

**ECHO Seed Banks:**  
*Connecting Past Harvest  
to Future Possibilities*

*Amaranth in  
Guatemala: 24 Years  
of Multiplying Hope*

*Seed Banking 101:  
FAQs Answered*

*Building a Seed Bank  
in Myanmar*

*ECHO's Seeds  
Circling the Globe*

*Photo: Visitors and staff of ECHO East Africa displaying moringa seeds.*

*“Seed banks give farmers confidence that the harvest will still come.”*



*Abram displaying a Star Apple Tree (*Chrysophyllum cainito*) in the propagation area of the North America Impact Center.*

## **A Letter from ECHO's President**

As autumn settles over North America, we see how farming and seasons are tied together. Fall is harvest time, a chance to reflect, and when farmers save the best seeds for the seasons ahead. Yesterday's bounty becomes tomorrow's hope.

Seed banking works the same way. As farmers save seed to ensure next year's crop, ECHO's seed banks connect past harvests to future possibilities. Whether it's a small packet in a village or a carefully maintained collection at one of our centers, these seeds carry the promise of healthy families and stronger communities.

After over forty years of walking alongside local communities, ECHO has seen how each open-pollinated, locally adapted seed reflects our mission. Seeds link faith and food. They bring people together. And in times of climate change, economic strain, or social upheaval, seed banks give farmers confidence that the harvest will still come.

Your partnership makes this possible. Every packet we share and every person we train offers the hope of transformation and the faith that the next season will bring abundance.

Thank you for helping us sow seeds of hope and resilience year after year. Together, we can end global hunger.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Abram J. Bicksler'.

*Abram J. Bicksler, Ph.D.  
President/CEO*

*P.S. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Donor Interest Survey I shared in the last issue of ECHO News. We received hundreds of insightful responses, and your feedback will greatly shape and strengthen our future partnership with you. We are deeply grateful for your engagement and support.*

# A Gift of Amaranth to Guatemala: 24 Years of Multiplying Hope

**I**n 2001, Tara Cahill of the Cloud Forest Conservation Community ([www.cloudforestconservation.org](http://www.cloudforestconservation.org)) in Guatemala visited ECHO North America and received a small packet of Mexican Grain Amaranth seeds. She carried them back to Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, and introduced them into school and family agroforestry gardens as a simple gift to improve nutrition and diversify local farming.

Those few seeds became the beginning of something enduring.

For twenty-four consecutive years, Tara has planted, multiplied, and shared those amaranth seeds from season to season, year after year. Amaranth continues to thrive in the region today, feeding families, improving soil health, and inspiring the next generation to value seeds as a foundation for resilience and hope. Tara recently sent photos of her vibrant amaranth plants, celebrating the exceptional quality and vitality of the seeds received from ECHO. As she puts it: “I have been planting, multiplying, and enjoying them for twenty-four years straight.”



*ECHO Asia Seed Bank currently produces five seed varieties of grain amaranth (*Amaranthus hypochondriacus*) that they share throughout the Asia network in September 2025.*

What began as a single packet in 2001 has become an intergenerational resource woven into local gardens, school programs, and community fields. It's a living picture of ECHO's seed banking vision: small beginnings that multiply into lasting transformation.

Tara's story reminds us that hope can start with a handful of seeds and a single act of generosity. By sharing and multiplying amaranth, she and the ECHO network have not just introduced a nutritious crop but have sown the potential for healthier families and stronger communities for generations. From one seed packet, a legacy of nourishment and resilience continues to grow.

## What is Amaranth?

Amaranth is an ancient grain that was once a staple in Mesoamerican civilizations and is valued for its exceptional nutritional profile. It's a powerhouse of protein, calcium, iron, fiber, and essential amino acids, often surpassing many common grains. Amaranth leaves are also edible and provide rich vitamins and minerals.

Amaranth is incredibly valuable in Guatemala, especially in regions like Alta Verapaz, where food insecurity and malnutrition can be persistent challenges. It thrives in poor soils and harsh climates, supports agroecological diversity, and offers farmers both a market and home-use crop. It is also popular in other regions around the world where we work. ECHO Asia's Seed Bank produces and shares five amaranth varieties to their network. Amaranth nourishes bodies and strengthens entire communities' resilience to adversity by regenerating the soil and providing sustainable, adaptable yields.



*Tone Ma Lay displays a harvest from her garden in Pyio Oo Lwin, Myanmar.*

## Building a Seed Bank:

### *From Training to Transformation in Myanmar*

**W**hen the pandemic struck in 2020, Tone Ma Lay from Myanmar found herself unexpectedly grounded in Thailand. She had traveled to the ECHO Asia Impact Center for what was supposed to be a two-month internship on seed saving. Within days of her arrival, the borders closed, and her stay stretched into four months.

Tone Ma Lay was sent by the Lisu Baptist Convention Seminary in Myanmar, where she was studying. ECHO's closest partner there is Professor Thaung Si and has been connected with this group since 2012. With their encouragement, Tone traveled to Thailand to expand her learning. The extended time at ECHO Asia proved pivotal for her and, ultimately, for her community.

With the extra months, Tone Ma Lay immersed herself in seed banking training and broadened her learning across sustainable agriculture practices. She studied integrated pest management, biochar, and community development while observing how ECHO Asia equips partners. Reflecting on the experience she shared, "I am very satisfied and very happy with the internship."

When she finally returned home, Tone Ma Lay found familiar challenges that had deepened during the pandemic. Farmers were increasingly dependent on expensive chemical inputs and local crop diversity was declining. Remembering her time at ECHO Asia, she gathered neighbors to share what she had learned. She explained the value of saving seed, demonstrated how to clean and store it well, and encouraged others to share their own knowledge. A community seed swap followed, and families brought seeds from their homes to exchange. The response showed that people wanted to preserve their seed heritage and needed a structure to support it.

