1. Aaron Lowden and Akumeh Meeruuni (Acoma Melon) and Tiidishukuume'tr'a (Acoma Hubbard Squash Seeds)

Most times we reference those good ancestors we think of them as some distant relatives from several generations ago. However, sometimes those good ancestors were people we knew in our lifetime. Most of shta nawaaiitemish (my uncles) are no longer here but they took every opportunity in shared space to impart so much knowledge during their time. One was kind, patient, and would give you direct answers. The other was stern, wanted quick results, and would make you work for the answers. Both reflecting their seeds; one like the meeruuni (melon) with that instantaneous sweetness, the other like the tiidiishukume'tr'a daani (winter squash) which you had to wait for that nourishment. Their gifts of knowledge about how we commune with the land and pray for the renewal everything as the sun shifts from north to south back and forth across our world. These seeds of squash and melons are the physical remains of that knowledge. They handed me these seeds, taught me how to sow them and treat them with the love of a parent. Cancer and diabetes took you both from us so much earlier than we thought. But with our haakumeh seed we are able to preserve a piece of their existence, their impact, and their love. Mah meh skuwaanama aahmoo shraumah anaweh Ya iy ni ya eh gi yu ty

Aaron Lowden was born and raised in Acoma Pueblo and is the Program Coordinator for Acoma Ancestral Lands Farm Corp Program

2. Tiana Baca and Black Tepary Bean Seeds

A wet spring almost made me
forget
the way the earth
cracks and crumbles
in summer sun

When we tucked you in
the earth
my feet stirred from
the warmth
of the ground below

Four days you waited
in sweltering soil
as I offered small prayers
in between my curses of
broken irrigation
grateful that
of all the seeds
in this moment
it was you

waiting

I figured you'd survive
but I didn't account for
your thriving

Seven days in
and just one drink
rainwater
portioned out of the cistern like
communion
just a taste

Yet as you arched forth
breaking ground I thought might
break you
I could feel the meaning of
Tenacity

Tiana Baca is the Garden & Sustainability Director at the Desert Oasis Teaching Garden in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is passionate about regenerative agriculture and community education.

3. John McLeod and Blue Corn from Taos

Blue Corn

In October, at the Intertribal Food Summit, I had the opportunity to return to Governor Suazo of Taos Pueblo an ear of blue corn that I had grown out. This humble reunification marked 31 years since our community of friends and growers had received the gift of this corn from Tellis Goodmorning of Taos Pueblo at the Kokopelli Nãtural Law Conference. Over the years, Chris Wells, founder of All Species Projects had been the primary keeper and grower of that corn.

Now it had been my turn.

Although we have been growing fruit and vegetables on our small farm at Story Ranch, along the Tecolote River near Las Vegas for over 30 years, the planting and harvesting of the blue corn was not only story-driven and climate determined but life changing.

Following years of climate activism and engagement, I have come to accept the reality of climate driven disruptions beyond our imaginations. Alongside this living nightmare, has been my increased respect and understanding of the necessity for developing food security in our region and the critical role place-based seeds, with memories and capacities for resilience through climate extremes, have in our future food sources.

The blue corn ear I was gifted, launched me on one of my greatest agricultural journeys. It grew my respect, developed my observer skills, expanded my baking choices, and gifted me an authentic response

to climate chaos.

Governor Suazo, graciously accepted the precious ear I handed him, thanked me, stuck it in his pocket and wandered on.

John is an educator and seed lover. He lives and works at Story Ranch outside of Las Vegas, New Mexico

4. Bill McDorman and Tortilla Corn

Hope, Hopi

We must look beyond the fires and the floods and threats and walls of our often troubled times to a more hopeful future. The strength of the answers we use to face the questions of our age can only come when we know again who we really are. The good news is this rapidly changing world is forcing all of us to do just this. We must find our story.

I believe seeds are the most powerful tool we humans can pick up and put in our hands, economically, politically, culturally, and especially now for me, spiritually. I know now why I ended up dedicating 40 years of my productive life to sharing seeds and their stories. It is time for me now to go home and finish finding my story. I am blessed. The seeds and the Hopi have shown me a path. I will find and embrace my story by growing the corn. Nothing else is as meaningful to me now. The power to change everything is in every single seed.

Bill grows corn and other heritage grains in Cornville, Arizona with his wife Belle and his 90 year-old parents.

5. Beverly Todd and Lanceleaf Sage Seeds, Virgin Groundcherry Seeds, and Foxtail Prairie Clover

Lanceleaf Sage

floating on the melting snow
rushing from creek to river
tiny seeds

caught in the out take
flushing into the farmer's field
settling onto the edge of a furrow
sinking into warm soil

inhaling
exhaling
awakening

tiny root reaching deep
green shoot reaching to the sky
leaves opening to the sun
growing taller into
the longer summer days

bright crisp aroma
bees loving
brilliant tiny blooms

seeds ripening and falling
stems and leaves drying
with the shorter, colder days
snow falling

as seeds wait
for the next turning
of the world

This gentle sage appears among the vegetables at the community garden. When I bump her, she reminds me of her presence with her blunt scent. I love to crush a green leaf and inhale the full aroma. Her seeds ripen over a few weeks and fall as they are ready, so I visit often with a bucket to shake the seeds into.

