

PSI Workshop
Turtle Tree Seed Company

Copake, NY
August 5, 2002

General Information about Turtle Tree Seed Company:

Turtle Tree Seed Company, owned by Nathan and Beth Corymb is a biodynamic seed company which has grown vegetable, herb and flower seed for ten years and has put out eighty yearly mail order catalogues since 1994. There were 288 varieties offered in their 2002 catalog. They typically grow out approximately 50 varieties for commercial seed production annually. In addition to commercial seed production, they also participate in several on-farm trials and a few small breeding/research projects.

The company is located in Copake, NY (approximately 100 miles north of NYC) within the Camphill Village community. The community supports approximately 230 individuals, including many developmentally disabled adults who contribute to the community through farming, gardening, and producing crafts.

PSI Workshop Overview:

The workshop was attended by 21 individuals, including many from Turtle Tree Seed Company. The workshop began at 9:00 am and finished at 4:30 pm. Lunch was served at noon and consisted of a plate of greens, lentil soup, homemade cheese and bread (All organically produced).

- **Basic Concepts of Seed Production:**

Larry Robertson (USDA-ARS, PGRU) discussed the basic objectives of and criteria for seed regeneration, the differences in self- and cross-pollination breeding systems, as well as, basic cage construction and the use of bees as pollinators. He also lectured on the concepts of self-incompatibility and photoperiod response. Furthermore, the attendees were informed about the National Seed Storage Laboratory and the National Plant Germplasm System.

- **Tour of Turtle Tree Seed Production Fields:**

Nathan Corymb started the tour with a visit to the Camphill Village's healing garden. The group then walked through the Turtle Tree Seed Company's production garden while Nathan discussed this year's seed crops, including onions, cabbage, tomatoes, and green beans. Discussion centered on this year's production of onion, lettuce, squash and tomato.

- **Small Scale Seed Regeneration:**

Dave Sharman (Cornell University) discussed seed production at Wellington Farm in Geneva, NY. The major points of the presentation included a



Allium production at Turtle Tree Seed Company

discussion of the major seed-propagated and cole crops conserved at Wellington Farm. Other areas covered in the presentation included pollination controls (cage use, apiary use and hand-pollination) and seed storage protocol.

- Basics of Plant Characterization:

Deborah Johnston (USDA-ARS, PGRU) discussed the different types of descriptors used to provide information for the general management of different accessions. She also discussed the use of digital imaging in characterization and evaluation. She detailed the various descriptor lists used in evaluation and characterization of *Lycopersicon* (tomato), *Allium* (onion), and *Brassica* (cabbage).

- Discussion of Intellectual Property Rights and How They Effect Seed Production:

Larry Robertson (USDA-ARS, PGRU) wrapped up the formal presentations discussing the differences between plant variety protection, plant patents, utility patents, and trade secrets.

- Pictures From PSI Workshop:



Tour of healing garden at Camphill Village



Flower from healing garden at Camphill Village



Lettuce and onion production at Turtle Tree Seed production field



Nathan Corymb discussing squash and tomato production at production field