

The Seed Festival - first of its kind in Mumbai - brings together groups from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Pondicherry and Uttarakhand, working for decentralized conservation and promotion of seed diversity and related knowledge. It is a celebration of our rich heritage – evolved, preserved and shared by the indigenous peoples and farming communities of India.

Festival features and events :

- › An exhibition of the numerous seed varieties conserved by the participating groups, along with relevant posters and printed material
- › Opportunity to interact with those engaged in seed conservation
- › Film shows, talks and discussions on relevant subjects
- › Books and literature stall
- › Tribal dance from Bastar, Chattisgarh
- › Community singing and music

Parallel seminars on agro-biodiversity issues at:

- › TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) on 18 Feb
- › IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), Powai on 21 Feb, 11am- 1 pm
- › BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) on 21 Feb afternoon

Your support is precious :

- › Spread awareness of the rich diversity and importance of our crops, seeds and cultural knowledge
- › Visit the Festival with friends & family to know more
- › Meet the participating groups & know how to support their work
- › Inform all who may be interested by passing this invite
- › Help for mass awareness by informing media contacts
- › Sign the 'Seed Declaration' for conserving our priceless heritage
- › Write to the government representatives to be proactive in conserving our seed diversity and bio-cultural heritage
- › Join local groups to create awareness & support

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Join the SEED FESTIVAL

celebrate the rich diversity of our seeds and bio-cultural heritage

On February 19 to 21, 2012 (9 am to 7 pm)

at Janata Kendra, near Mumbai Central Station (west) Tulsiwadi, Tardeo

Entry : free & open for all



To raise public awareness and policy support to conserve and share this priceless wealth which is under threat of being lost forever.

This affects all, so please join and support!

WHY SEED DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL

India's rich diversity of crops is the result of human-nature interaction and the collective efforts of many generations of farmers to evolve varieties with certain desired qualities, suited to local conditions. Sadly, the many thousands of crop varieties that flourished and provided food and livelihoods to our diverse regions and cultures for past centuries, have been largely eroded by the technology and policies of modern agriculture.

Much of what remains has ended up in distant gene banks, far from its rightful owners and the cultures in which they were rooted. This resource represents the collective genetic and bio-cultural heritage – including food culture, ecological knowledge and value systems – of local communities that passed them down from generation to generation. It is also the most vital resource to safeguard the future livelihoods of these farming communities and the people they feed.

But today, the threat to this priceless heritage is more grave than ever before, especially from patented commercial hybrids and GM (genetically modified) crops.

The Seed Festival thus aims at raising public awareness and policy support for the conservation & promotion of our seed wealth and related community knowledge and culture.

HISTORY OF CROP DIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN INDIA

India's recent history of crop diversity conservation starts with Dr R H Richharia's pioneering work, especially with respect to rice varietal diversity. Sensing the threat from global agri-business, Dr Richharia stressed the need for crop development with a wider genetic base, drawing from peoples' knowledge and farmers' seed varieties.

His work at Raipur, Chhattisgarh, to collect, conserve and study the many thousands of distinct rice varieties found in this region – a global centre of origin of rice diversity – was a great eye opener. Most of the grassroots and civil society initiatives in crop diversity conservation are an offshoot of the awareness created by Dr Richharia through his relentless efforts in the eighties, continuing till the last stages of his life.

The 'Richharia Campaign' is an effort to continue conservation work in this spirit and to promote the rights of farming communities and indigenous people over their heritage resources.

PARTICIPANTS

Beej Bachao Andolan, Uttarakhand: is a non-formal collective of small farmers and activists. They promote holistic agriculture on traditional principles, and have preserved over 200 local varieties of rice, beans, millets and other crops.

Sahaja Samrudha, Karnataka: means 'Bountiful Nature'. It is a peoples' movement for safeguarding agro-biodiversity, building sustainable villages, and ensuring food futures the organic way.

Pebble Garden, Auroville, Pondicherry: have regenerated 6 acres of eroded wasteland into a vibrant forest, a fruit tree area and a small garden, which is home to 90 hardy plant varieties for home gardening. It also runs a home based seed exchange initiative.

Sambhav, Nayagarh, Odisha: has long experience in organic horticulture and vegetable production, following ecological methods, including bio-dynamic farming. It is actively engaged in in-situ conservation and promotion of rice and vegetable diversity.

Dharohar, Bastar, Chhattisgarh: is a community-based organization initiated by adivasis in Kondagaon, Bastar. It is involved in rice diversity conservation and promotion of agro-biodiversity and organic farming methods among adivasis of Bastar region.

Sarjana, Satna, Madhya Pradesh: a registered NGO of local people, it is engaged in conserving agro-biodiversity, spreading environmental awareness, and promoting organic farming in tribal regions.

Ramesh Sakarkar, Amravati, Maharashtra: is a small farmer engaged in the conservation, sharing and promotion of local seed varieties of Vidharbha since nearly a decade.

ORGANISERS

Coordination: Richharia Campaign, MP & Chattisgarh

Facilitation: Development and Justice Initiative, New Delhi

Local Support in Mumbai: ASHA-Mumbai (Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture), Bharat Jodo Friends, Earthcare Books, Farmers' Market, GM-Free Maharashtra, MOFCA (Mumbai Organic Farmers and Consumers' Association), Nurturing Grounds, Urban Leaves, Yusuf Meherally Centre (YMC) and friends