Lanceleaf Sage *Salvia reflexa*
Native annual, also known as blue sage, common throughout the Rocky Mountain Region. Volunteers and will self seed in the garden. Like all members of the Mint family, it supports beneficial insects and feeds bees. Michael Moore in Los Remidios describes its medicinal uses and calls it a form of local chia.

This persistent cousin of the tomatillo returns every spring and hugs the bare, hot ground at the edges of the community garden. She bears generous small sweet yellow fruits in papery husks that the prairie dogs share with me. Where seeds fall on irrigated ground, she grows a little taller, a little wider, a little brighter green.

Virginia Groundcherry *Physalis virginiana*
Perennial native volunteer at the community garden. Drought hardy, sprawling plant, 12" to 18" in height. Sweet fruits are small and more abundant with supplemental water.

This patient member of the legume family comes into the field with the ditch water and waits for summer heat to sprout and grow. She feeds herself, the soil and other plants by hosting rhizobia on root nodules that fix nitrogen from the air into the soil. I love to walk among her in late summer when long stems with tiny purple flowers sway in the breeze and buzz with all sorts of bees collecting nectar and pollen.

Foxtail Prairie Clover *Dalea leporina*
Late summer annual in legume family. Upright, branching to 3' tall. Volunteered at the community garden, likes irrigation. Rhizobia nodules observed on the roots – potential cover crop species? Bees

love the late August bloom. Shallow roots and late seeding make it easy to eliminate if unwanted.

Beverly is a potter, home gardener, permaculture designer, amateur botanist, community organizer, seed saver, and student of plant breeding. She has been planting, hugging and caring for a half acre food forest in Farmington, New Mexico for 18 years.

Read by Jamie Figueroa.
Jamie is Boricua by way of Ohio and longtime resident of northern New Mexico. As a writer and educator, she practices story making as a way to amplify underrepresented voices.

6. Eva Parr and Glass Gem Corn

Sweet Arms of Earth

sweet arms of earth
teach me to do right by the seeds.

the voices of a million mothers
rise from the damp morning soil
begging me to
oh please,
be tender.

the seeds sing songs into my palm about the hands that held them before.
they tell me about great floods
endless drought
about the gizzards of crows
the stomachs of sparrows
the sounds of stars
the pain of separation
spilled blood, stolen land
mothers' tears that well and fall
as cataclysmic storms

they tell me, clearly
about the deep wounds of trauma
the turmoil of the land
and those whose bones lie below us,
restless.

I stand
bare feet in the earth
and hear the seeds breathe their stories

every fiber of my being feels into the sorrows and joys

Eva is a community organizer and seed freak from California. She currently oversees 3 community gardens and 12 school gardens in Western Colorado & serves on the Advisory Council for Community Seed Network. In her free time she enjoys rock climbing and ceramics.

7. Jennifer Case Nevarez, Larry Emerson and White Corn, Anasazi Beans, Pinto Beans, and Alfalfa Seeds

Seed Story

It all started with a stranger in a coffee shop
That stranger was Dr. Larry Emerson,
a Diné farmer, researcher, relative, and indigenous activist
I was a refugee from hurricane Katrina at the time,
and Larry looked me in the eye
in the middle of a coffee shop
and said "You're in Root Shock."
His words rang through me like a gong
And although the modern world I had come from
offered little context for understanding
what he meant by that
I knew he was right.
And, as he explained further
humans can go into shock
when they are uprooted or unrooted…
when they lose their sense of place and belonging
and that in order to survive and even to thrive,
we actually need to be connected...
and to be responsible to something bigger than ourselves
and so, in that moment
a stranger became a friend
and we began a journey together
of bringing human beings back together
with themselves, with each other,
with the earth,
and with Creation
through the Tse Daa K'aan Learning Community,
which was born and built on Larry Emerson's farm in Tse Daa K'aan (or Hogback)
in Dinétah (or Navajo Nation)…
And for almost a decade,
older and younger generations came together there,
including students from all over the nation,
to put their hands on the earth,
to plant seeds,
to tend the farm,
to sit in the chao and the hoghan,

and to talk around the fire
to remember what it means to be a responsible human being.
I have watched many city kids weep
the first time they planted anything
or begin crying at the smell of wet earth
the first time tilling a field or making adobe
One student, transfixed staring at the earth, even said
"I have never done this but I know this
I know this in my body…I know this in my soul
I know this smell…I know this feeling
it's familiar in the most peaceful and comforting kind of way"
We planted seeds of all kinds
Corn, Bean, Squash, Melons, Alfalfa, Medicinal Herbs
We nurtured orchards and harvested Tobacco, Cedar, Sage
Timeless and primal, the seeds taught us and we spent season after season
restoring a sense of kinship and reconnecting
Reconnecting community members and visitors of all ages
with themselves, with each other, with the Earth, and with all of Creation.
Tilling the soil and also tilling the seeds of humanity
Because, as Dr. Larry Emerson advised the very first day I met him
"Well-being is nourished by being accountable to a people and a place"

In honor of Dr. Larry Emerson. 1947-2017

Larry Emerson a member of the Diné Nation from Tse Daa K'aan, Dinétah, Hogback, New Mexico. A respected father, brother, and son, and a Diné community member who served the greater good as an activist, researcher, educator, farmer, and artist. In response to growing concerns in service to the greater good, Larry Emerson and Jennifer Case Nevarez worked together for over a decade to birth the TDK Learning Community and steward a series of Hogan Dialogues.

