



Seedlink

Preserving the Cultural and Genetic diversity
of Southern Agriculture

News from the Southern Seed Legacy

pacs.unt.edu/southernseedlegacy

Spring 2012

The Southern Seed Legacy at UNT: Please (Re)Join Us!

By *Jim Veteto*

Greetings Seed Savers from the University of North Texas (UNT) in Denton, Texas! It has been a busy year for us since re-locating to UNT from the University of Georgia last spring. As you will read in the pages of this newsletter, we hosted our UNT inauguration at The Laboratory of Environmental Anthropology last spring with Dr. Virginia Nazarea (Southern Seed Legacy co-founder) as our distinguished guest speaker. In addition, a group of SSL students accompanied me in March up to Hot

Continued on page 6



*Dr. Veteto and his UNT students at the seed swap
in Hot Springs, AR*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 SSL at UNT: Please (Re)Join Us!
- 1 14th Annual Old-Timey Seed Swap
- 2 UNT's Environmental Anthropology Lab
- 2 Climate Change, Agricultural Diversity, and Apples
- 6 Place-Based Foods of Appalachia
- 7 The Slow and the Slow Cooked
- 8 2012 SSL Seed Swaps

14th Annual Old-Timey Seed Swap in Hot Springs, AR

By *Erin Wackerla*

We woke up early, the morning of February 27th 2011 to the beautiful family lake house we were lodging at in Hot Springs, Arkansas, having driven five hours the previous day from Denton, Texas, the new home of the Southern Seed Legacy. We would be participating in the 14th annual Southern Seed Legacy Old-timey Seed Swap, and the inaugural Hot Springs Seed Swap co-hosted by Conserving Arkansas' Agricultural Heritage (CAAH!), shortly. Dr. Brian Campbell and his family had joined us the night before, after the successful CAAH! seed swap at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show. The

Continued on page 3

The Inauguration of UNT's Environmental Anthropology Lab

By Erin M. Wackerla

Dr. Virginia Nazarea, co-founder of the Southern Seed Legacy at University of Georgia in 1996, came for a visit to North Texas on April 21st, 2011, to present her lecture, *Between Memory and Exile: The Dilemma of Plant Genetic Resource Conservation*, and to attend the inauguration of the Laboratory of Environmental Anthropology, home of the Southern Seed Legacy's heirloom seed collection at UNT. Having read quite a bit of her work, I was excited when she stepped into our ethnoecology classroom early that morning to share her knowledge with us. She began by briefly discussing some of her background. Nazarea began her studies in biology but eventually found herself drawn to anthropology as it "provided a wider playground to think about relationships between humans and the natural world" and the way human groups conceive of these relationships. After this initial introduction she opened discussion to questions from the students, which drew the conversation quickly into her work. She touched on many topics that would be expanded upon in her formal presentation later that day.

A couple hours after class let out, Dr. Jim Veteto and several environmental anthropology graduate students, including myself, in addition to one environmental philosophy graduate student, met with Dr. Nazarea at Banter, a favorite local Denton café/bistro, for lunch. We sat around enjoying our meals and conversation of the graduate student's practicum projects, ambitions, and our mutual interests in agrobiodiversity and local/urban farming and farmers markets. After finishing our meals we departed and prepared to attend Dr. Nazarea's presentation that would be held on campus shortly after.

The lecture was in the chemistry building, where Dr. Veteto gave Dr. Nazarea a warm welcome and introduction. Dr. Nazarea began as with a brief background over the evolution of plant genetic resource conservation over the past several decades. It began with *ex situ*, or off-site conservation such as seed banks or other controlled scientific settings; proceeded to discuss *in situ* conservation, in place conservation,

Continued on page 5



Spring Blossoms in an orchard near Hendersonville, NC.

"...one of the most effective ways to ensure agricultural resilience to climate change is through the preservation of genetic diversity."

Climate Change, Agricultural Diversity, and Apples

By Steve Carlson

Greetings Southern seed savers! I hope your gardens fared well in yet another summer of record extremes. This year in the Texas high plains we've seen the most intense drought and heat wave on record. Certain areas in Georgia also experienced drought conditions, while much of the southeast and northeast experienced heavy bouts of rainfall from Atlantic storm systems. Dealing with extreme weather conditions is becoming increasingly common all over the world, and ensuring the sustainability of our farming systems in a climate that is growing more and more irregular is of vital importance.

