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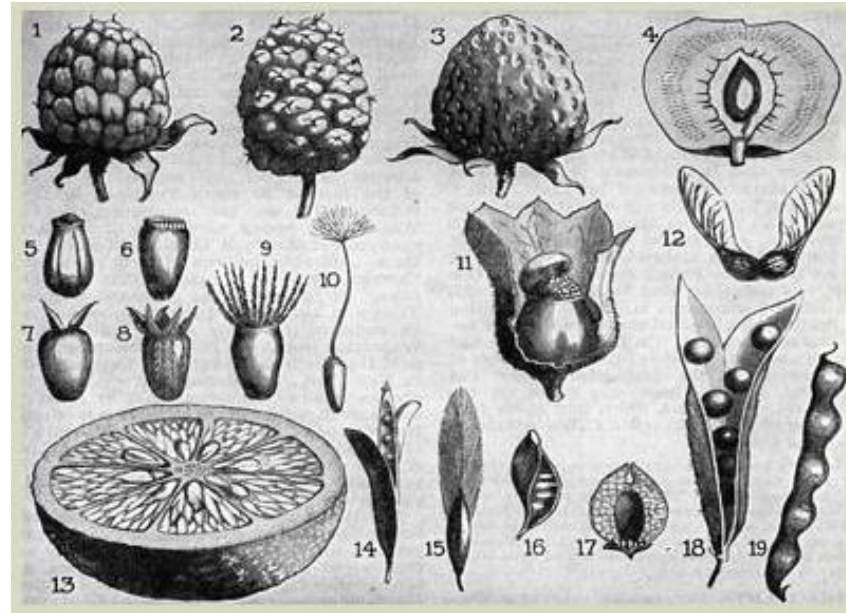


SUSTAINABLE SEED PRODUCTION

By Sibongile Cele
LWAZI INCUBATOR



Introduction



To see things in the seed, that is genius.