Jennifer Case Nevarez is a grandmother, aunt, wife, daughter, and sister who loves living in the Guadalupe Barrio neighborhood of Santa Fe, New Mexico. She stewards www.communitylearningnetwork.org, a non-profit organization that was born from the hogan and from TDK Learning Community and is dedicated to "building community through real-life learning."

8. Isaura Andaluz and Haba (Fava) Seeds

Me pidieron que escogiera solo una semilla. Una nada mas? Imposible! Estamos rodeados por semillas. Viajan, vuelan, bailan y mueren. Pero no se muren de veras, se transforman. Con un poco de agua brotan nuevas hojas, exponiendo todas las características que han desarrollado en sus viajes por el mundo.

Expuestas a extremos del sol, la luna, el viento, el calor, el frío, sequía y nieve, las semillas se fortalecen grabando estas condiciones climáticas en su memoria. Encantadas llegan a nuestros jardines, granjas, bosques y selvas. Caen en los lugares más propios. La naturaleza nos enseña el camino que requiere

mucha paciencia, año atrás año.

Por medio del proyecto de Arid Crop Seed Cache, estoy trabajando con semillas de variedades ya no popular o común, y con semillas criollas que tienen resistencia a sequía, enfermedades y pestes. El propósito del proyecto es aumentar la variedad de semillas resistentes, y reforzar la resistencia del ecosistema y biodiversidad a través de un aumento del consumo de estas variedades.

Cuando uno ve una semilla, se queda calladita, tranquila en nuestras manos. Uno ni tiene idea de la sabiduría que lleva. El año pasado hicimos ensayos de germinación de semillas viejas. Cero fue la tasa de germinación más popular. Pero, yo y las semillas, no nos podíamos dar por vencer.

Plante unas habas de más de 30 años de edad y en la primavera nacieron aproximadamente 80% de las habas. Y este año, las otras 10-20% que se habían quedado en la tierra, están ya grandes y muy contentas acobijadas de rúcala. Esto demuestra que las semillas están inextricablemente vinculadas a la tierra. Y nadie, ni científicos, las puede separar.

Las semillas sueñan con la tierra calentita, un poco de agua, abono, y el cariño de nuestras manos. Pero lo que vale más es el respeto y paciencia que les damos a las semillas enquanto continúan en su camino, sin intervención científica de genes y manipulación. Como nos demostraron las habas, la naturaleza sabe lo que hace. Y juntos podemos caminar en este mundo sagrado.

English Translation:
I was asked to choose only one seed. Only one? Impossible! Seeds surround us. They travel, fly, dance and die. But they don't really die. They are transformed. With a bit of water they sprout new leaves, displaying all the traits developed in their travels around the world.

Exposed to the extremes from the sun, moon, wind, heat, cold, drought and snow, the seeds are strengthened through the recording of these climatic conditions in their memory. Delighted, they arrive to our gardens, farms, woods, and jungles, landing in the places most appropriate for them. Nature teaches us what the path is, which requires much patience, year after year.

Through the Arid Crop Seed Cache project, I work with a variety of seeds no longer popular or common, and heirloom seeds with resistance to drought, disease and pests. The project's goal is to increase the variety of these resilient seeds and to strengthen the resiliency of the ecosystem and biodiversity through increased consumption of these varieties.

When one looks at a seed, it is quiet and calm in our hands. One has no idea of the knowledge it carries. Last year we did germination tests of old seeds. Zero was the most popular germination rate. But the seeds, and I refused to give up. I planted fava beans that were over 30 years old and approximately 80% germinated. This year the other 10-20% that remained in the soil are now growing, wrapped in arugula. This demonstrates that the seeds are inextricably bound to the soil. And no one, not even scientists can separate them.

The seeds dream of warm soil, a bit of water, compost and the affection from our hands. But what is worth more is the respect and patience that we give the seeds as they continue on their path, without scientific intervention of genes or manipulation. As the fava beans have shown us, nature knows what is does. And together we can walk in this sacred world.

Isaura Andaluz is a life-long seed steward based in Albuquerque. She worked to establish the Arid Crop Seed Cache, New Mexico's largest collection of native and drought-tolerant seeds. Passionate about food, bees and seeds, she has advocated for the protection of seeds and the right to farm through the Farmer Protection Act, participation on USDA's AC21 Committee, and creation of the Save NM Seeds Coalition.

9. Chloe Maize Hart-Mann and Zinnia Seeds

A couple of years ago I decided to grow flowers in my families garden so I could have my own project in the garden. We grew pink zinnias, Californian Giant Zinnias, marigolds, and calendula. The calendula and marigolds didn't do that well that year, but the zinnias did very well. So we saved the seeds of all the flowers and planted the zinnias the next year. That year the two types of zinnias crossed and we got a variety of flowers. There were now small flowers that were colors other than pink and more large pink flowers. We kept growing the zinnias each year and we got more and more interesting flowers and flower colors. Then in 2017 I found something very interesting, a white zinnia. That was the first year I had found a white zinnia. The next year I found more white zinnias, but I also found multicolored, and yellow zinnias. I had never seen yellow zinnias before this year. Some of the more memorable multicolored zinnias were large red flowers that faded to yellow, another memorable flower was a peach colored flower with pink on the petals right where they connected to the center. I truly enjoy growing the flowers and the flowers got me to be more involved in the garden. One thing that I love about zinnias other than the colors is that the pollinators love them. I have seen bumble bees, bees, butterflies, and humming birds on the flowers, they really attracted the pollinators to my garden. Because of my zinnias, I am now more involved in the garden, and have my own summer project.