It has been found that one of the most effective ways to ensure agricultural resilience to climate change is through the preservation of genetic diversity. Although seed banks such as

Continued on page 4

“Seed Swap” continued from page 1

Campbell and Veteto families, plus five of Dr. Jim Veteto’s graduate and undergraduate students from the University of North Texas sat around and ate breakfast while discussing agrobiodiversity topics. After our final cups of coffee the students and Jim headed down stairs to finish packaging seeds for the seed swap that would be taking place later in the day, while the rest of the folks bantered and entertained the children upstairs.

We set up an impromptu seed packaging assembly line, labeling the packages, sorting the seeds, and placing and sealing them securely into their appropriate envelopes. Our seed cargo consisted of several heirloom varieties such as Carolina golden rice, Myrtle Garmon crowder peas, Italian marigold, rose tomato, Cherokee blue mustard, sea island cane, and California giant zinnias. Dr. Campbell’s organization (CAAH!) would also be bringing many varieties such as the chocolate stripe tomato and an heirloom variety of sweet basil. Shortly after assembling the seed packets we headed to the Art Church Studio in historic downtown Hot Springs where the swap was held.

As Jim gave a presentation to local gardeners before the swap, students of both Jim and Brian discussed their experiences with seed exchange, this being the first seed swap for many of them. As we talked, Mark, the owner of the



Tim Hassell talks to seed swappers about the ornamental species he brought.



Young seedsavers learning from the best: Brian Campbell and Jim Veteto

ArtChurch Studio, gave us a tour through the art gallery. The first display was of elegant water colors of butterflies, befitting of the day’s theme.

Both our groups had ample supplies of seeds to share including information on the importance of promoting agricultural biodiversity. About 25 people were there at a time and many individuals came and went to learn about heirloom seeds and acquire seed packets in hopes of growing some of their own. Besides SSL and CAAH!, a hand full of other growers came to exchange seeds and impart their knowledge. One seed swapper, Ms. Minnette, had brought Casaba seeds, a unique type of melon she had acquired from a farmers market in the U.S. Southwest that, she reported, had traditionally been a Navajo variety. Mr. Tim Hassell, a local grower, brought some interesting ornamental species. The “Pretty-by-night,” a local Hot Springs variety, is an

Continued on page 6



A handful of Myrtle Garmon Crowder Peas



“Climate, Diversity & Apples” continued from page 2

the SSL collection are incredibly important, it is the continual act of planting the seeds that will expose them to the environment and encourage them to develop resistance to environmental stresses. In other words, keep on growin!

As one of the first students to study under Dr. Jim Veteto after his PhD completion and move to the University of North Texas, I am excited and honored to become part of the SSL, such an incredible and essential organization (In fact, the same organization that funded the creation of the SSL has awarded funding for my masters research—the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program). People save and plant heirloom seeds for many different economic and cultural reasons, but whatever the motivation, one factor holds true: by doing so, you are actively working toward a sustainable system to pass on for future generations. It is this active preservation of agricultural diversity that motivates my Masters research in Applied Anthropology.

As previously mentioned, the climate is becoming increasingly unpredictable, posing a serious threat to the sustainability of our food systems. As a student in applied anthropology, I’ve decided that I am best situated to help mitigate the effects of climate change by researching farmers’ perceptions of, experiences with, and reactions to climate change. My SARE-funded project will study the decision making process of apple orchardists—farmers of long term crops which are sensitive to changes in the environment. This sensitivity makes the orchardists excellent observers of climactic changes. Furthermore, because apple trees live

anywhere from twenty to one hundred years, the orchardists are usually very careful to plant (or graft) varieties they think will prosper in the current and future climate. We stand to learn a great deal about climate change and best management practices from apple orchardists.

