

SEEDS OF TIME

A Film by Sandy McLeod

Documentary Feature, 77 Minutes



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SHORT SYNOPSIS



A perfect storm is brewing as agriculture pioneer Cary Fowler races against time to protect the future of our food. Seed banks around the world are crumbling, crop failures are producing starvation and rioting, and the accelerating effects of climate change are affecting farmers globally. Communities of indigenous Peruvian farmers are already suffering those effects, as they try desperately to save over 1,500 varieties of native potato in their fields. But with little time to waste, both Fowler and the farmers embark on passionate and personal journeys that may save the one resource we cannot live without: our seeds.

LONG SYNOPSIS



10,000 years ago the biggest revolution in human history occurred: we became agrarians. We ceased hunting and gathering and began to farm, breeding and domesticating plants that have resulted in the crops we eat today. But the genetic diversity of these domesticated crops, which were developed over millennia, is vanishing today. And the consequences of this loss could be dire.

As the production of high yielding, uniform varieties has increased, diversity has declined. For example, in U.S. vegetable crops we now have less than seven percent of the diversity that existed just a century ago. We are confronted with the global pressures of feeding a growing population, in a time when staple crops face new threats from disease and changing climates.

Crop diversity pioneer Cary Fowler travels the world, educating the public about the dire consequences of our inaction. Along with his team at The Global Crop Diversity Trust in Rome, Cary struggles to re-invent a global food system so that it can, in his words: “last forever.” Cary aims to safeguard the last place that much of our diversity is left in tact: in the world’s vulnerable gene banks.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, a group of indigenous Peruvian farmers work to preserve over 1,500 native varieties of potato in their fields. Through the guidance of activist Alejandro Argumedo and the help of the International Potato Center gene bank in Lima, several communities join forces to create a new conservation grounds called “The Potato Park.”

But not all is well in this haven for diversity. The Andes Mountains, our planet’s most diverse region for potatoes, is already seeing the crippling effects of climate change. Potato production has risen more than 500 feet in altitude over the last 30 years, leaving varieties at lower elevations unable to produce. With erratic weather patterns already eroding biodiversity, what is to be done when these farmers can no longer continue moving “up”?

With a passion few possess, Cary set out to build the world’s first global seed vault – a seed collection on a scale larger than any other. The vault, located in Norway, is an unprecedented insurance policy for the crop diversity of the world. In an extraordinary gesture of support, the farmers of the Potato Park become the first indigenous community to send samples of their potato diversity to the vault for safekeeping.

But as the stakes of maintaining a secure global food system continue to rise, adaptation will become a requisite for our own survival. How can we best maintain the diversity that still exists for our food crops? How do we create new diversity to adapt our fields to a changing climate? The answers are as complex as the system they intend to fix. And it will require a combination of efforts: from scientists, plant breeders, researchers, farmers, politicians, and even gardeners.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



When I met Cary Fowler a whole new world opened up to me. I realized that, although I thought I knew a thing or two about food, the issues that he was grappling with were entirely new to me. And that those issues, largely concerning food security, are issues that anyone who likes to eat should not only know about, but also have a say in too.

Cary Fowler is a guy who has almost single-handedly created something of great value for the Global Community. I can't think of any other global endeavors that have the kind of absolute value for all of us that the Svalbard Global Seed Vault holds.

The Peruvian farmers give a face to the smallholder farmer who has saved the diversity that Cary is trying to preserve. Together they represent a way forward to a more sustainable future.

Our food system is not sustainable or secure and this is a problem that affects us all. Without a good agricultural foundation we can't have sustainable agriculture and without sustainable agriculture, we will not have a sustainable future.

Sandy McLeod, 2014

CARY FOWLER QUOTES

"I'm not sure why it happened, but it really dawned on me that agriculture was going to face a gigantic challenge with climate change and that agriculture was not ready."



"Most of us take seeds for granted. The fate of human kind is resting on these genetic resources: Seeds. So nothing could be more important."

"Agriculture is in danger. The whole world is in danger. We need to learn to adapt. If we don't, we'll face catastrophic consequence on a scale you cannot imagine."

"The way in which we are feeding the current population is not sustainable. We're trying to teach the world how to save itself."

"We're really in a race against time. We need to mobilize before it's too late. We're gonna pay a price if we don't do the smart thing and help agriculture adapt."

