

Greetings, gardeners!

Seed library meeting this coming Wednesday

I hope to see you this coming Wednesday, February 26, at 7pm for a seed library discussion and tomato fostering program. Last year's tomato fostering program was a great success, so we've decided to do it again. In addition to fostering tomatoes, we will also foster a new seed donation, which is a plant called the Cocona. Cocona grows naturally in the Amazon jungle, and its fruit, which are berries the size of avocados, taste something like lemons and tomatoes. They have a long germination period and requires special care to germinate. I will be bringing luffa sponges, which I grew last year (yes, we have luffa seeds "Thai long" that you can plant this year), and some chicha morada for you to taste, which is a drink made from maiz morado purple corn (yes, we have these seeds, too), which was used in religious ceremonies by the Incas.

New seeds

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (rareseeds.com) donated a massive variety of seeds this year! We've got some really interesting seeds, besides the cocona (described above, which needs to be started now), including:

1. **Cactus** (yes, you can try your hand at growing your own cactus from seed)
2. **Aka hon chirimen Shiso (aka perilla)**, which is a Japanese herb that is used for pickling and coloring and can also be put in salads to add spice or can be planted as decorative borders
3. **Spotted Aleppo Syrian lettuce** - you may be aware that the war in Syria has required that Syrian seeds be extricated from the Doomsday Seed Bank because the agricultural lands have been largely destroyed. Growing Syrian seeds is an act in these times to protect the world's threatened seed diversity. Please consider growing it and saving this special seed.
4. **Arka Suryamukhi squash** - a winter squash from the area near Bangalore, India. It stores well over the winter, is very productive, and has sweet, delicious flesh.
5. **Jelly melon** - a spiky African fruit that is orange, with pulp that looks like green jello.
6. **Strawberries!** - we have 3 kinds, all of which should be started indoors now.
7. **Sorghum Tennessee tall girls** - sorghum canes are grown to press into delicious syrup!
8. **Pink bananas** - if you are up for a real challenge, start some pink banana seeds now in a big pot, put it outside when the weather is warm, and overwinter it inside next winter. If you're lucky, you'll get some sweet small pink bananas before winter time.

We will have these and the rest of the new seeds catalogued in the seed library by the time we meet on Wednesday.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the library next week! Bring your thoughts, questions, and tomato and cocona planting energy!

Sharon Miller, Coordinator
Voorheesville Seed Library