varieties that have been passed down for at least a century. John's gardening season begins indoors, with most plants started on heat mats beneath humidity domes in mid-April. Sowing seeds six to eight weeks before the last frost allows him to transfer most plants outdoors by late May but more sensitive species remain indoors a bit longer, protected from unpredictable weather.

Managing a garden of this magnitude demands significant commitment, especially when it comes to harvesting and preserving the anticipated 400 pounds of tomatoes. While some are sold, the majority are destined for preserving as canned tomatoes or sauce, undoubtedly the reason for the multiple beds dedicated to garlic (four varieties) and onions (nine varieties) elsewhere in the garden.

When asked to name a favorite tomato, John hesitates to choose just one. He favors Brandywine and Cherokee for fresh eating and praises any of the purple varieties for their exceptional flavour, while recalling the striking beauty of a Nebraska Wedding variety from previous seasons. John's final piece of advice, equally relevant to novices and seasoned gardeners, is to keep a detailed garden journal. Meticulous record-keeping helps track successes and challenges, allowing for continuous improvement and higher yields in seasons to come.

3 ways to become a member

Annual membership cost is \$20 / person

1. Go to our [website](#) and fill out an application online
2. Go to our website, [download](#) the form and mail it to us
3. Purchase your membership at any of our fundraising events around town.

Board Update

Since the spring plant sale, the Seed Bank Board of Directors has been busy planting the seeds of future growth — literally and figuratively. Like good gardeners who start planning and seeding well in advance of planting, we've been nurturing new ideas through strategy meetings and hands-on experiments in the College gardens.

Here's what we've been up to:

- Held a series of strategic planning meetings to shape our goals and priorities for the coming years.
- Delegated key responsibilities to Board members and committees, with new focus areas including community education & outreach, fundraising, and seed science & research.
- Welcomed a new Board member, **Lisa Benschop**, to the team.

Meanwhile, several experiments and grow-outs are under way in the College gardens:

- A **Plum Tigris tomato trial** to test genetic purity of our seed stock following signs of possible cross-pollination.
- An experiment in **tomato isolation techniques**, using low tunnels to prevent cross-pollination, reduce the required isolation distance, and increase yields. This increased seed quantity will provide us with a more selective fruit collection so we can harvest from the best fruit.
- Annual seed grow-outs of Black Cherry, Plum Tigris, Amish Paste, Jagoda, and Tomatoes de Camores tomatoes, Ireland Creek Annie bush bean, Mr. Tung's pole bean, Bietina swiss chard, Cardinale lettuce, King of the North peppers, and Black Hungarian peppers.

We look forward to sharing results from this summer's experiments — as well as updates on the Seed Bank's evolving vision — in the next quarterly newsletter.

Board of Directors

(March 2025-March 2026)

- Christina Grondin, Chair
- Kevin Dribnenki, Vice Chair
- Brenda Bruns, Treasurer
- Michele Trumpour, Secretary
- Lisa Benschop, Director at Large

We're thrilled to have Lisa Benschop join the CCSBS Board of Directors!

Lisa has a long history in non-profit community service and artist-run organizations, both in their administration and program delivery. Also a perpetually learning "chaos gardener" and distractible tender of houseplants, Lisa just likes to be a part of things growing to fruition.