PRESS QUOTES

"The urgency of expanding the world's seed portfolio is made eminently clear"

- The New York Times

The New York Times

"'Seeds of Time' offers a vital, clear-headed look at the effects of climate change on global food security"

- The Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

"Very powerful...it's fascinating...you wouldn't think that something like seeds would be that compelling, but *it is* and it's really important."

- Claudia Puig, USA Today / 89.3 KPCC



"Engaging"

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

"This is a documentary you cannot afford to miss."

- CRITERION CAST



"*Seeds of Time* stands out as truly exceptional. It's about an issue less prominent in the public dialogue but of universal importance...it's just riveting filmmaking, a story swiftly and beautifully told."

- MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL



"The documentary directed by Sandy McLeod, is a portrait of Fowler, - one that also provides an object lesson in what it looks like to search for genuine solutions."

- GRIST



SCREENINGS

SEEDS OF TIME has had an incredible run on the film festival circuit, including screenings all over the world at:



BIOS (Crew)

SANDY MCLEOD (Director / Producer)



Sandy McLeod is an Academy Award nominated independent filmmaker, with experience in most of the major areas of filmmaking.

Her directorial debut was in music videos, when she directed a series for VH1 called *The Sixties*. Her next film was *Doll Day Afternoon*, a short film she directed for Saturday Night Live. The film went on to be shown in museums nationwide, including the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Walker Art Center, and the Dallas Museum of Fine Art.

She worked with Jordan Cronenweth and Jonathan Demme to establish innovative textural elements of the landmark film *Stop Making Sense*. Then she conceptualized and directed a Talking Heads' music video, which was featured at the New York Film Festival and is now part of the permanent collection in New York's Museum of Modern Art. An AIDS music video that she directed is also part of MOMA's permanent collection.

She was the production designer of *Swimming to Cambodia*, a one-man show by Spaulding Gray. A further collaboration with Jonathan Demme resulted in a documentary for Channel 4 called, *Haiti, Dreams of Democracy*.

Sandy has been a long-time collaborator with John Sayles as second unit director. She is a member of the Directors Guild of America. She directed an Academy Award nominated short documentary called *Asylum*—a film about a Ghanaian woman who sought political asylum in the United States to escape female genital mutilation. The film also won a Gracie and was nominated for an Emmy.

Seeds of Time is her first feature length documentary film.

CARY FOWLER (Protagonist)



Prior to joining the Crop Trust as its Executive Director, Dr. Cary Fowler was Professor and Director of Research in the Department for International Environment & Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. He was also a Senior Advisor to the Director General of Bioversity International. In this latter role, he represented the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in negotiations on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Cary's career in the conservation and use of crop diversity spans 30 years. He was Program Director for the National Sharecroppers Fund / Rural Advancement Fund, a US-based NGO engaged in plant genetic resources education and advocacy. In 1985 he was awarded the Right Livelihood Award (the "Alternative Nobel Prize") in a ceremony in the Swedish Parliament. In the 1990s, he headed the International Conference and Programme on Plant Genetic Resources at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which produced the UN's first ever global assessment of the state of the world's plant genetic resources. He drafted and supervised negotiations of FAO's Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources, adopted by 150 countries in 1996. That same year he served as Special Assistant to the Secretary General of the World Food Summit. During the negotiation process of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, Cary chaired a series of off-the-record retreats with key delegates, sponsored by the Nordic countries.

Cary has been profiled by CBS 60 Minutes and the New Yorker, is the author of several books on the subject of plant genetic resources and more than 75 articles on the topic in agriculture, law, and development journals. Cary earned his Ph.D. at the University of Uppsala (Sweden), and in 2008 received an honorary doctorate from Simon Fraser University (Canada). He also received a 2010 Heinz Award for his "vision and efforts in the preservation of the world's food supply".

STANLEY BUCHTHAL (Executive Producer)



Stanley Buchthal has executive produced the documentaries *Cry Haiti*, *Lou Reed's Berlin*, *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, *The American Ruling Class*, and such narrative films as *The Last Party 2000*, *Poster Boy*, *Spanking the Monkey* and John Waters' *Hairspray*. His most recent credits include: producer on *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child*, executive producer on *Love Marilyn*.