What makes this project even more beneficial is that it will take place in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, which is likely the most diverse foodshed in North America. A RAFT (Renewing America’s Food Traditions) publication that came out earlier this year titled “Place-Based Foods of Appalachia” documented 633 distinct apple varieties in central and southern Appalachia (I encourage you to check the SSL website for an electronic copy of the publication—and find a description of it below). This apple diversity allows orchard managers to be highly discriminating when deciding what varieties to cultivate, and research into this selection process will be beneficial for understanding climate change and its potential effects on apple diversity in the area.

I look forward to spending my summer in the western region of North Carolina to carry out my project, and this time next year I hope to inform you of my results. ■

Place-Based Foods of Appalachia

By Steve Carlson

Early in 2011 the Renewing America’s Food Traditions (RAFT) alliance released a publication that we here at the SSL are thrilled to promote. Jim Veteto, along with Regina Fitzsimmons, Kanin Routson, DeJa Walker and internationally-celebrated RAFT founder Gary Paul Nabhan edited the publication. Entitled “Place-Based Foods of Appalachia: From Rarity to Community Restoration and Market Recovery,” this booklet is a beautiful addition to other publications put out by Dr. Nabhan and RAFT focusing on the recovery of at risk place-based foods.

The 36 page publication contains a number of well-written articles that highlight the astonishing amount of food diversity found in Appalachia and inspires readers to support further documentation,

Continued on page 7



“UNT Lab” continued from page 2

which complements *ex situ* by allowing the plants to continue to grow out in a natural context so they may adapt along with the changes to the environment. She also discussed *in vivo*, or in life, which promotes conservation as a part of human and biological living contexts. The last phase that she discussed is what she termed as *trans situ*, referring to plant species that have been transplanted from one region of the world to another. An example she provided was the transplanting of native Vietnamese plant species to the U.S. that migrated over in the hands of refugees, which have been grown out in homegardens. She connected this with issues of identity experienced by refugees who had never farmed or planted gardens in their homeland but adopted the practice only after relocating to the U.S. This significantly expresses a resistance or “counter memory” to the Western meta-narrative in order to create an “out-of-place sense of place.”

Dr. Nazarea continued with her presentation by discussing her current research in Peru. Her focus was on the repatriation of potatoes by the scientific community to native people. She emphasized that the difference in perception on returning these potatoes is vastly different between the two communities. To the locals, the acts of collecting and removing and then later returning the potatoes are not as simple as it may seem. There is a different relationship they have to their potatoes, where they relate the potatoes to infants, which are chastised for having gone away. The locals recognize that the context in which these estranged potatoes are being reintroduced to is not the same as when they left.

When the presentation was opened to discussion there was much concern over the “loss” of cultural memory. Dr. Nazarea emphasized, that although there seems to be amnesia of sorts, globalization may result in its own counter

reaction, including movements of people reacting to the loss of identity and responding to it with a “return” to the land and the creation of “discordant notes of renewal that spring up in the blandness of modernity.”

Finally, we made it to the Laboratory of Environmental Anthropology inauguration, shortly after the presentation. Dr. Nazarea, the majority of the anthropology faculty members, many interested students, several professors and researchers from other departments, and a representative from the PACS Dean’s office were all in attendance. Everyone was happy to see how the lab had transformed during the past semester from an old biology lab into a cozy research and seed storage facility focused on several different aspects of environmental anthropology. Dr. Veteto took questions and told stories of his research in Appalachia while he presented the lab to the visitors, who seemed especially interested in the cold storage for the Southern Seed Legacy seed collection packed to the brim with jars full of old-timey heirloom seeds.

We ate and drank refreshments that were provided while talking about new and exciting ways to reconceive our relationships with the natural world. It had been a busy day, full of conversation on agrobiodiversity conservation and many other environmental topics, which left us with a lot to reflect about. We are very thankful to Dr. Nazarea for her eloquent lecture, for her presence at the laboratory inauguration, and to have been able to show her how far the Southern Seed Legacy—which she sprouted fifteen years ago—has come since being transplanted to UNT this spring. ■



