

Finding Drought Resistant Seed

Climate change is slowly forcing us to think about its implications ...

The threat of climate change is forcing our crop scientists to begin the search for heat-resistant and drought resistant seed sources.

As the climate heats up, current varieties of crops are going to be greatly stressed. We need to develop / re-discover varieties of rice, wheat, corn, potatoes, sorghum, millet and beans that can mature quickly and be robust in what they produce.

Peasant farmers are our greatest resource in this search.

In the Andes, peasants grow at least 50 varieties of potatoes each year. This diversity insures that at least a handful of these varieties will be successful, depending on the growing conditions. They will plant the same diversity next year.

In Burkina Faso (on one side of the Sahara) and Ethiopia (on the other side) peasant women have been astute enough to quietly create banks of seeds that have grown well despite the heat and drought.

It won't be easy for current scientists to re-build trust with these societies, because many have threatened them with seed patent control. Now they want to borrow their stories and secrets. But the search has already begun. It is obvious we cannot deny the challenges that for-shadow our future.

(Written by Joyce Sasse)

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