

Local Seed Network Manual



Snake Bean, photo of courtesy of Jason Ingram.

Produced at The Seed Savers' Network by Jude and Michel Fanton and Amy Glastonbury

Publisher's Note

The Seed Savers' Network is auspiced by The Seed Savers' Foundation Ltd, a charitable institution registered with the ATO. It was founded in 1986 and is active nationally in Australia and internationally promoting conservation of locally adapted non-hybrid seeds of food plants. A solution oriented organisation, it has facilitated the exchange of thousands of traditional varieties and trained hundreds of people in seed saving.

This manual is complementary to The Seed Savers' Handbook by Michel and Jude Fanton.

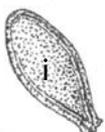
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The Seed Savers' Network

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to volunteers Paula Williams, Marian Warren, Bronwyn Sindel and Vanessa John; intern Brian Shillinglaw; and local seed network coordinators Keith and Dianne Davies, Robyn Williamson, Mazza Verdante, Annie Jenkins, Robin Parker, Terry Frewin; Steve Solomon and Loretta Faulkner, Seed Banker at The Seed Centre for their contributions.

We are also grateful for the case studies sent in by Local Seed Networks and look forward to hearing from other groups whose experiences will be recorded in future editions.

The seed illustrations were drawn by Alfredo Bonanno for The Seed Savers' Handbook in 1992. Ai Morikawa conceived the cartoon illustrations and Kaori Yoneta drew them. They were both interns from Japan at Seed Savers in 2003.

A special acknowledgement goes to staff member Amy Glastonbury for pushing this project along and pulling it all together and to pro bono consultant Alan Morden for reworking the lay out.

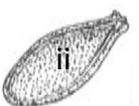




Photo courtesy of Jason Ingram



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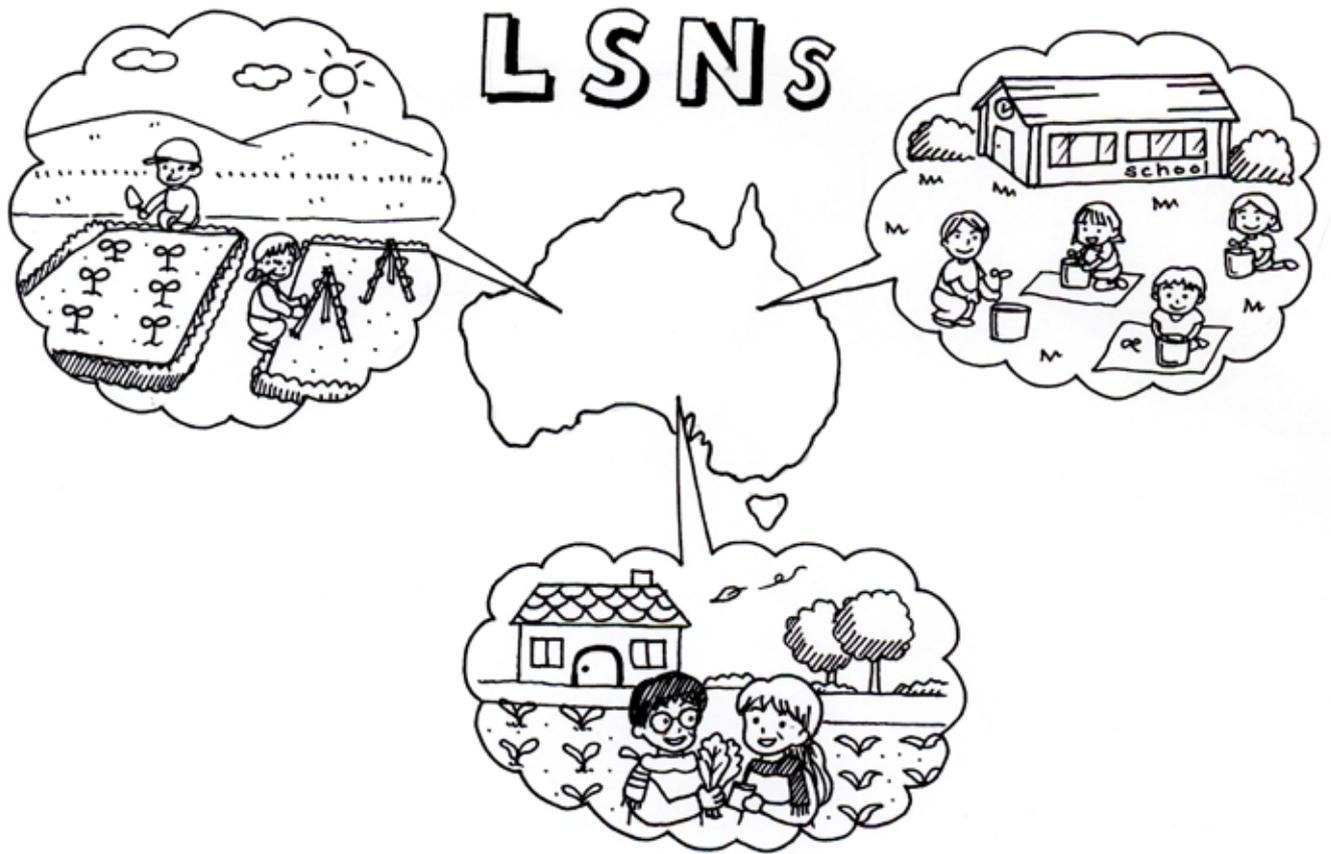