Lao Tzu

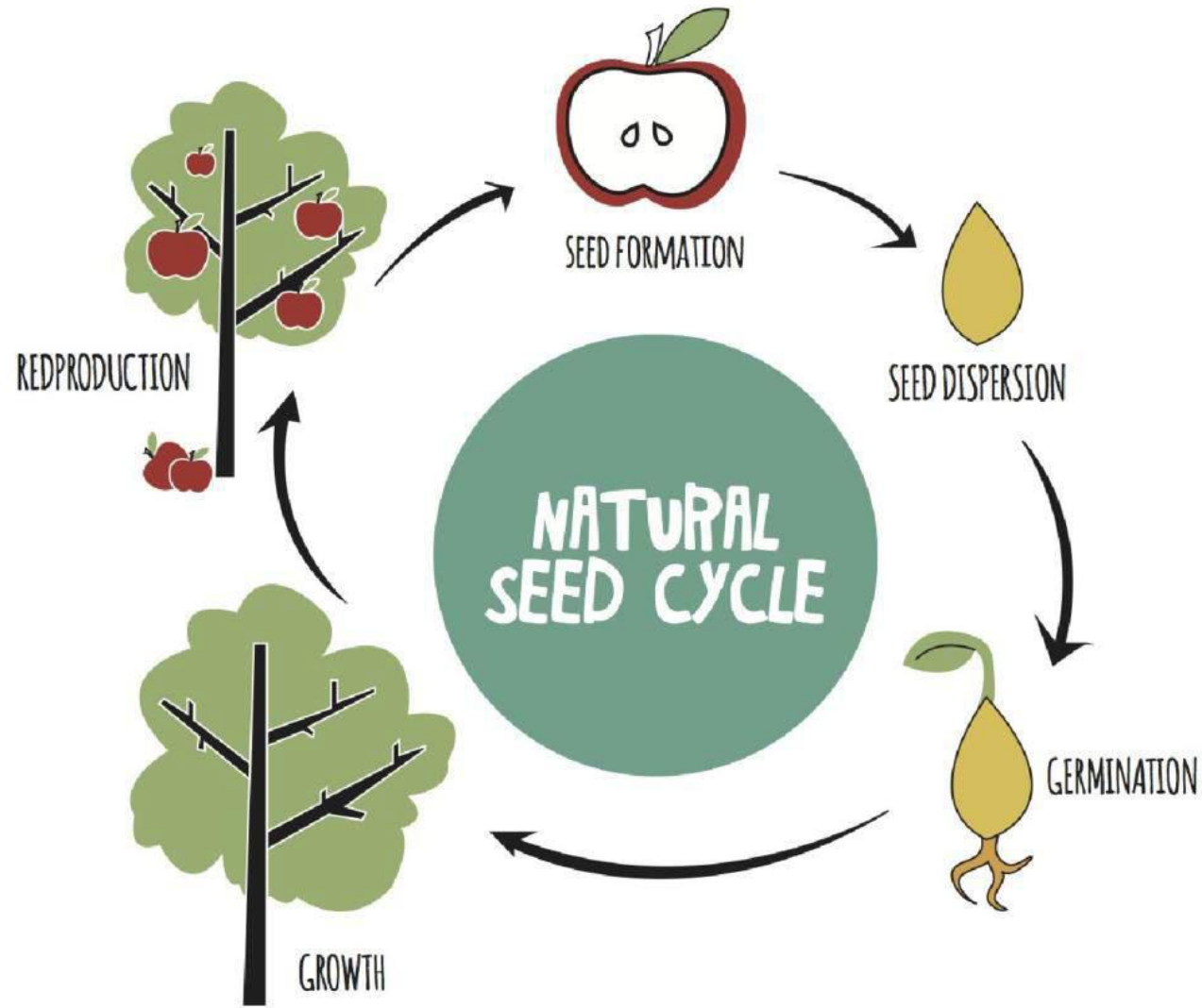
The Seed system

The seed system in South Africa can broadly be divided into two dominant types.

First the **commercial seed system**, where seed production is regulated, where intensive research and development is undertaken and where seeds are distributed through commercial seed companies.

On the other hand, there is the **community based seed system** which is comprised of household/farm seed selection and saving, farmer networks, local markets and gift exchanges.





Overview

1. Sustainable food systems rely on sustainable seed systems.
2. A Seed is a natural resource that should be available to all.
3. Seed saving is a skill that should be learned and shared.
4. The continued practice of seed saving by individuals can contribute to community, regional, national, and international seed security.



Why Save SEED?

- On what level am I interested in saving seed?
- To just play around in my garden, maybe seed swap.
- To adapt a seed variety to your climatic conditions and insure a source of resilient seed.
- To preserve the genetics of a variety (an heirloom perhaps) and insure a reliable source.
- To contract with seed companies to produce seed as a source of income.
- Other?



Skills for seed saving

Seeds are life, they are a source of food, of power and of dignity. They are valuable, hold promise, are part of our culture and heritage and are embedded in indigenous knowledge, traditions and cultures. Seeds are nature's gifts to her people and all living beings. Importantly, seeds are for free and for sharing.

Seeds are a gift from nature.



What seed is best for me?



Seed harvesting Techniques

Pick by hand

Shake into bags or buckets

Pull up the plant and hang

Cut the plant and hang

Lay the plants in windrows

Lay a tarp below the plant and shake or hit the plant to release seed.



Harvesting - Dry Seeded and Wet Seeded



Wet Seeded Techniques

Let the seeded crop mature on the vine as long as possible before harvesting.

The seeds will continue to increase in size and quality for days to weeks after the first fruit is edible.



Seed Storage

To maximize the life of your seed keep it:

Cool.

Dry.

Protected from insects and rodents.

THE most important thing to remember is that the seed should be very dry before it is placed in storage.



Seed longevity

Every seed has a different longevity based on how it is stored.

A general rule for typical storage:

1 year: onion, parsley.

2 year: dandelion, sweet corn, leek, okra, pepper.

3 year: asparagus, beans, carrot, celeriac, celery, chervil, Chinese cabbage, pea, spinach.

4 years: beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, fennel, kale, pumpkin, squash, Swiss chard, tomato, turnip, watermelon.



Longevity dependencies

The longevity of a seed depends upon the TEMPERATURE and DRYNESS in which it is stored.

For example, a typical life span of a bean is 3 years. But, with optimum coldness and dryness, a bean seed can last up to 10 years, 20 years if it's frozen.

Dry matters a lot more than cold



QUESTIONS?