Dr. Nazarea giving her talk at UNT

Anthropology

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

“SSL at UNT” continued from page 1

Springs, Arkansas to co-host a seed swap in collaboration with the Conserving Arkansas’ Agriculture Heritage project directed by Dr. Brian Campbell of The University of Central Arkansas. We have also launched an apple biocultural diversity project in collaboration with the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (see pages 2 and 4). In addition to developing our website and physical space at the lab, we have also recently finished doing an evaluation of our existing collection of over 800 seeds, prioritizing what endangered varieties need to be grown out, and what surplus we have available for the public. I have also had the good fortune to put out two major publications on Southern heirloom seeds and foods in the last year: a booklet on the place-based heirloom foods of Appalachia and an edited volume on culture and barbecue in the Mid-South that includes chapters on Southern heirloom tomatoes and heritage hog breeds (see page 7). It has been a rewarding and exhausting year, but I think we now have a system in place that will better serve our members and keep the SSL vibrant and strong through another successful decade of preserving the cultural and genetic diversity of Southern agriculture!

I would like to personally invite you to join or re-join the Southern Seed Legacy. As a member-supported organization, we are only successful if we have a robust and active membership base that supports our activities and helps us to keep the legacy of Southern heirloom seeds alive by growing out endangered varieties and contributing to replenishing our seed bank. We’ve lost some members in the past several years, which is understandable given the state of the economy and our state of flux as we have been transferring institutions and getting back up and running (thank you for your patience during this process). Now that we are situated solidly at UNT and running smoothly, I ask that you re-join or join our efforts as the only organization in the Southern

United States (16 years and running) dedicated solely to preserving cultural and genetic diversity in Southern agriculture. We will be hosting or co-hosting four seed swaps this spring (see page 8) throughout the South (Texas, Arkansas, and Georgia), so if you are nearby we invite you to come join us physically as well. Your renewed membership and participation in our seed saving network is appreciated and necessary as a vital component to carrying the rich tradition of Southern seed saving into the 21st century in a rapidly changing world. ■

“Seed Swap” continued from page 3

evening-time blooming flower that his great grandmother had kept several generations ago and which Tim has maintained to this day. He also provided two varieties of flowering shrubs and a flowering vine, all of which he attested to have beautiful aromas. The yellow blooming shrub named Winter Jasmine had reportedly been brought over from China by Robert Fortune, a famous historical botanist. The second was the pink flowered shrub, the White Flowering Almond, which was an heirloom species local to Arkansas given to him by a friend whose family had kept for many generations. The vine Tim brought grows up to 30 feet with beautiful yellow flowers and is called “Cross Vine.” Many others partook in the exchange; one gentleman came without seeds so reciprocated with some Tibetan crystals instead while one couple brought tiny ‘Scotch Bonnet’ hot peppers they had acquired in Jamaica. All in all a very diverse and successful swap!

The swap was the first of (hopefully) many for Hot Springs, Arkansas as well as for the new student initiates. We only hope the seeds planted in Hot Springs and in the minds of the students will grow into a passion for conserving the treasured heirloom seeds of Arkansas and the rest of our Southern region. ■

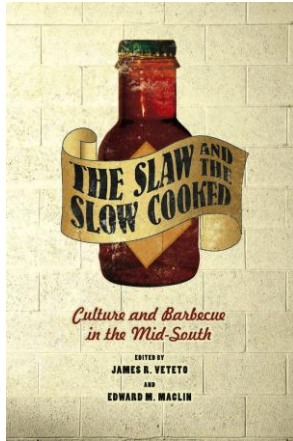


Southern Seed Legacy

Preserving the Cultural and Genetic diversity of Southern Agriculture

The Slow and the Slow Cooked: Culture and Barbecue in the Mid-South

Edited by James R. Veteto & Edward M. Maclin



Texas has its barbecue tradition, and a library of books to go with it. Same with the Carolinas. The mid-South, however, is a region with as many opinions as styles of cooking. In *The Slow and the Slow Cooked*, editors James Veteto and Edward Maclin seek to right a wrong--namely, a deeper understanding of the larger experience of barbecue in this legendary American culinary territory.

