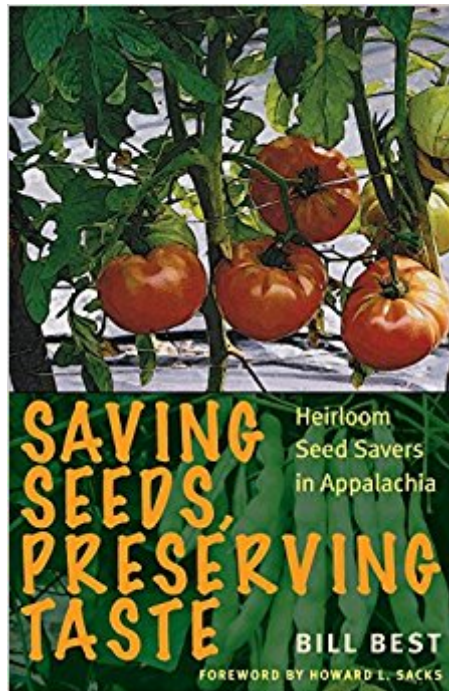




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Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste: Heirloom Seed Savers In Appalachia



Synopsis

The Brown Goose, the White Case Knife, Ora's Speckled Bean, Radiator Charlie's Mortgage Lifter – these are just a few of the heirloom fruits and vegetables you'll encounter in Bill Best's remarkable history of seed saving and the people who preserve both unique flavors and the Appalachian culture associated with them. As one of the people at the forefront of seed saving and trading for over fifty years, Best has helped preserve numerous varieties of beans, tomatoes, corn, squashes, and other fruits and vegetables, along with the family stories and experiences that are a fundamental part of this world. While corporate agriculture privileges a few flavorless but hardy varieties of daily vegetables, seed savers have worked tirelessly to preserve genetic diversity and the flavors rooted in the Southern Appalachian Mountains – referred to by plant scientists as one of the vegetative wonders of the world. *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste* will introduce readers to the cultural traditions associated with seed saving, as well as the remarkable people who have used grafting practices and hand-by-hand trading to keep alive varieties that would otherwise have been lost. As local efforts to preserve heirloom seeds have become part of a growing national food movement, Appalachian seed savers play a crucial role in providing alternatives to large-scale agriculture and corporate food culture. Part flavor guide, part people's history, *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste* will introduce you to a world you've never known – or perhaps remind you of one you remember well from your childhood.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Ohio University Press; 1 edition (April 30, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0821420496

ISBN-13: 978-0821420492

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #877,154 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #114 in *Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Region > South* #183 in *Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Agronomy* #193 in *Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home*

Customer Reviews

“This animated narrative offers a glimpse into American folklore, migration patterns, and the glory of the family farm as it is known through its seeds, which live on season after season, offering distinctive local flavor.”

• Publishers Weekly

“Best’s book depicts the alternative to corporate farming as unveiled in Karl Weber’s Food, Inc. (2009), discussed in Michael Pollan’s In Defense of Food (2008), explored in Sally Fallon, Pat Connolly, and Mary G. Enig’s Nourishing Traditions (1995), and revealed in Robyn O’Brien and Rachel Kranz’s The Unhealthy Truth (2009).”

• The Journal of American Culture

The magic in the greatest of all Jack tales is that what appears to be a mere handful of seeds turns instead into a giant beanstalk leading to riches beyond measure. That same sort of alchemy is at work here in Bill Best’s *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste*. Yes, it’s a practical and useful handbook for good garden husbandry, but as it unfolds before your eyes, it reveals as well a vital world of southern Appalachian people, plants, food, and practice to nourish both body and soul.”

• Ronni Lundi, founding member of the Southern Foodways Alliance, author of *Shuck Beans, Stack Cakes, and Honest Fried Chicken*

“Perhaps only once in a lifetime, we read a book that is a true treasure of American lore, one that no other person could write. Bill Best should be considered a National Treasure Keeper, for his beans, tomatoes, and corn as well as his stories are irreplaceable and therefore of immeasurable value.”

• Gary Nabhan, author of *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Foods*

“In *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste*, Bill Best has captured in words his passion and dedication for perpetuating heirloom vegetable and fruit varieties in Appalachia. This has been his life’s work. At seventy-nine, he continues to promote the saving of heirloom seeds, seeds that hold the potential for flavorful, nutritious food; seeds that if saved, can be grown year after year; seeds that hold a part of the history of Native American and Appalachian cultures.”

• Journal of Appalachian Studies

Bill Best was a professor, coach, and administrator at Berea College for forty years, retiring in 2002. Since that time he has continued his seed saving and work with sustainable agriculture and for several years has been director of the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center located near Berea, Kentucky. The center makes heirloom seeds available to a wide regional audience and to the nation

in general. In addition, through special arrangements, the center also ships seeds to many other countries.

I am a huge believer in saving seeds and planting heirloom varieties, and I do for the most part. I bought some bean seeds and a few other vegetables from the author's organization and I think what he is doing is great. The beans were awesome!! On the book... I thought it was more about the process of saving seeds, what and how to do, etc. It is more of a collection of stories about the people that have saved different bean varieties and such. It just wasn't what I was really expecting and I found it a bit boring, but would probably appeal to folks that were interested in that part of "bean history."

How our heirloom foods were preserved, propagated, and grown are a vital connection to our heritage, and point the way to restoring our abbreviated food system. Bill Best brings his experience and knowledge to these subjects in an informative and enjoyable read. And for those of us in Kentucky he is a local treasure- farming in Berea and selling his heritage foods at the Lexington Farmers Market.

This book was great. IT was so much fun to read. Reminds me of my years growing up. I learned a lot about beans and their history. Recommend this book to anyone. Also gave lots of information on growing other vegetables.

For anyone interested in vegetable gardening this book is a must read. Loved the stories about seed savers. Also easy to understand directions for saving seeds.

Very interesting. I ordered some of these seeds from bill best and can't wait to start my own family tradition

Good product

Great book. Good information, and also very entertaining.

The author is very knowledgeable and passionate about his subject. He communicates to his readers the importance of saving original seed before it is contaminated by commercial products.

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