Introduction



Madagascar bean

A local seed network consists of friends and neighbours who come together to exchange their locally adapted seeds and other planting materials.



About Local Seed Networks



The Seed Savers' Network

South Australian Seed Savers gather to swap seeds and other planting materials

Devolving Seed Savers into local seed networks was first discussed at The Seed Savers' Network in the mid 1990s with a full-blown process of helping groups establish commencing in August 2001. Within a year there were thirty such groups and twenty more in the second year. We trust many readers of this manual will feel encouraged to start up their own Local Seed Network.

A local seed network (LSN) is a group of gardeners who save seeds and exchange them with one another. There are many types of LSNs: from groups of friends who meet at each other's houses to community gardens with extensive seed banks.

An LSN can be a part of an already existing organisation, such as a Permaculture group, soil association, Biodynamic group, garden club or school. An LSN might alternatively be just a group of individuals formed specifically for the purpose of swapping seeds and other planting material.

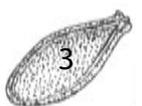
LSNs do not necessarily need to be an incorporated association. They can be just a loose group of people willing to share seeds, plants, grafting material, tips on growing food and seed saving, produce – and certainly a laugh.

Affiliation with The Seed Savers' Network gives an LSN a national profile, public liability insurance, advice and support. As a network of local seed networks we can offer support to each other, gain greater recognition in the wider community and have more power to promote, educate and campaign seed related issues. We can also apply for grants as an umbrella organisation.

How The Seed Savers' Network supports LSNs

Seed Savers can offer support to LSNs by:

- setting up a home page within our website for your group where you can advertise events and publish your seed list (if you wish others to have access to your seed stocks),
- including your activities in Seed Savers' Network articles, webpage, e-news and publicity,
- providing advice on all aspects of running a seed network,
- giving workshops or talks in your local area on seed production, banking, networking, etc.,
- providing short courses for local seed network coordinators at The Seed Centre in Byron Bay,
- providing back-up storage facilities at The Seed Centre for particularly vulnerable varieties,



About This Manual

This manual has been compiled by the staff of The Seed Savers' Network during its second year of aiding the formation of local seed networks. It is for people (such as gardeners, farmers, collectors and teachers) interested in either creating or joining a local seed network. It is also for members of existing LSNs to gain further ideas on running their network.

It explains how to successfully initiate or work in an LSN, with information on seed sourcing, storing, drying, cleaning, testing and distribution. Chapters on keeping records, sharing skills and promoting seed saving are also included. We have assumed that you have some experience on how to produce seeds.

If you need technical information on seed saving, please refer to The Seed Savers' Handbook, available from The Seed Savers' Network see page i for details.

The manual is designed in modules that can be photocopied. It can be used to focus action and as a guide for discussions with friends who are keen to act, either at meetings or sharing a pot of tea.

This manual is based on the experience of those already coordinating Local Seed Networks as well as our own with The Seed Savers' Network. It is not a static document; it will be updated and republished regularly. We urge you to write to us with your own experiences of running an LSN. Your contributions and corrections will be duly acknowledged in the next edition. We wholeheartedly thank the LSN Coordinators whose contributions you will see in this manual.



Photo courtesy of David Cavagnaro

Local seed networks are networks of local gardeners who swap seeds and planting material. This manual has been put together by The Seed Savers' Network to help others establish and run a local seed network.

Knowing what an LSN is, you may want to begin **Forming A Network (2)**, or join a nearby network to be involved in **Sharing Skills (9)** and **Promoting Seed Saving (10)** ...