Chloe Maize Hart-Mann lives in Anton Chico, New Mexico, where she grows zinnia flowers and saves their seeds. She also helps her family grow food, save many other seeds, and take care of their livestock.

10. Brett Bakker and Amarillo del Norte Bean Seeds

We call it Amarillo del Norte. It's just a yellow bean from Northern New Mexico. It was called Ancient Yellow by Fabian Garcia back in 1912, and he said it was rare then. So, here's a story of how I came across this seed.

When I was collecting seeds for Native Seeds/SEARCH up in Northern New Mexico, in Vadito, one of my favorite little villages up there, I met a guy named Nick Montoya. A farmer, firefighter, santero, and he was always generous with seeds. I got peas and beans and squash and all kinds of stuff. But, I hadn't seen this one and I'd been going to visit him for three or four years. And one time I went back and he's like, "Oh, yeh, I think you might like this one." And I thought it was really interesting that he waited that long. He was being patient, check'in me out. Was I doing this for a good reason? You know, what was my intentions? Was I going to be someone who just came, and, hit and run? But after I kept coming back for a few years, I think, I felt like he really trusted me enough to give me this bean that was really rare.

I never saw it anywhere else. Miguel Santistevan said he found it in Mora years later. But it's still not

very common up there, which is very bizarre because it's really productive, it grows at high elevation, it grows down here. Fabian Garcia said that you could grow two crops in the low elevations in a year.

So, the real lesson to me was, just being patient. You know. And especially when you're collecting seeds from elders and in traditional cultures you don't push. Because they're not like that. Whenever I'd go collecting seeds from someone and it would be, oh you know I want to come back and get some seeds, oh when's a good time to come? And their like, I'm here. It wasn't like Monday at 4 o'clock. They don't do that. It's just, you have to be patient and whenever the connection happens to be.

So, Nick was also a santero. In the winter he's carving saints and little ornaments and stuff. And I asked him one time, "Hey, do you ever do a San Isidro? You know, I have been looking for a San Isidro and I just don't see any up here." And he said, "No, no I've never done one of those, but that's a good idea." And we just went on and we were sitting in his kitchen, got my seeds and left. And a year later I went back. Same thing. We're sitting in his kitchen. I'm having coffee. His wife gives me a bowl of beans and we're talking and we're looking at the seeds. And he goes, "Oh yeh, by the way that's yours." And he gestures with his head into the corner of the kitchen. He did not know I was coming. And there's a little San Isidro bulto just sitting there, waiting for me to come. And just that patience, you know. And it was sitting there in the kitchen. It wasn't like he brought it out cause he knew I was coming. It was there waiting for me to show up because he knew I was coming back. And I get choked up just thinking about that one, but uh, yeh.

Brett Bakker began collecting and planting traditional southwestern & heirloom crops in 1979. He is currently with The Arid Crop Seed Cache Project and farming in the South Valley, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

11. Sara Wright and Nasturtium Seeds

Trailing Nasturtiums

I first fell in love with the fiery red and gold trailing nasturtiums that grew in my grandmother's garden when I was a small child. I believe it was my mother who first put the flowers in salads making each summer meal a festive event.

Both my mother and grandmother were gardeners so I grew up with plants indoors and out. I participated gathering all kinds of ripe seeds and pods including wrinkled bright green nasturtium seeds that looked to me like tiny human brains that shrunk to half their size as they dried on screens in my grandmother's attic. Later the seeds were stored in paper bags until spring.

The awe that I experienced touching any seed as a child is still with me. That each one carries its own story, its own DNA (protein) signature, and the form the seed will take, is a miracle worth reflecting upon.

The first flowers I ever planted were nasturtiums that came from my grandmother's garden. I prepared little rock crevices that lay against a giant granite boulder on Monhegan Island, my first adult home in Maine. Located 16 miles out to sea, this tiny fishing village was flooded by tourists in the summer. When people walked up from the wharf passing by my house, they often casually plucked the flowers I cared

for so tenderly. Putting up a sign made no difference and I was too young to feel tolerance for these interlopers, eventually moving my precious nasturtium patch to another garden behind the house!

Although I used the leaves in salads I had a hard time picking the flowers, preferring instead to enjoy the feast by sight.

As soon as my two boys were old enough, each summer they bit off the fragrant flames, even as a multitude of bees and hummingbirds vied for sweet nasturtium nectar. Sometimes, when childhood friends came over, my sons would pick and eat a nasturtium creating quite a stir. Other children were amazed. No one ate flowers!

My children are long ago grown and gone and I am still planting nasturtiums some fifty years later.

Last year, I planted the few seeds that I had brought with me from Maine, here in Abiquiu. I also ordered some from a familiar catalog that specializes in organic and heirloom seeds. I grew my own in a large pot, and planted the others directly into the ground on the east side of the house. The nasturtiums in the pot had yellowing leaves and yet the seeds from both were equally abundant.

However, the nasturtiums I planted in the ground held more moisture after watering, providing my house lizards with giant green leaves that both lizards and buds thrived under during the monstrous July afternoon heat. When the vines finally began to trail in early August the plants were festooned with a riot of color, much to my joy and delight. Nasturtiums were still blooming well into November.

To this day, I rarely break off and eat a newly blooming flower as sweet as they are to the taste, although I regularly use the pungent peppery leaves in salads.

