



Seeds of Diversity Canada

Annual Report 2006

Seeds of Diversity Canada's 22nd year has brought a steady strengthening of programs, funding and member involvement. The continuing efforts of our member seed growers gave life to our flagship projects. Our member donations reached near-record levels. Funding from private and public sources helped to solidify the programs that we are able to offer to growers, schools, community gardens, and heritage sites. As well, we introduced three important new projects: *Descriptive Keys for Horticultural Crops*, a proactive back-up of our members' seeds in the federal Plant Gene Resources seed bank, and the groundbreaking *Pollination Canada* program, which has already won an international award.

Our main focus this year was the development of a path toward sustainable operating funding. Traditionally, Seeds of Diversity's funding is obtained from membership fees, individual charitable donations, grants, and sales of our publications. Through partnerships and strategic projects, the organization is seeking broader operating support from a greater number of charitable foundations, and taking steps to attract significant private donations. In particular, the establishment of a long-term operating endowment fund has been a key priority.

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers across the country, we continue to offer a wide assortment of programs for our members, and the public: our Magazine, Seed Exchange, Canadian Tomato Project, Great Canadian Garlic Collection, Canadian Seed Catalogue Inventory, Pollination Canada, Descriptive Keys for Horticultural Crops, Plant Gene Resources Canada, Seeds of Diversity Gardens, The People

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Membership: 1,275

BC	190
AB	72
SK	19
MB	32
ON	456
QC	412
NB	26
NS	26
PE	8
NL	3
YT	4
NT	3
USA	22
Overseas	2

Seed Exchange

Growers: 126
Varieties: 1,834
Offers: 2,445

Our major funders

George Cedric Metcalf
Charitable Foundation

Ontario Trillium
Foundation

Environment Canada

Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Human Resources and
Social Development
Canada

Members and donors
like you

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Financial

Grants in 2006

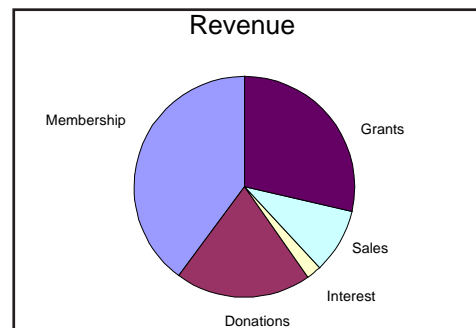
The Ontario Trillium Foundation awarded a grant of \$6,000 toward office expenses, and a grant of \$4,000 toward the cost of producing our annual Seed Exchange Directory.

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.

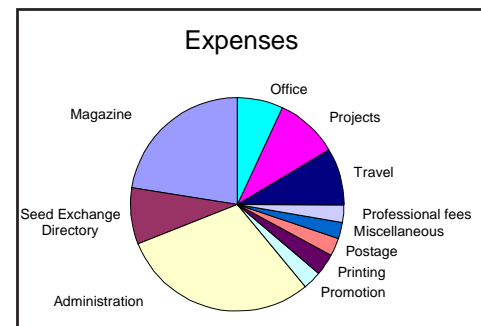
The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation awarded a grant of \$25,000 toward office expenses and technological capacity.

Steady membership revenue, near-record individual donations, and operating support from charitable foundations allowed Seeds of Diversity to increase its membership expenses slightly, while maintaining a balanced budget.

Late in 2005, we set up a secure electronic payment system on our web site, allowing people to pay for memberships, make donations, and purchase publications with their credit cards. During the following twelve-month period, over \$17,000 of revenue was received through this system; approximately one quarter of our total revenue from the applicable categories. Online payment offers members greater convenience, and faster delivery of renewals and purchased materials. As well, it saves time for our office staff in processing renewals, orders, and payments.



The most significant development in our operational finances is a capital endowment fund, named the Heather Apple Seed Preservation Fund. This fund, internally restricted by a special by-law, will hold donations in perpetuity, and release a portion of earnings to support Seeds of Diversity's annual operating costs. The fund takes the organization's fundraising in a new direction of planned giving; seeking major donations and bequests to build the capital that will move us closer to self-sufficiency.



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 200 tomato varieties were bred or adapted to grow well in Canadian growing conditions. Our goal is to relocate them, multiply and distribute them for Canadian gardeners to rediscover, and to document their characteristics and productivity in all regions of the country.

In the second year of its existence the Canadian Tomato Project has showed steady growth. Jim Ternier, our president, and commercial seed grower, donated and distributed 86 samples of tomato seeds to 27 growers at no charge. Jim volunteered many hours to research the introductions, pedigrees, histories, and current sources of nearly 200 varieties of tomatoes of Canadian origin. This information is available on the project web site.



Half of the distributed samples came from the tomato collections of the Canadian and U.S. federal seed repositories. The rest came from Jim Ternier's own collection and from samples obtained from private collectors in Canada, U.S.A. and Belgium.

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

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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Great Canadian Garlic Collection



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.

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

In 2006, 31 members joined the project. Over 110 samples of rare garlic were distributed to participants from coastal British Columbia to the Maritimes. Participants submitted observation forms at the end of the year. Although these have not been counted or analysed yet, all information will be posted on the project web site. A core collection of 56 varieties has been planted at the Everdale Environmental Learning Centre in Ontario. Volunteers and staff took detailed observations and photographs of all varieties during the summer of 2006. This information will appear on the project web site, as volunteers become available to assist with data entry.

Canadian Seed Catalogue Inventory

42 mail order catalogues are currently tabulated.

