



# Seeds of Diversity Canada Annual Report 2005

Seeds of Diversity's 21st year has been one of progress, tragedy and renewal. Following our tremendously rejuvenating 20th anniversary conference in November 2004, our board and staff set out to develop a strategic plan for the next 20 years; a roadmap that would realize our objectives of saving and sharing the abundant diversity of plants, so many of which are threatened, that still grow in gardens throughout Canada.

What we could not predict was the tragic and sudden loss of our long-time office manager, Evylin Stroud. Plans for the

future were set aside while immediate needs took priority.

Our ancestors have bequeathed us a rich agricultural and horticultural heritage of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and grains which are beautiful, nutritious, delicious tasting and resistant to insects and diseases. With a little effort we can preserve these wonderful varieties and ensure that they will survive for our children to enjoy.

-- Heather Apple

But well-laid plans resume after a time, and we pursued, and earned, support from our members, our donors, and major funders to develop the programs described in this report.

We are proud to offer Canadians truly unique opportunities to rediscover our gardening and farming heritage. Our

volunteers are an indispensable part of those opportunities; growing, sharing, caring. Evylin was proud of that, too.

Membership: 1,323

Seed Exchange

Growers: 130

Varieties: 1,498

Offers: 2,007

Thank you to our major funders:

George Cedric Metcalf  
Charitable Foundation

Ontario Trillium  
Foundation

Agricultural  
Adaptation Council –  
CanAdapt

Heritage Canada

Members and  
individual donors like  
you

# Financial

## Grants in 2005

The Ontario Trillium Foundation awarded a grant of \$12,000 toward office expenses, and a grant of \$8,000 to cover the full cost of producing our annual Seed Exchange Directory.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation also awarded a grant of \$4,600 toward the development of a set of systematic horticultural descriptors designed for amateur gardeners. Approximately one-third of this amount was spent in 2005, the project to be completed in 2006.

The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation awarded a grant of \$25,000 toward office expenses and technological capacity. The majority of this amount is to be spent in 2006.

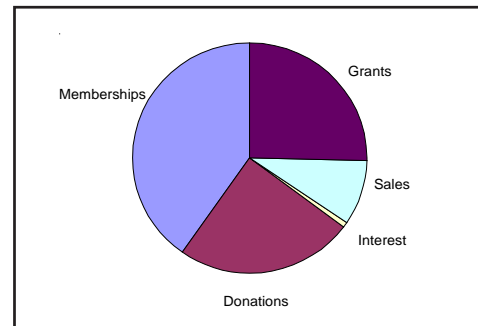
In the past fiscal year, we made a strenuous effort to raise additional revenue and to reduce expenses, aiming to eliminate the deficits of past years. In operational terms, we met that goal, and we thank our donors, major funders, and tireless volunteers for their contributions.

Our individual donors gave a record total of \$19,362 during the past fiscal year, more than doubling the amount of the previous year.

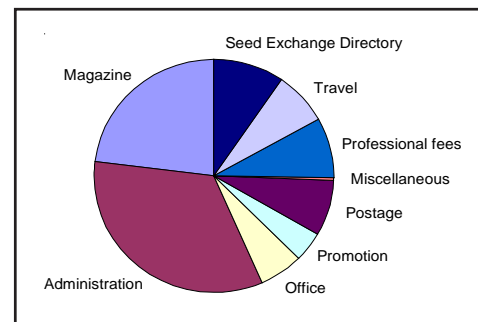
Our membership fee was increased, and our membership held at a steady level. Many members chose our discounted three-year membership, yielding lower revenue this year but a consistent deferred revenue for two more years.

Finally, although operational revenues met expenses, year-end accounting adjustments related to our new seed saving handbooks increased their recognized cost more than was expected, leading to an overall reported loss. This adjustment decreases our inventory value however, so sales will yield a greater recognizable profit in 2006.