Saving seeds from year to year was simply part of what I did without thinking about it until I began to write and celebrate my own rituals (almost 40 years ago now). After making that shift I incorporated nasturtium seed gathering as part of my fall equinox thanksgiving celebration. Every year I invoke both my mother and my grandmother in remembrance and gratitude for their legacy – a long and unbroken line of growing these flowers and saving their seeds. Someday, I hope to find someone who will carry on my nasturtium seed story after I am gone.

Both the leaves and petals of nasturtiums are packed with nutrition, containing high levels of vitamin C. Ingesting these plants provides immune system support, tackles sore throats, coughs, and colds, as well as bacterial and fungal infections.

Nasturtiums also contain high amounts of manganese, iron, flavonoids, and beta - carotene.
Studies have shown that the leaves have antibiotic properties; they are the most effective before flowering.

Nasturtiums are native to South America; they are not an imported species, perhaps lending credibility to the importance of sticking to native plants during this time of Earth's most difficult transition. They are known as a companion plant. For example, nasturtiums grow well with tomato plants. In addition, they act as a natural bug repellent so I always have small patches of them growing around my vegetable garden. Aphids are especially attracted to them leaving more vulnerable plants alone. Rabbits and other creatures aren't tempted to eat their leaves or flowers because of their sharp flavor, yet these trailing

vines attract many pollinators. Bees of all kinds love them. Although nasturtiums are frost sensitive, I note that even after germination the little green shoots with hats simply hug the ground if the weather turns inclement. Unless the temperature dips below the mid 20's nasturtiums always bounce back. In fact even a hard frost won't take all the adult plants at once because their vining habit protects some of the seeds and some flowers. I always end up pulling the vines and the very last flowers before all are withered (this is when I consume the flowers after picking a small bouquet for the house). For all the above reasons I think these tough and tender vining plants have a good chance of surviving in the face of Climate Change.

Sara is a writer, ethologist and naturalist who is making her home in Abiquiu, New Mexico

13. Iren Schio and Blue Corn from Taos

Mais

While growing up in Switzerland I knew Mais, as it's called in Swiss German, to be grown for Animal feed and oil.

Yet when I went on bike adventures outside Zurich's city limits as a Child the cornfields were always fascinating to me.

From the tender first green shoots to the tall stalks gently swaying in the breeze. If it was ripe enough, my friends and I helped ourselves to some ears and ate them right there as a delicious snack! Much more delicious than the exotic canned baby corn we were familiar with in Chinese Restaurants.
After living in New Mexico I learned to love corn in a much deeper way.

From petroglyphs to Tamales, what a gift Corn is for us Humans.

Robert Mirabal gave a concert at Ghost Ranch in 2015 and gifted his audience kernels of the Blue Corn he grows in Taos.

I have planted them in the spring in the garden ever since.

After harvesting and husking the Corn we grind it into a coarse flour.

We tried grinding it at first on a stone metate but contrary to all the photos of smiling Native maidens grinding corn in that fashion, it proved to be very hard work and we now use a metal hand mill for this task.

Dave bakes the most delicious corn bread with our flour.

I often play my flute in the Corn patch during growing season, as a thank you to the Corn Mothers, and because it brings me peace and joy.

Iren lives and works in Abiquiu, where she loves to hike, garden and pursues her art.

14. Ron Boyd and Turquoise Corn from Hopi Land

This is the story about the turquoise corn from Hopi land. I would like to explain the way it was explained to me.

When I received this corn, I knew it to be Hopi Turquoise Corn. But I mentioned that to a Hopi man once, and he said, "This isn't actually Hopi Turquoise Corn unless it is planted on Hopi land in the Hopi way with the Hopi methods. Otherwise, we just call that turquoise corn from Hopi land." And that's a difference that I really appreciated.

I kind of like, while remembering all the years around corn, not just the Hopi Turquoise but this relationship with corn is really an earliest memory. That's a memory of about 60 years ago. I grew up rural, Arkansas, Valley River farm country and all around us was a lot of sweet corn and field corn and silage corn, mostly yellow corn. During the summer time, sweet corn: my mother would buy sweet corn, 12 ears for a dollar. I'd eat corn until I just couldn't eat it anymore. She would put it up. She'd can it. Then we'd have canned corn through the winter.

Then through my childhood I spent as much time as I could, because I liked earning money, working in the fields, and a lot of the field work was working on the corn. So, I irrigated corn, harvested corn, planted corn, ate corn.

This particular corn, the turquoise corn from Hopi land, I received, about, 30 some years ago. I think it was 1987 when a friend of mine, who had worked with John Kimmey ... John Kimmey was at that time heading a small seed company, first small seed company I was aware of: Talavaya Seed Company. Lionel had worked with John Kimmey. John and, now I know, his wife Claire had been to Third Mesa, Hotevilla and received this corn from Grandmother Carolina Tawangyouma. I received six seeds that year, about 1987. I planted those six seeds at the front door of my house and was delighted with the outcome. Of course, those six seeds probably must have made at least 12 ears.

