

## **Biodynamic Plant Breeding**

### **A new phase**

The Biodynamic Seed Project has now been running for over four years. During this time the growing of seeds by biodynamic growers has become well established, more growers have joined in the work and the number of varieties being produced for Demeter Seeds - Stormy Hall has increased dramatically. Regular training workshops have been held on a variety of subjects related to seed growing and plant selection and growers have been supported on the ground thanks to the tireless efforts of our traveling Fieldsman Peter Brinch. Overall a lot of progress has been made. We have now come to the point where the seed work needs to enter a new phase and one that focuses primarily on plant breeding. There is an increasing need not only for biodynamic seed but also for biodynamic bred food plant varieties. Flavoursome, high quality vegetables and fruit are more and more sought after by consumers. Plant breeding now needs to be the primary focus for our work.

#### **New project**

The current Seed Development Project will cease in its present form as from October. In its place a new Biodynamic Plant Breeding Project will be launched. Although its main focus will be on plant breeding the training and support of seed growers will need to continue. Encouraging more growers to produce for Demeter Seeds will still remain vitally important.

#### **Need for funding**

This Biodynamic Plant Breeding project will of course require funding. Plant breeding is a research activity and as such it cannot be funded from sales of seed. It is also a long term undertaking and it takes several years before a new variety becomes available. We are therefore looking for gifts, donations and grants to support this work. There are many areas of our biodynamic work which are in urgent need of funding and it is very hard to choose one above all others. Our food plant diversity is however rapidly declining as major seed companies strengthen their control over the seeds market. Those seeds that are available are mostly hybrids. It is likely that before long nothing but CMS hybrids will be on the market. The conventional line of research can only then lead to GM. It is therefore absolutely essential that an alternative way of working with non-hybrids is found so that individual farmers throughout the world can be re-empowered. Biodynamic plant breeding methods offer the only means of reversing this trend. They provide a positive alternative to genetic modification. This is why the Biodynamic Agricultural Association has set work with seeds at the top of its priorities.

#### **Track Record**

We do not have the funds at present to carry it forward and are therefore launching this appeal. The experience of the last four years has shown that there is an enormous amount of goodwill towards this work. This has translated into a willingness to volunteer and offer all kinds of intangible support as well as make direct donations. This level of goodwill together with a good four year track record, gives us great confidence that the new project will be a success.

#### **Gifting the project**

All efforts towards directing financial support, gifts and donations towards this important work will be most warmly appreciated. Cheques (made payable to BDAA) can be sent direct to the office. Alternatively there is an online giving facility on the BDAA website (via CAF). Regular small donations are especially helpful and can be paid by monthly standing order (contact office for details). Do pass this request on to others that you feel might be in a position to respond to this appeal.

For further information please contact Bernard Jarman at the BDAA, Painswick Inn Project, Gloucester Street, Stroud GL5 1QG Tel. 0044 (0)1453 759501 email: [office@biodynamic.org.uk](mailto:office@biodynamic.org.uk)