



*Working with farm & city
to cultivate a local,
sustainable food system.*

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BC Participatory Carrot Seed Project

FarmFolk CityFolk

OSDP Final Report

Covering Period March 1 – December 15, 2013

BCSeeds- continues to be led by a committee of small-scale organic seed growers, who give feedback and direction to FarmFolk CityFolk's Seed Security work. **The BC Participatory Carrot Seed Project** is being matched by funding from the Bauta Family Seed Initiative on Canadian Seed Security: <http://www.seedsecurity.ca/en/> under one of the five themes: applied research.

OSDP Grant Deliverables

- 1. Recommendations for the ideal infrastructure for the production of carrot seed in a caged environment.** Each of the four participants used high tunnels to cage the carrots. With the exception of Sue Moore who modified an existing greenhouse, they built new structures for the research. The tunnels needed to be sturdy enough to withstand high winds, allow for ventilation and, at the same time exclude wild pollinators from entering. The growers were asked to document their experience through words and photos to be posted on the BCSeeds site. See growers blog postings under Carrot Seed research: <http://www.bcseeds.org/>. Patrick's postings were used as the basis for an article in the COG magazine.
- 2. Shared data on the efficacy of growing carrot seed in caged environments (climate control, pollination, soil fertility, irrigation regime, timing of harvest, etc.).** One of the main challenges experienced by all the growers was finding the best pollinators to introduce into the system. They determined that Blue bottle flies worked best but sourcing and/or growing them proved difficult. Through out the project the growers met by phone to share their experience and followed up by email with questions and observations. Ann Kirk, from University of Manitoba and John Navazio, from Organic Seed Alliance, joined the calls and offered suggestions and advise. For the complete project report see publication attached.

3. **Increase ability of BC growers to produce carrot seed regionally, where it has previously not been viable because of prevalence of Queen Anne's Lace.** Selecting four growers for the project was critical to the future of seed production. Not only was it important to learn how to grow in different climatic and soil conditions. It was just as important to see how seed growers could integrate recording and reporting their observations into their already busy seasonal schedules.

We learned a lot about both. Going forward into year 2, 3 and 4, we will select growers who demonstrate the capacity and commitment to work with research consultants in determining what data is important to collect and then set up systems to observe, record and report their findings. We are looking for growers who already grow carrot seed and/or ones who grow carrots as a significant crop in their production schedule. Growers will be selected who want to participate in varietal trials with the goal of “bulking up” carrot seed production. We have identified two additional growers who fit that category: Jon Wilcox from Sunshine Farm in Kelowna and Elaine Spearing from West Enderby Farm. We will be following up with both Jon and Elaine for year two of the carrot seed research project.

- **On farm Field Day-** Port Townsend- with John Navazio: the four growers- Patrick Steiner, Sue Moore, Mojave Kaplan and Jen Cody, Heather Pritchard (Project Manager), Rupert Adams (Project Coordinator), Anne Kirk, University of Manitoba research consultant and Jesse, graduate student, travelled to Port Townsend for an all day workshop organized by Organic Seed Alliance. John Navazio conducted the workshop and took the participants to organic commercial seed producing farms.
- **Conference Calls-** the research team kept in contact through regular conference call with follow up emails.
- **Carrot Seed Farm Visits-** Michael and Heather visited Growing Opportunities near Ladysmith on Vancouver Island, Sue Moore, Notch Hill Farm in Sorrento and Patrick Steiner, Stellar Seeds, at Johnson's Landing. The purpose of the trip was to document the research in stories and photos. They also visited Elaine Spearing and Jon Alcock with the intent to invite them to participate in the project.

4. **Compare experiences of carrot seed production in four distinct regions of BC (Vancouver Island, Fraser Canyon, Shuswap, West Kootenays).** We have clearly documented the successes and challenges of growing in the four regions. Some factors that affect the different results are high winds, variances in temperature, differences in infrastructure and grower capacity.

5. **Disseminate results of carrot seed production trials to larger farming and gardening community through online media, print media, and conference presentations.** Jesse Howardson, a grad student was hired, on contract to collect the data, stories and photos from the growers and write the report. Jess accompanied the group to Port Townsend and took notes and photos. She is interested and knowledgeable about seeds and has received a Fellowship to support us in the research and development of a seed cooperative.

Michael Marrapese, Farmfolk Cityfolk's IT and Communications manager, laid it out in booklet form. It will be available on line on the BCSeeds site, the Bauta Family Initiative Canadian Seed Security site and the COABC site.

- **Conferences:**
 - **July 5-7: -BC Food System's Network Gathering** (Shawinigan Lake)- roundtable on Community Seed Security with Jen Cody introducing the Carrot Seed Research Project.
 - **ACORN-** Moncton, New Brunswick- 21-24- Carrot Seed presentation at their annual organic conference.

- **Listservs:** the seed_collective listserv (which FarmFolk CityFolk administers as one of the BCFSN listservs) continues to be the best way to share with interested seed growers and community activists.

- **Magazines:**
 - **FarmFolk/CityFolk**-page 10 for a write up of our carrot seed projects:
http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/PDFs_& Docs/MagazinePDF/FFCF Spring-Summer 2013.pdf
 - **COABC and COG-** COG article in the summer edition and COABC is the 2014 spring edition.

- **Information tables** at FarmFolk/CityFolk and partnered events. USC Canada provided all the regions with new portable display boards and FarmFolk CityFolk has created panels illustrating their Farm Program, including one on carrot seed research.

- **August 18th, September 8th, September 21th Feast of Fields,** (Okanagan- Church Farm), (Lower Mainland- Krause Berry Farm and (Vancouver Island- Metchosin Farm). We provided seed information and resources (including an interactive seed game and give away seed envelopes) at each event. At the Vancouver Island Feast, the Central Island Seed Saving Network brought carrot seeds to clean and feast guests helped clean the seeds and learn about the project.

- **November 3- Field to Fork Poster session-** (Chilliwack, BC). Heather attended the event with other OSDP funded research projects and talked to the Carrot Seed Porject. **See attached Poster.**

P.S. Although funding for the year 2-4 has not been confirmed the project will continue, with or without external funding. The results of year one will be presented at the OSA Conference in Corvallis, Oregon February 1 & 2 and at the COABC Conference & AGM, February 21 & 22, 2014