



The roots of authentic taste

Organic plant varieties are bred in line with nature's principles – for better taste and healthy, robust plants.

Why do we need organic plant breeding?

Rich and tasty bread, delicious vegetables, fruit with high vitamin content – this is what you expect and usually get if you buy organic. The

fundamental basis of all these products is seed. And each grain of seed has a long history: Generations of farmers and breeders have left their traces in the genome of vegetable and cereals.

Organic farmers today grow both, traditional varieties and “modern industrial” varieties. Traditional varieties offer a wide range of taste and biodiversity, but are often not suited for producing larger quantities. “Modern industrial” varieties are bred to perform best with artificial fertilisers and pesticides – but not under organic farming conditions. Therefore, organic plant breeders are developing “modern” varieties for organic farming. But organically bred plant varieties are still rare.

Spotlight on: Seeds of resistance – farmers bakers

The feet in the soil and the hands in the dough – this is the daily bread of the “paysans boulangers”, farmers bakers in France. They take care of their own wheat and rye varieties, exchange the best seed with their neighbours, and they feel the true quality of the grains in their fingers!

www.semencespaysannes.org

Spotlight on: Kultursaat – breeding is culture

If organic gardeners are not satisfied with the vegetable varieties on the market – they sometimes start to breed themselves. A group of organic vegetable breeders has founded the association Kultursaat (culture seed) in 1994. Today, about 80 new vegetable varieties and 17 conservation varieties are officially registered under the responsibility of Kultursaat.

www.kultursaat.org





ORGANIC PLANT BREEDING

Organic plant breeding – what has been reached so far?

Since the 1920ies, plant breeding has been increasingly monopolised. Multinational, private companies mainly focus on plant breeding for conventional farming. Plant varieties are bred for maximum yield under high input conditions and maximum uniformity. On the other hand, these plants are often sensitive to diseases and pests as well as scarce nutrient supply. The invention of hybrid breeding made farmers dependent on seed companies such as Syngenta and Monsanto, because re-using seed from their own harvest is impossible when hybrids are grown.

Since the 1950ies, independent breeding initiatives have worked on varieties suited for organic farming. Despite continuous lack of finance (while GMO research has received massive amounts of public support) and legislation that restricts the marketing of varieties with a lower level of uniformity, the movement can claim for many successes in conserving several local varieties and having developed several new organic

Organic plant breeding needs time and money

Breeding research needs time and money – the development of a new variety takes about 10 to 15 years, depending on the variety. It can cost more than 600 000 Euros.

In order to finance these efforts, organic breeding initiatives and their innovative approaches often depend on donations from private foundations, public support and private sponsors



What you can do

- Ask your organic food shop or your farmer for organic or open pollinated plant varieties.
- Find a list of breeding initiatives, background information and further links on www.organic-plant-breeding.org and www.eco-pb.org
- Grow organic varieties in your own garden
- Support organic plant breeding and donate for organic plant breeding (e.g. www.saatgutfonds.de)
- Buy food made from organic varieties (e.g. Bioverita, Zaadvast labels)
- Join the movement!

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