This corn grows about four or five-foot-tall and it has one or two ears per stalk. So, over the next 30 some years, I reckon I've planted that corn at least a dozen times. Starting with those six seeds, it's pretty likely I harvested two to three thousand pounds of that corn. I first planted it in Taos, New Mexico and from there I moved a 1000 foot higher, to about 8000 foot. I planted that corn on the high road and made good crops there. Then I think the next crops probably came with me when I came down to La Villita on the Rio Grande, at 5700 foot. I've made half a dozen crops down there. I also planted at a friend's place in Chimayo. So, this corn has produced really well all the way from, well around 5000 to 8000 foot. Of course, I have handed off a lot of it. I know recently, a bunch of it came back to stories of turquoise from Hopi land in Illinois. I've sent some up to my friends in Colorado and he's had good success with it up there.

It's really a beautiful corn. When we plant it, we most often times do it with community or the tribe or friends. And a few years ago, we picked up on the idea, it was suggested somewhere, that when we plant the corn, not just the turquoise corn but any of the corn, we put the corn in our mouths, then put it in the ground. The message suggested that when that corn is in your mouth, it gets a sense of you, you DNA, your genetics and it grows with you and about you. That just feels really nice.

In fact, I have never planted this corn mechanically. It's always been planted either by hand or with a

simple, simple little planting tool. I've never planted it with power tools. I've never planted it with a tractor. Then about three years ago, when we harvested, the kids helped me harvest it. These were 4, 5 and 6-year-olds that helped me harvest it. We took it all out of the ground with a scythe and sickle, made a big pile of it. Still got this beautiful picture of these kids running and jumping on the corn. Yeah, it's really brought a lot of magic.

So, we've eaten it in a lot of ways too. I believe it's a flour corn. So, we've used it for tortillas, atole, corn meal for corn bread. Even eaten it when it was in the milk. You can eat it that way but it's not all that exciting. Oh, we made chicos out of it once too.

I think the last year I had it at my field, I couldn't flood irrigate so I put overhead irrigation on it. And irrigated it that way. At the end of the season, there were a few problems with the outcome and I could hear the voice of the corn real clearly stating, "We're girls from the desert here and we don't get overhead sprinklers, unless it's the rain.". So that was really clear: I'll never do it with overhead irrigation again. When I planted it in Taos, it was higher up, not as hot and I could actually finish that corn with three irrigations: once when I planted it, once when the tassel came in, and then when the silk came in. That would finish it. But down at 5000 feet, in sandy soil, I've got to irrigate it a little bit more often.

It must have been four or five years ago. One of the things I noticed about it was the silk on the ears of this corn, when it was still golden and fresh and the silk on the top of that ear was as long as the ear. It's the longest, golden locks of silk I've ever seen on an eared corn.

It was a few years ago, back again, maybe about 10 years ago, a buddy and I did a project at Hopi land, and this involved peaches. I took this turquoise corn back because I felt like I should return some of it, and the young men who we were doing this project with said they had never seen this corn before. So, I'm not sure how much of it is still on Hopi land. But, yeah, it was really a delight, it was great evening with these young men. We were grafting peaches and before the evening was over, and with good laughter and jest, and I carry with me still, these young men told me that we were some of the white boys they'd been waiting for. That felt really good.

So, I'm going to plant this corn again this year. I sell it to a seed company and if I explain to them, the way it was explained to me: "this is not Hopi Turquoise Corn, this is turquoise corn from Hopi land. We're planting it white boy way and it's not Hopi corn unless it is planted Hopi way." It'll go to the seed company I work with and they're crazy excited about it. And there it goes, around the world. This company sells around the world. So, we'll see how it evolves.

Ron Boyd is a seed grower, spoon, shoe and cider maker and farms with his wife Debora in La Villita, New Mexico.

15. Bill Mann and Brown Djoura Milo

We have grown Sorghum Bicolor both sweet and grain over the last few years. This sorghum is also known as djoura, great millet, jowari, or milo. Easy to grow and very drought tolerant, it is one of the most important staple foods around the world for people, animals, and soils. It builds soil, produces food, feed, forage, and if it is a sweet cane provides a sweetener. The first sorghums we grew were

sweet. We started with a red variety and then a black seeded cane. The red was acquired from Native Seeds/SEARCH and the black was provided by a neighbor who got it from a pueblo. Next we were gifted a grain sorghum from another seed saver in Gila, NM. All of these sorghums we grew from small plots into larger ones as we saved more seed. If thinned properly the stalks grow tall and strong producing more grain. Once the grain has been harvested we put our goats out to eat the stalks and fertilize our fields with their manure and when they are finished the field is ready for planting a fall or winter crop.

Bill Mann has been farming with his family for the last twelve years in the Pecos River Valley near the village of Anton Chico, New Mexico.

16. Beata Tsosie-Peña and Aurelia's Green Amaranth Seeds from The Garden's Edge Seed Travels

My name is Beata Tsosie-Peña. I'm from Hapo Kha'p'oo Owinge, Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico. I'm going to share a poem with you called "Tsez" which is the indigenous people of Guatemala's word for amaranth. This poem is close to my heart as amaranth is a favorite plant of mine. I think it's beautiful and so powerful in its ability to feed the people and in its shared story that is so important to reflect on, as it's the story of indigenous people as well. I just really honor the Guatemalan farmers who came and shared their knowledge of this plant with us, how to grow it, how to harvest it. I had to honor it with a poem.

This poem is called "Tsez", it's with thanks to the Garden's Edge and the Qachuu Aloom Association.