ABIGAIL DISNEY (Executive Producer)



Abigail Disney is a filmmaker and philanthropist. Her longtime passion for women's issues and peace building culminated in her first film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. Abigail created the groundbreaking PBS mini-series *Women, War & Peace*, the most comprehensive global media initiative ever mounted on the role of women in peace and conflict. She has played a role in many film projects and is currently at work on a film highlighting the key role of women in the Arab Awakening. She founded the Daphne Foundation, Peace is Loud and co-founded, along with 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, the Gbowee Peace Foundation USA.

JD MARLOW (Co-Producer / Editor)



Editor / Co-Producer, JD Marlow has worked in the world of post-production as an editor and post-producer. During his time at Postworks, a New York-based post facility, he post-produced hundreds of projects ranging from commercial to broadcast television and feature films. He has also shot and edited many commercial and documentary projects, including the hour-long *After the Storm: Lessons from the Northern Edge*, which premiered on PBS Rhode Island in 2008. He has been involved with many television documentaries such as PBS Makers' "Women in Comedy" & "Women in War", History Channel's "Rebuilding the World Trade Center", and ESPN's 9 for IX "Branded."

CHIEMI KARASAWA (Supervising Producer)



Chiemi Karasawa is an award-winning Producer and founder of Isotope Films, a New York City based production company that develops and produces films and media content based on true stories. Her list of credits as a producer includes the 2009 Emmy Award winner *THE BETRAYAL* (NERAKHOON), *BILLY THE KID* (2008), *MAURICE SENDAK: TELL THEM ANYTHING YOU WANT* (2010), *LOVE ETC* (OWN 2010), *ELEVATE* (2011), *HARRY DEAN STANTON: PARTLY FICTION* (2012), and *ELAINE STRITCH: SHOOT ME* (Directorial Debut), which will be released by IFC/Sundance Selects in February 2014. Karasawa has been a guest lecturer on Documentary Producing at NYU, SVA, and the Woodstock Film Festival, and has served on documentary screening committees for The Spirit Awards and Tribeca/Gucci Documentary Fund.

EMILY TRIANTAPHYLLIS (Co-Producer)



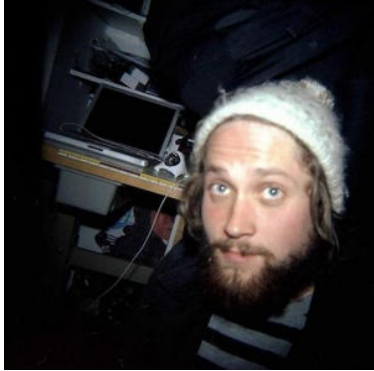
Co-Producer, Emily Triantaphyllis previously worked in the social work field and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi. She has worked with the producers and directors at Arts Engine, DCTV and HBO Family and previously produced another agriculture documentary titled, *What's Organic About Organic?*

JOHN WALTER (Editor)



Editor, John Walter is the director of “Some Assembly Required” from THE FIRST AMENDMENT PROJECT and is a filmmaker from Detroit. His first film, *How to Draw a Bunny*, was a documentary investigation of the mysterious life and death of American artist Ray Johnson. *Bunny* won numerous accolades, including prizes at the Sundance and Paris film festivals and an Independent Spirit Award nomination for best documentary.

HENRIK EDELBO (Cinematographer)



Henrik Edelbo is a cinematographer based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Coming out of the skateboarding community, at an early age Henrik begun filming his friends street skating. For the last 10 years he has been working in documentary, commercials and TV in Hong Kong, Mongolia, Russia, Morocco and all over Europe.

KRIS BOWERS (Composer)



Pianist Kris Bowers is one of the newest and brightest lights on the jazz landscape. Schooled in jazz and classical music, raised amid the rap and hip-hop of the 1990s, inspired by the cinematic power of the great film composers of recent decades, Bowers' sound – though rooted in traditional styles – is open to numerous external influences that keep the music fresh and vibrant for a new century. This rich and eclectic sensibility is evident from the very first notes of *Heroes + Misfits*, his debut recording on Concord Jazz.

BIOS (Participants)

PAMELA ANDERSON (Former Director General, International Potato center)



Pamela Anderson, director, Agricultural Development leads the team that works to reduce hunger and poverty for millions of farming families in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia by increasing agricultural productivity in a sustainable way.