Operating Revenue (does not include projects or publications)



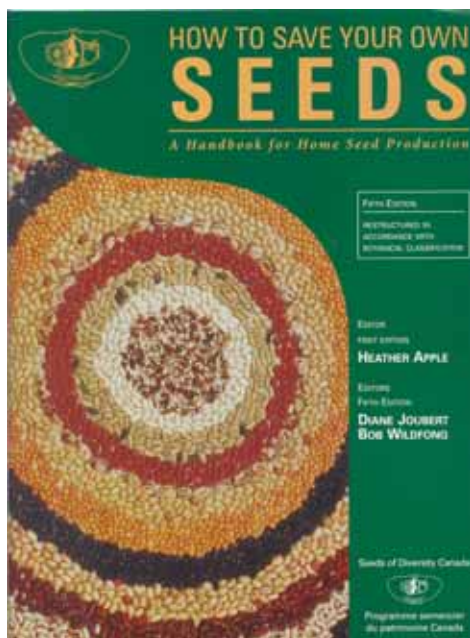
Operating Expenses (does not include projects or publications)



# Seed Saving Handbook

In March 2005, we published the English-language fifth edition of our popular seed saving handbook, *How to Save Your Own Seeds*. This edition is nearly 50 percent bigger than the previous handbook and has been restructured to make plant family relationships more clear.

Our French seed saving handbook was rewritten in 2003 to provide more detail and to include information on a wider assortment of garden plants. With funding assistance from



Heritage Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's CanAdapt program, we translated the improved French handbook to English, added several instructional photographs, and published this exceptional self-teaching manual for beginners and expert seed savers.

The response from members, the general gardening public, and book retailers has

been exciting and very promising. Only six months after publication, nearly 1,000 handbooks had already been sold, and orders are arriving daily.

Pages: 48

Species: 80+

Photos: 60+

Plant Families:

Apiaceae  
Asteraceae  
Brassicaceae  
Chenopodiaceae  
Cucurbitaceae  
Fabaceae  
Liliaceae  
Malvaceae  
Poaceae  
Solanaceae

We thank the following for their financial assistance.

Heritage Canada for translation funding – \$5,000

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – CanAdapt for printing assistance – \$3,600

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# Garlic Collection

Varieties in 04/05: 28

Varieties in 05/06: 58

Growers in 04/05: 52

Growers in 05/06: 53

Samples in cultivation  
across Canada  
in 2004: 138

Samples in cultivation  
across Canada  
in 2005: 206

Alison's  
Asian Tempest  
Baba Franchuk's  
Chesnok Red  
China Rose  
Carpathian  
Denman  
Fauquier  
French  
Georgian Crystal  
German Red  
Inchellium Red  
Israeli  
and 45 more!

Seeds of Diversity's Great Canadian Garlic Collection is a national project that explores and documents the many varieties of garlic grown in Canada.

There are well over 100 varieties of garlic that are suited to Canadian growing conditions. Our goal is to grow as many varieties as possible in all of Canada's major agricultural areas and to record their success and characteristics.



In 2005, 14 members joined the project and 13 previous members withdrew. Thirty new varieties were donated to the collection, and the number of samples distributed to active growers increased by 50 percent compared to the 2004 planting season.

A majority of growers submitted observation forms for the 2004–2005 growing season, providing detailed information about 78 samples of garlic growing in diverse regions from coastal British Columbia to the Maritimes. This information will be posted on the project web site in 2006.

A core collection of 53 varieties has been planted at the Everdale Environmental Learning Centre in Ontario for observation and distribution to growers in 2006.

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# Canadian Tomato Project

Seeds of Diversity's Canadian Tomato Project invites gardeners throughout Canada to grow all known Canadian tomatoes in a multi-year project with careful documentation. During the last century, over 100 tomato varieties were bred or adapted to grow well in Canadian growing conditions; but seeds for most of these are difficult to find and information about them is scattered and incomplete.

Seeds of Diversity offers seeds of Canadian tomatoes to a limited number of members at no charge to further this project.

Members are encouraged to seek Canadian varieties in our Seed Exchange, and non-member gardeners are encouraged to purchase Canadian varieties. All participants are asked to make careful observations and report the characteristics of their tomatoes so that the varieties can be better documented.

This project is new in 2005. Thirty-three members received seeds from Jim Ternier, our vice-president and a commercial seed grower. Twenty-four members received seeds from Plant Gene Resources Canada, the federal plant gene bank and a partner in this project. In all, approximately 110 samples of seeds were distributed to members at no charge. Observation forms were distributed via our web site.



## What's a Canadian Tomato?

A tomato is Canadian if it was bred in Canada, or if it has been grown in Canada long enough to have “adapted” to our growing conditions. We have found over 100 tomatoes that were bred or adapted in Canada.

Many were introduced by Agriculture Canada between 1890 and 1980, some were developed at Canadian universities, and a few were created by individuals through their own backyard garden crossing and selecting.

We also extend Canadian “citizenship” to family heirloom varieties brought to Canada by immigrants and grown here for many generations.

