



Finding Heirloom Collard Seeds

Finding and saving heirloom seeds from collard greens is important to these researchers.

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photo by Mark Farnham Heirloom tomatoes, heirloom melons and heirloom beets: When it comes to saving heirloom seeds, these are some of the fruits and vegetables that first come to mind.

But don't forget about healthful collard greens!

Plant geneticist, Mark Farnham hasn't. Farnham, who works with the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), teamed up with a group of collectors to look for unique collard varieties in the Carolina coastal plains.

According to ARS, commercial cultivation of the collard expanded dramatically in the 20th century, and is now dominated by a few hybrid varieties.

The team collected 87 distinctive collard seed samples from these small gardens—collard greens heirloom seed varieties that might otherwise have disappeared in the near future.

The collard seeds are now kept in the U.S. Plant Introduction Collection of vegetable Brassicas in Geneva, N.Y., where scientists maintain facilities for the preservation of plant germplasm.

Read more about their research.

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