Pamela joined the foundation in 2014 from the CGIAR Consortium, an organization focused on advancing international agricultural research and one of our key strategic partners. She was director general of the International Potato Center (CIP), one of the research centers within CGIAR, Pamela was with CIP since 2002. Before that, she was senior entomologist at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Cali, Colombia. Pamela has conducted research in agricultural entomology and plant virus epidemiology related to food security and income generation for resource-poor populations and authored numerous publications on these topics. In addition, she has been an advisor to the Federation of American Scientists, a research consultant at Harvard University, and a member of the Government of Ireland Hunger Task Force.

Pamela holds an M.Sc. in Entomology from the University of Illinois, an M. Sc. in Human Ecology from Harvard University, and a D.Sc. in Population Sciences/Vector Entomology from the Harvard School of Public Health.

ALEJANDRO ARGUMEDO (Co-Director, ANDES)



ALEJANDRO ARGUMEDO is a K'echua from Peru. He holds an agriculture degree from McGill University, which was followed by service with CUSO in Ecuador. He is the Director of the Quechua-Aymara Association for Sustainable Livelihoods (ANDES) based in Cusco, Peru, an action-research and advocacy indigenous organization focusing on territorial approaches to sustainable development. He is also the founder of the Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Network, a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas, and current coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples' Biocultural Assessment on Climate Change (IPCCA).

JOHN TORGRIMSON (Executive Director, Seeds Savers Exchange)



John Torgrimson has been the Executive Director of SSE since July 2010. He previously served as Editor and Media Coordinator for the organization. Torgrimson has considerable experience managing nonprofit organizations, including serving as Executive Director of Oxfam Hong Kong, an international development and relief organization working in Southeast Asia. He is a former Peace Corps Volunteer, having served as a community development worker along with his wife Patricia in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. He and his wife live on an organic certified hobby farm in Minnesota.

DIANE OTT WHEALY (Co-Founder, Seed Savers Exchange)



Diane Ott Whealy co-founded Seed Savers Exchange with Kent Whealy in 1975. She has been a national leader in the heirloom seed movement and a strong advocate for the protection of the earth's rare genetic food stocks for over 36 years. In 1986 she helped develop Heritage Farm, SSE's scenic 890-acre headquarters near Decorah, Iowa to maintain and display endangered varieties. Today she is a featured speaker at garden shows and botanical gardens throughout the country. In June 2011, she published "Gathering: Memoir of a Seed Saver", which tells the story of how SSE has grown from a small coterie of passionate gardeners to one of the most active and effective seed saving organizations in the world.

LUIGI GUARINO (Science Leader, Global Crop Diversity Trust)



Luigi served as a consultant for FAO and IBPGR from 1984-87, working in the South Pacific and Middle East on a number of germplasm collecting, characterization and documentation projects, and as a germplasm collector for IBPGR from 1987-1992. He was then appointed to work on genetic diversity issues in Bioversity International's Sub-Saharan Africa Group based in Nairobi, Kenya. Luigi then moved to the Bioversity Regional Office for the Americas in Cali, Colombia in 1997 which he coordinated Bioversity's global research agenda on measuring, locating and monitoring genetic diversity, with responsibility for the application of GIS, and also managed Bioversity's work on germplasm use in the region, including research on patterns of use of ex situ collections. He had responsibility for national and regional programme development in the Caribbean sub-region.

From 2002 to 2006 he worked at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in Fiji, where he co-ordinated and managed a regional PGR network for the Pacific Island countries and territories. He is author of some 30 refereed articles and more than 10 conference presentations, and has edited a number of books and proceedings. Luigi, an Italian national, holds BA and MA degrees in Applied Biology from the University of Cambridge, UK.

PAUL SMITH (Secretary General, Botanical Gardens Conservation International)



Dr. Paul Smith is the former Head of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew's Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) – the largest and most diverse seed bank in the world. During his nine years at the helm, seeds from more than 25,000 plant species were conserved in the MSB and, in 2009, the MSB achieved its first significant milestone, securing seed from 10% of the world's plant species, prioritizing rare, threatened and useful plants. Since then, the MSB and its 170 partner institutions in 80 countries around the world have set themselves the target of conserving 25% of the world's flora by 2020. The ultimate aim is to bank the seed of all plant species and to make that seed available for use in the landscape. During the last five years, Paul and his team have promoted the concept of seed banks as a resource for human innovation, adaptation and resilience, and, today, seeds from the MSB and its partner seed banks are being used in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and habitat restoration. Paul trained as a plant ecologist and is a specialist in the plants and vegetation of southern Africa. He is the author of two field guides to the flora of south-central Africa and the Vegetation Atlas of Madagascar. He is a Fellow of the Linnean Society and the Royal Geographical Society.