15 catalogues were updated during 2006.

The result is a snapshot of 4600 varieties of 420 species of horticultural plant varieties sold in Canada.

Two years ago, 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.

This list is intended to be fully updated on a three-year rotational schedule. As well, annual and perennial flowers are gradually being indexed to complete the inventory.

This information is invaluable to conservationists because it helps to determine the degree to which each variety is threatened, and thus its priority in a conservation collection. The information is equally valuable to growers looking for particular named varieties.

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Pollination Canada

Pollination Canada is a national program to raise awareness of the importance of pollinating insects in agricultural and natural ecosystems. As a joint venture of Seeds of Diversity and Environment Canada's Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network Coordinating Office, Pollination Canada draws upon partnerships with industry, government, educational, and non-profit organizations.



The first goal of the program is to encourage Canadians to discover and appreciate the often-ignored, but crucial, ecosystems of pollinating insects in backyard gardens, farms, natural lands, vacant urban lands, and rural residential properties.

The second goal is to recruit and train volunteers to help monitor the populations of pollinating insects throughout Canada, over a wide range of locations and land uses. Bees, moths, butterflies, wasps, hornets, beetles, and certain flies are the key insects to be studied.



The program successfully recruited and trained observers in pilot sessions in Southern Ontario during 2006. Further recruiting and development is planned nationwide during 2007.

Over 70% of our food crops need insects for pollination.
Bees do more than just make honey!

Pollinators enable wild plants to reproduce, and their fruit and seeds provide valuable food for birds and animals.

International Award

On October 18, 2006 the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign gave its 2006 Pollinator Advocacy Award to Jim Dyer, the scientific and technical advisor to the Pollination Canada program.

Our congratulations and thanks go to Jim, for his pioneering work in the early stages of the program, and for his inspirational efforts to raise awareness of the "invisible ecosystem in our backyards".

Facts

There are over 1000 species of pollinating insects in Canada.

Pollinating insects are essential for the annual production of over \$1.2 billion worth of Canadian produce such as apples, pears, cucumbers, and melons.

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Descriptive Keys for Horticultural Crops

Descriptive Keys are available for:

Apples
Beans
Garlic
Onions
Lettuce
Peas
Peppers
Potatoes
Squash
Tomatoes

Seeds of Diversity's *Descriptive Keys* project is designed to help gardeners describe their plants in a systematic way. During 2005-2006, Seeds of Diversity developed observation forms for ten common horticultural plant species, with multiple choice questions about the features that distinguish each variety from the others.

We based our Descriptive Keys on the standard characteristics used by the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) and Canada's Germplasm Resource Information Network (GRIN-CA). Amateur gardeners can use these Keys with only a basic knowledge of botany, but the results of their observations are scientifically meaningful, and compatible with standard international methods of botanical description.

Standard descriptive keys are already used in the Canadian Tomato Project, and the Great Canadian Garlic Collection.

Plant Gene Resources Canada

PGRC maintains a national collection of over 100,000 samples of seeds for free international exchange by growers and researchers.

The collection is stored in a large, underground, climate-controlled freezer at about -20°C, which should keep most seeds viable for 20-30 years.

During 2005-2006, Seeds of Diversity's seed growers donated 116 samples of rare, heritage seeds for long-term backup in the federal government Plant Gene Resources seed bank in Saskatoon.

Although the best way to conserve rare varieties is to keep them in circulation and annual cultivation, so that people can fully enjoy them, reliable backup storage is an important component of any seed conservation plan. Thankyou to our seed growers for making your seeds available to future generations!

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Seeds of Diversity Gardens

Mount Pleasant Cemetery - Toronto



The Seeds of Diversity garden at the Mount Pleasant Cemetery was opened in 2001 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. Volunteers led by 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.

We would like to thank volunteer Rachel van Sheep for her dedication caring for the garden during the 2006 season, for guiding tours, and promoting our work through this practical and beautiful garden project.

Everdale Environmental Learning Centre - Hillsburgh

The Seeds of Diversity garden at Everdale, located near the town of Hillsburgh Ontario, is a half-acre seed saving and biodiversity demonstration garden maintained in partnership between Seeds of Diversity and Everdale's staff and volunteers. The garden is a feature of public tours, workshops and public events throughout the growing season. Since 2001, Everdale has hosted ten intensive seed saving workshops led by Seeds of Diversity.

Operated as a conservation garden, as well as a demonstration and teaching site, the garden is used to multiply seeds for the Canadian Tomato Project, as an observation site for the Pollination Canada program, and as the central host site for the Great Canadian Garlic Collection.



By interplanting different species in fixed-distance plots for isolation, the garden has a capacity to produce useful quantities of seeds for 100-120 varieties of vegetables, fruit, grains, and flowers each year.

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Seeds of Diversity is not just a collection of seeds. It is a network of people growing, exchanging, learning, and delighting in the wonders of our shared horticultural inheritance.



To our 240 volunteers, we offer our deepest thanks. This organization could not exist without you.

To our 112 donors, we value your financial assistance. Every donation helps us to broaden our network, to teach another gardener, to back up seeds of another variety.

To our 126 grower members, we salute your efforts to save Canada's garden and farm heritage. Even the small action of gathering a handful of seeds can make a difference for a gardener who grows them, whether next year or generations into the future.

To our 1149 supporting members, we thank you for your interest in heritage plants, crop biodiversity, and conservation. Each and every membership supports what we do, and your support is crucial.

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