I fell in love with Amarante this summer
From the moment that Cristobal's magic hands
Formed soft, circular beds in sandy dirt
Plowed up by borrowed tractor
That unearthed pottery shards...so old
And then his brown, calloused hands
Sprinkled tiny white seeds
On top of the circles he had made in earth
We paid attention
As he taught us knowledge that came from
Indigenous mountains in Rabinal, Guatemala
From hand woven cloth and ceremonies dressed in white
Dressed in rainbows and beautiful mujeres strong espiritu montaña
All smiles and dark ancient eyes
That has seen much history
While they knowingly cultivate their own
Knowledge that traveled here
In continuation of the old connections
That traveled ageless roadways buried beneath modern time
Macaw feathers and jade in plundered graves tell stories of this
And now Cristobal whose family was murdered for industry

Gently buries sacred seeds
and I think about Edson's words and stories from his elders
How this majestic plant named Tsez, revered like corn in Pueblos
Sustained and nurtured the intelligence of Mayan people
Over time created vast cities that spoke with constellations
Purple fields that blanketed hundreds of acres of rolling mountains
In a place blessed by rain and celestial origins
That cultivated and loved Amarante
All violet magenta rainforest green purple brilliance
Containing complete B proteins that needed no name
Nurtured advanced civilizations that lived in lush beauty
That eventually fell under the glare of Spanish domination
They saw how important this plant was to the people
And burned thousands of acres of crops
Cut off the hands
Of people who were caught trying to grow it
The people grew it anyway
And the seed survived
Lived to be planted among potshards
That came from a similar time and place
Survived to be planted
By those descended and connected
To the old ones who died to save it
The trees are turning yellow-red before their sleep
And now Julian whose eyes are bright alive
Teaches me about harvesting these seeds
How when they are ready
Hundreds will fall from bent over bright purple buds
Effortlessly into your hand with a gentle touch
Confidently he cuts a few and puts them upside down inside a bag
And Sylvia a mother of four garbed in color
Whose strong voice carries her forward as a woman of purpose
Demonstrates cooking with this amazing seed
Golden atole, popped on a fire, ground into flour, sprinkled on food, as cereal
I drink two full delicious cups with and without sugar
The children cannot get enough of the popped kind
They insist its popcorn and continue to eat
While my hands become stained pink as I rub the seed
Out of its flowers against a framed screen
We speak of winnowing
And I imagine the wind carrying the dried parts away
The seed falling onto a waiting container
Delicate masses of creationism
The size of a grain of sand, and so plentiful
I honor the plant with prayer
Now chopped at the stem
That came from a line of seed

Stretching across ages
Sharing our inherited experience
colonization and conquest within our DNA
I like to think we are acclimatized to it
Stronger and able to adapt
As we still draw knowledge from plants
Who store the weather patterns in their memory
Who were diligently stored and grown
by generations of hallowed hands
such an honor to plant this seed
and walk the roadways of remembrance
Even the plants have stories to pass on

Thank you.

Beata Tsosie-Peña is from Santa Clara Pueblo and El Rito, New Mexico. She is the Environmental Justice Program Coordinator for Tewa Women United, a poet, musician and mother, and Is passionate about community gardens

17. Sunny Dooley and Blue Corn Seeds

The story that I am speaking of is the story of Dolii/Bluebird: She came bearing many gifts. The one that is mentioned in this brief retelling is the important gift of the Blue Corn seeds and the value of sharing her abundance.

Native Nations across the north and south hemispheres have unique protocols regarding how and when their Origin are retold. For the Dine' Navajo, stories are primarily told from the New Moon of Ghaajii/October and to the First Thunder Awakening in the mid Winter months. This observance is to allow hibernating and migrating birds, animals, reptiles, insects, trees, shrubs, grasses, moss and lichens the grace to fully reintegrate and fortify themselves for upcoming seasons. When the Dine' tell these stories of Origin, they are told verbally, to allow the energy of the spoken word to adhere to certain aspects of creation. This allows for a relational connection between all species. It is a reestablishment affirming our interwoven existence.

Sunny Dooley and the seeds she cares for live in Chi Chil Tah, New Mexico. Having grown up with seed stories and songs, Sunny continues the cycling of seeds for all creation to ingest the JOY and grow.

18. Mary Waldie Vigil and Hemp Seeds

Hemp

I am still here.
But I have not been in your area for a long time.
I grew acre upon acre in the old world.

The world where I was loved and cared for.
I was a U.S. staple they might say. I was used for paper, clothing, and rope.
I was honored to have Thomas Jefferson use me to write the Declaration of Independence and to have Betsy Ross sew me into a flag.
Then a new world dawned.
The war on Drugs began and I was considered a drug.
It was prohibited to grow me and what use to be prized was forgotten in a bag in the National Seed Storage Laboratory.
I was rotten, moldy, dusty, and lost for a long time.

However, one day the truth about my significance and a need for me had arisen.
I am more than a piece of paper or cloth.
I am an agricultural marvel.
I can clean the soil which has been contaminated.
I can provide healing with my CBD properties that have now been found through science. My seeds when consumed are more nutritionally superior than flax seeds.
I can still become fiber, but I can be used for much more than just cloth or rope.
I can even build houses with bricks build from my stocks.
And one day I just might be the biomass that makes your electricity.
I am a revolutionary plant!

Before you judge me, learn about me.
See if I can help you or your family, I just might be one of the answers to today's problems.
You will be able to find me soon growing in your neighborhoods and in fields you pass.
I will be on the shelves in stores in various forms.
Look for me, and when you find me, don't forget that I almost passed out of all knowledge.
Be thankful that Hemp exists.