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# Seed Saving Gardens

Varieties in 2005: 124

Seeds saved:  
10 kg (22 pounds)

Participants in this  
year's Beginner Seed  
Saving workshops: 32

Participants in this  
year's Advanced Seed  
Saving workshop: 7

Some of the heritage  
varieties grown for  
conservation, education  
and display:

Serpent cucumber  
Gamma Climenhaga  
tomato

Blue Jay bean

Forellenschluss lettuce

Perpetual spinach beet

Harlequin marigold

Morden Midget

eggplant

Antohi Romanian

pepper

Lucchese tomato

## Mount Pleasant Cemetery – Toronto

The Mount Pleasant Heritage Seed Garden was opened in 2001 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. For five years, volunteers, led by Seeds of Diversity director Ghan Chee, have planted the garden with an assortment of heritage flowers, fruits, and vegetables as a demonstration of the diversity, beauty, and living legacy of our shared horticultural inheritance.



## Everdale Environmental Learning Centre – Hillsburgh

Located near the town of Hillsburgh, Ontario, Everdale hosts a half-acre seed saving and biodiversity demonstration garden maintained by Seeds of Diversity volunteers led by Bob Wildfong. The garden is a feature of public tours, workshops, and public events throughout the growing season. Since 2001, Everdale has hosted nine intensive seed saving workshops led by Seeds of Diversity.

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# Canadian Seed Catalogue Inventory

In early 2005, Seeds of Diversity completed the first stage of a comprehensive inventory of the common fruit and vegetable varieties offered by Canadian mail-order seed companies.

Variety names from 41 mail order catalogues were tabulated. Similar names and known synonyms were altered to a common naming scheme.

The result was a snapshot of over 3,000 varieties of horticultural food crops sold in Canada, with a count of the number of companies that sold each.

This information is invaluable to conservationists because it helps to determine the degree to which a particular variety is threatened, and thus its priority in a conservation collection.

## **The 10 most common vegetables in Canadian seed catalogues (# companies)**

Cherry Belle radish (20)  
French Breakfast radish (19)  
Brandywine tomato (19)  
Straight Eight cucumber (18)  
Black Seeded Simpson lettuce (17)  
Red Russian kale (16)  
Rhubarb swiss chard (16)  
Black Beauty Zucchini (16)  
Green Zebra tomato (15)  
Scarlet Runner bean (15)

The information is equally valuable to growers looking for particular named varieties.

Seeds of Diversity aims to maintain the inventory on a three-year update cycle. Out-of-date listings will be noticeable but should not be significant in our statistical analyses.

Catalogues inventoried: 41

Species counted: 78

Varieties counted: 3,261

## **Distribution:**

Of 3,261 varieties listed in the CSCI:

2,164 (66.3%) are sold by only one listed company

479 (14.6%) are sold by only two listed companies

444 (13.6%) are sold by three to five listed companies

128 (3.9%) are sold by six to ten listed companies

46 (1.4%) are sold by more than ten listed companies

# The People

Evylin Stroud was Seeds of Diversity's office manager for 12 years. She kept the books, updated our mailing lists, and attended to innumerable details invisibly. She joked that if no one noticed her work then all was running smoothly.

Her passing in May took from us a colleague and a friend, but also robbed us of a key staff member whose experience and knowledge bore the weight of Seeds of Diversity's day by day operation.

Behind the scenes, we worked all summer to relearn how Seeds of Diversity operates, all the while dealing with the loss of a friend.

But Evylin would be pleased that her office continued to function without her. That thought got us through it.

## **Hugh Daubeny, President**

Hugh is a research scientist and a renowned plant breeder of small fruit, now retired from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre, where he developed several important raspberry and strawberry cultivars. He remains active in the berry breeding community and writes prolifically for *Seeds of Diversity* magazine.

## **Jim Ternier, Vice-President**

Jim is an accomplished vegetable seed grower and proprietor of Prairie Garden Seeds in Saskatchewan. He has been a member of Seeds of Diversity for many years and has developed strong connections with members throughout Canada.

## **Bob Wildfong, Executive Director**

Bob has worked as Seeds of Diversity's part-time Executive Director for three years. Before that, he was the organization's third President. Bob became interested in heritage plants through his other job at an agricultural museum in Ontario, and found good work by merging his professional background in software engineering with his love of gardening.

## **Judy Newman, Office Manager**

Judy has worked part-time for Seeds of Diversity for five years, first as the board's Executive Assistant and now as our Office Manager. Her qualifications for her new role are solid, but more important is the close working relationship that she has had with our board, members, and staff.