In developing the book, Veteto and Maclin cast a wide net for divergent approaches. Food writer John Edge introduces us to Jones Bar-B-Q Diner in Marianna, Arkansas, a possibly century-old restaurant serving top-notch pork and simultaneously challenging race and class boundaries. Kristen Bradley-Shurtz explores the 150-plus-year tradition of the St. Patrick's Irish Picnic in McEwen, Tennessee. And no barbecue book would be complete without an insider's story, provided here by Jonathan Deutsch's "embedded" reporting inside a competitive barbecue team. Veteto and Maclin conclude with a glimpse into the future of barbecue culture: online, in the smoker, and fresh from the farm.

The Slow and the Slow Cooked stands as a challenge to barbecue aficionados and a statement on the Mid-South's important place at the table. Intended for food lovers, anthropologists, and sociologists alike, *The Slow and the Slow Cooked* demonstrates barbecue's status as a common language of the South. The book is currently available at Amazon.com or Vanderbilt University Press, call 1-800-627-7377 or visit:

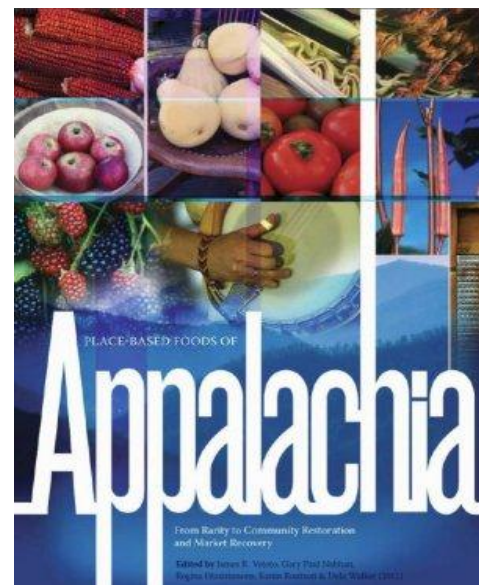
<http://www.vanderbiltuniversitypress.com/books/431/the-slow-and-the-slow-cooked>. ■

"Place-Based Foods" continued from page 4

recovery and community use of these foods. Among these articles are words from Appalachian seed-saving experts such as Bill Best, Ira Wallace, Kevin Welch, and Doug Elliot, among others. To highlight a few topics: Bill Best discusses his struggle in rescuing the Noble bean (a type of "Fall" or "October" bean) from the brink of extinction, Doug Elliot describes the preservation of the beautiful Nancy Hall sweet potato variety by his wife Yanna Fishman, and Kevin Welch discusses how the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have maintained their connection to the earth through gathering wild spring greens.

Alongside these great narratives in the publication are extensive lists of both heritage and heirloom fruits, nuts, vegetables, and grains found in central and southern Appalachia. In total, the publication lists 1,412 distinctly named food varieties in the area, making it the most diverse foodshed yet studied by the RAFT alliance. Furthermore, each variety listed is classified as extinct in the marketplace, endangered (1-3 commercial sources), threatened (4-6 commercial sources), or common. The state(s) that each variety is located in is also indicated. For instance, under the list for heritage apple varieties you'll find the *Kentucky Limbertwig* is threatened, but found in NC, followed by the *Kentucky Red* which is extinct in the marketplace but found in AL, KY, and TN.

We thank everyone involved in creating this publication and encourage you to continue preserving this wonderful diversity! You can access a PDF of the publication from a link on the SSL website, at <http://pacs.unt.edu/southernseedlegacy>. ■



Southern Seed Legacy
Department of Anthropology
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle Drive # 310409
Denton, TX 76203-5017
southernseedlegacy@unt.edu
<http://pacs.unt.edu/southernseedlegacy>



Southern Seed Legacy 2012 Seed Swaps:

Date	Location	Times	Contact
Feb. 15-17	TOFGA Conference Mesquite, TX	5:00 Friday until noon Sunday	Trish Percy, 214-673-5862 pdpercy@sbcglobal.net
Mar.3	Hot Springs, AR The Art Church, Studio 301 Whittington Ave.	3-5 pm	The Art Church artchurchorg@gmail.com
Mar. 10	Eureka Springs, AR Carnegie Library, 194 Spring St.	10am-2pm	Kate Zaker, Carnegie Library info@eurekalibrary.org
late April	Grove Creek Farm Crawford, GA	TBA	TBA