JOHN BAMBERG (Curator, U.S. Potato Seed Bank)



John Bamberg is Project Leader of the US Potato Genebank located on the UW Peninsular Agricultural Research Station near Sturgeon Bay. NRSP-6 is the US genebank for tuber-bearing *Solanum* species (potatoes) and is part of the USDA National Plant Germplasm System. It is supported by all SAES with off-the-top funds from USDA/CSREES, USDA/ARS and UW.

The genebank's mission is to facilitate the improvement of potato through acquisition, classification, preservation, distribution, and evaluation of wild and cultivated potato germplasm. The Project provides a ready source of *Solanum* germplasm for US and foreign potato breeders and scientists. It coordinates evaluation of stocks by specialists around the US, and technology, germplasm and research cooperation with other potato genebanks around the world. It also has a strong program of on-site evaluation and characterization associated with *Solanum* taxonomy, genetics, physiology, genebank technology and other disciplines through which the exploitation of the germplasm is facilitated. One of the emphases of Bamberg's program has been collection and research on wild potatoes native to the southwest USA. All these physical and informational resources are cataloged and advertised.

CREDITS

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Sandy McLeod

Co-Producers
JD Marlow
Emily Triantaphyllis

Executive Producers
Stanley Buchthal
Abigail E. Disney

Director of Photography
Henrik Edelbo

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John Walter

Supervising Producer
Chiemi Karasawa

Original Score by
Kris Bowers

Seed Images by
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Wolfgang Stuppy

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Alejandro Argumedo
Lino Mamani Marca
John Torgrimson
Diane Ott Whealy
Nolberto Palomino Ccana
Luigi Guarino
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John Bamberg
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Production Insurance	Film Emporium

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NRK
Roger Arnold
SMIRSH Films Ireland
T3 Media
Will Squibb

Additional Material Provided by

Cary Fowler
Climate One at the Commonwealth Club
The Global Crop Diversity Trust
Image Entertainment Inc. / *Earth*
National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel
N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry
TED Conferences, LLC

Seed and Fruit Images from
Seeds - Time Capsules of Life and *Fruit - Edible, Inedible, Incredible*
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Additional Music

“Vientos Que Curan”
by Herbert Quinteros
Performed by Herbert Quinteros with Tito La Rosa & Jasmin Narvaja

“Ayarunas”
by Herbert Quinteros
Performed by Herbert Quinteros with Tito La Rosa & Jasmin Narvaja

Additional Interview Participants:

Adrian Chipa Tacori
Alberto Salas
Alfonso del Rio
Amanda Dobson
Andrea Lawrence
Asmund Bjornstad
Barbara Melera
Betsy Burton
Betty Fowler
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Clive Blazey
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Dr. Christina Walters
Dr. David Hodson
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Jacqueline Becker (Int'l Potato Center)
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Dan Barber

Special Thanks to the Following Organizations:

The Global Crop Diversity Trust
The U.N. Food & Agriculture Organization
The Svalbard Global Seed Vault
ANDES / Parque de la Papa
The International Potato Center
N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry
USDA Agricultural Research Service
USDA Plant Exchange Office
The Columbia Grammar School
St. Stephen's School
Mason Temple / Church of God In Christ, Inc.
Seed Savers Exchange
Lakeview Organic Grains
Melander Farms
Native Seeds

Special Thanks To:

Namae Natume
Amanda Bergeron
Judith B. Bass, Esq.
Jerry Kupfer

Very Special Thanks To:

Sam Dryden
Gini Reticker
Scott Griffin

This film was supported by generous grants from:

The Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust
The Ralph E. Ogden Foundation
Advanta Seeds
The Lucius & Eva Eastman Fund
The Christensen Fund
Ad Hoc Foundation
Peggy Dulany
Anonymous

*This film was supported by a grant from the Sundance Institute Documentary Film
Program and Fund*



This has been a production of:
Hungry

in association with
Fork Films
&
Isotope Films

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