**GLOSSARY OF SOW AND SAVE TERMS**

**BIODIVERSITY**Biodiversity is the variety of all living things. In the garden, plant biodiversity can be seen in the different species of crops (e.g. beans, peas, lettuce etc.) as well as the different varieties of each crop (e.g. Blue Jay Bean, Rattlesnake Bean and Tendergreen Bean). The more species and varieties are present, the more “biodiverse” the garden is said to be.

**CROP**A crop is a plant that is harvested by a human at some point in its growth stage to be used as food, either for people or for domestic animals.

**DORMANT**

An organism that is alive but not growing. Seeds are dormant until they are exposed to the correct timing and conditions that allow them to break their dormancy and begin growing.

**HEIRLOOM SEED**

Heirloom seeds, also called heritage seeds, are generally defined as varieties that have been in cultivation for 50 years or more. Heirloom seeds are often rare or endangered because they exist in very small quantities and are generally not offered for sale by larger seed companies. Heirloom seeds are more often preserved by gardeners, farmers and specialty seed companies interested in preserving and promoting biodiverse seed selections.

**OPEN POLLINATED SEED**

Open-pollinated plants are pollinated by natural mechanisms (i.e. insects, birds, wind). There are no restrictions on the flow of pollen between individuals which allows plants to slowly adapt to local growing conditions. Open-pollinated varieties will produce seeds that are genetically "true to type", meaning that the seed will result in a plant similar to the parent, allowing you to predictably plant, grow and save a specific variety year after year.

**HYBRID SEED**

Hybridization occurs when the pollen of two different species or varieties is crossed by human intervention.The first generation of a hybridized plant cross generally produces higher yields than the parent varieties due to a phenomenon called ‘hybrid vigour’. However, any seed produced by hybrid plants is genetically unstable and cannot be saved for use in following years, therefore hybrid seeds must purchase new every year.

**ORGANIC SEED**Organic seeds are grown using organic growing methods and without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

**SPECIES**A species is a group of living organisms that are so similar that they would be able to reproduce successfully together. For example, all domestic cats might not look the same, but they are a single species because they can mate and make kittens. Cats and dogs can’t reproduce together, so they are different species. In the garden, tomatoes and peppers are different species because they cannot reproduce successfully together.

**SEED BANKS**

A place where plant seeds are safely saved and stored. Seed banks can be small school or home seed banks, community banks or large international banks. Prominent global seed banks include the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew Gardens in London and the Svalbard Global Seed Bank in the Norwegian Arctic.

**TRAIT/CHARACTERISTIC**The unique qualities of a particular variety of crop. For example, a variety of lettuce might have traits/characteristics that allow it to grow well in dry weather.

**VARIETY**Varieties, also called cultivars, are the different kinds that exist within one crop species. Think of jalapeno peppers vs. bell peppers, or cherry tomatoes vs. roma tomatoes. There are thousands of different bean varieties and thousands of different tomato varieties even though most of us are only familiar with the limited varieties we see at the grocery store.