Mary is a rancher and farmer and lives with her family in San Fidel, New Mexico

19. Rowen White and Mohawk Red Bread Corn Seeds

I hold this Mohawk Red Bread Corn in my hand. Inside these kernels there's a seed song of resilience, resistance, remembrance, and reconciliation. This seed story begins with the dawning of our creation when the gift of this corn sprouted from the body of original woman's daughter. That from her grave would grow this corn, beans, and squash to sustain the people. This was the sprouting of our original agreements with our food plants. That we would take care of you and you would take care of us. These agreements that still run like wild rivers inside of our blood and our bones. It was this corn that grew us and our culture as Mohawk People. It was this corn that taught us how to be generous. Even when mysterious new people came from the east. We fed this corn to the colonizers, the settlers, the traders, the missionaries to keep them from starving. Even when those same people burned thousands of acres of our corn feeds during the revolutionary war. We rose up resiliently from the ashes of those corn fields. We learned how to eat the burnt corn to avoid starvation. Although they tried, they could never sever our connection to this corn, who we see as our mother. Wise ones kept caches of seed in smokey buckskin pouches for safekeeping. Hidden and growing until all was safe again. This corn

continued to be used in ceremony, fed to the lips of newlyweds, and babies, and even before death. Yet this corn, during the era of acculturation, assimilation, displacement dwindled down to one single cob in the hands of an elder. It was this one cob that spoke whispers of resistance to foresighted elders who petitioned our leaders and elders to not forget who we are and where we come from. Inside of these seeds the ancestors' prayers still echo. And this corn stayed with us through all of the adversities and challenges of the last many centuries of colonization and displacement. It was the seed song of this Mohawk Red Bread Corn that brought many people together over the last three years to plant reconciliation gardens in the Hudson River Valley. It has been the guidance and generosity of this red corn that's helping us to heal.

Inside these kernels is an achingly beautiful seed song that unites my ancestors, my living relatives, and my future generations. It is the seed corn that I proudly hand down to my daughter and son. That they might know the foods of their ancestors and love them as relatives.

Rowen White is a Mohawk seedkeeper, farmer, and passionate activist for indigenous seed sovereignty.

20. Greg Schoen and Chickasaw 8-Row Dent Corn Seeds from Carl Barnes

The Seed Remembers

A bunch of years ago I met a man named Carl Barnes… who was of Cherokee ancestry. Before Carl was born, his father moved the family to western Oklahoma to homestead. Carl was born there and as a little boy he went through the dust bowl years. As a young adult, Carl learned more about his Cherokee heritage and began growing a lot of the old varieties of corn that were still around, back when many of them were still being called 'Indian corn'. He later learned about the traditional corns of many of the tribes that were in Oklahoma and was able to reintroduce some of them to their original heritage corns that had become lost to them. And this had a deep spiritual effect on these people.

Carl had a lot of words of wisdom that he shared with us.
'The grandmothers will re-appear in the children.'
'If we do the prayer and ceremony the Old Ones will return.'
And one that was simple and profound—'The seed remembers.'

Carl also talked of all the colors of the corn and the musical tones like they were a rainbow that carried in itself the promise of a new language of humanity. That one got my attention and began my journey with the corn.

It's been three hundred generations since the mysterious origins of Maize (the corn) in the heart of Mexico. From there it spread, through all the migrations, and by passing from hands to hands to hands through millennia of time, deep down into South America and far up into North America, transforming itself into an unimaginable diversity of colors and forms as it sustained the people and even more so, nourished their spiritual life.

We're just beginning to understand something about inheritance that we are now calling epigenetics.

It's like another layer, beyond what we have thought of as how inherited traits are normally passed down. This is where the things that are experienced by a human being within a life-- the deep and perhaps stressful experiences-- these leave imprints, that are actually passed on to the future generations. Which means that at some level we are living the experiences of our ancestors. And this happens not only with humans but also other life forms…. such as the corn.

Common to all of the maize cultures of the Americas are the stories of the Corn Mother, and that human beings come from the corn. This is universal in their understanding.

So maybe it could be that as the Native peoples went through their times of peace and plenty along with times of war and hardship, and through all their migrations, into different lands and facing different challenges, that all this left its imprints, and this went into their oral histories and traditions. And along with them they carried their seed…which itself went through its experiences of being planted in various climates, soils, and conditions, and this too was recorded, diligently, into every kernel. Could it be that there evolved these two streams of history, of knowledge, in the people and in the corn, that become braided together? So closely that the corn itself became like the recordkeeper, a living library that has literally carried the stories of these peoples.

And maybe the Elders of long ago foresaw the coming times of conquest and colonization, where their ways would be lost, and so through their ceremonies and spiritual practices they imprinted their knowledge into the seed, to be kept alive by those same ceremonies and songs that are practiced to this day by their descendants.

Maybe… this is why they revere it so…

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These days many Native peoples are reconnecting with their traditional seeds and at the same time are teaching their languages to their young people. As if the ancient knowledge held in the corn is returning.

The seed remembers.
It remembers its ancestors.
It remembers those who have planted it, and where it has been planted.
It remembers being respected, or not respected.
It remembers being bought and sold.
It remembers being set free.

The seed remembers. The seed does not forget.

Greg Schoen currently resides in a rural setting near Silver City, New Mexico, where he grows heritage seeds and works with various nonprofit groups that promote seed saving and sustainable agriculture.