From those beginnings, Tone Ma Lay led a community effort to establish a seed bank using practical steps she learned at ECHO. The community identified key local crops, set up affordable storage using locally available tools, and began regular grow-outs to test viability and adaptability of seed stock. Women and youth joined in managing the seed bank so that knowledge and responsibility would be shared and sustained. As Tone Ma Lay put it, "[I am] Receiving many different blessings from God and one of the biggest is attending the four months internship at ECHO Asia."

Today, the seed bank serves families in her community with access to diverse and locally adapted seeds and with the skills to steward them for the future. In March 2025, ECHO Asia returned to Myanmar to provide additional training and support, building on the foundation that Tone Ma Lay and her neighbors established.

Tone Ma Lay's journey from an unexpected season in Thailand to a local leader in Myanmar reflects the heart of ECHO's mission. Small seeds of knowledge planted in the right place can grow into lasting hope for generations.



Lisu Theological Seminary School students construct a community level seed bank in Pyio Oo Lwin, Myanmar.

# Building a Community Seed Bank

When ECHO shares knowledge, it doesn't stop at one place; it multiplies. These steps show how Tone Ma Lay and her community built their own seed bank.

## STEP ONE

### Identify Local Needs and Key Crops

Tone Ma Lay and her community recognized the urgent need to preserve local seeds and protect traditional crops that were at risk of disappearing.

## STEP TWO

### Design Simple Storage Solutions

Using the techniques she learned at ECHO Asia, Tone Ma Lay helped her team create low-cost, practical storage methods suited for their climate and resources.

## STEP THREE

### Test and Multiply Seeds

She organized grow-out trials to test seed quality and adaptability, ensuring every variety could thrive before sharing it widely.

## STEP FOUR

### Engage and Equip the community

Tone Ma Lay invited local families and farmers to join seed-saving efforts, sharing her knowledge and empowering others to steward their own community seed bank.

## Want to learn more about Seed Banks?

ECHO's book *Community Seed Banks: Options and Opportunities for Resiliency* highlights how communities protect biodiversity and strengthen food security. This resource reflects the kind of expertise your support makes possible around the world.



Scan to  
Learn More



*Training participants clean tomato seeds at the East Africa Impact Center Seed Bank in February 2025.*

# Seed Banking FAQ:

## *Your Top Questions Answered*

**A**ccess to locally appropriate seeds can mean the difference between hunger and harvest in the lives of families ECHO serves around the world. Below are common questions and answers about seed banks that protect biodiversity and help communities grow their resilience. Seed banking and saving is a deep-rooted part

of ECHO's ministry that we have extensively explored and developed technical resources to address. This FAQ does not reach that depth, but aims to give you a general overview and direction. For more information explore [ECHOcommunity.org](https://ECHOcommunity.org) or our *Community Seed Bank Options* book (scan the QR code on page 4 to get your copy today!)

## 1. What is a seed bank?

A seed bank is a space or place where seeds or plant germplasm of potential importance can be stored for the future. It is a type of gene bank that serves various stakeholders, including gardeners, farmers, crop breeders, and scientists. Seed banks may exist to preserve small quantities of many different species or larger amounts of only a few. Depending on resources, seed banks can range from sophisticated cold storage facilities to low-cost seed storage structures.

## 2. What is a community seed bank?

Seed banks, like seeds, are diverse. They differ in size, scale, and purpose. Community seed banks are not using techniques like cryopreservation (extremely low temperatures to preserve plant genetic diversity). Community seed banks could function at a village, farmer cooperative, watershed, or province level in one or more of the following ways:

**Assistance:** Provide seed to farmers in need, either by sale or free distribution.

**Production:** Offer seeds for the purpose of improving crop genetics. Recipients may include farmers seeking improved varieties and crop breeders seeking germplasm for improving seed varieties.

**Preservation:** Maintain and protect seed germplasm. Seeds are not typically multiplied for sale or distribution, but for safeguarding against loss of genetic material in the event of calamity.

## 3. Why does ECHO focus on community seed banking?

Over time, countries have begun and will increasingly continue to restrict the flow of seeds across borders. This external pressure has increased the need for internal seed system development at the community level. Community seed banks provide avenues for local biodiversity preservation, faster and more

relevant seed distribution after a shock (e.g., an extreme weather event), and increased resilience of a community to meet its own needs, which shift over time. ECHO provides training, research, resources, and infrastructure options specifically for meeting community-level seed bank operations. This connects directly with ECHO's global goal #3: advancing Global Seed Banking.



*Top: A training participant proudly shows the seeds he gathered from a seed exchange in northern Thailand that will one day provide nutrition or income for his family.*

*Bottom: ECHO East Africa Seed Bank staff clean seeds of Cucumis anguria or the "cool" African Cucumber from Singida, Tanzania.*

#### 4. What does a community need to establish a community seed bank?

- Community-driven interest, recognition, and acceptance
- Funding
- Appropriate infrastructure for saving seeds (cistern/bunker underground, earthbag structure, CoolBot cold room, or other)
- Training on seed saving and banking best practices, including purity maintenance, seed multiplication and saving methods, germination testing techniques, and data management
- Data management system (paper or digital)
- Appropriate seed storage options for maintaining seed viability (dessicants, vacuum sealing, containers, or a combination of techniques)
- Distribution methods that are agreed on by all stakeholders
- Growing space for seed multiplication/regeneration
- Seed diversity sources

#### 5. What are the key functions of a community seed bank?

- Seed market analysis
- Preservation of indigenous seed resources
- Management (procurement, accession, inventory, and germination), multiplication, storage, and distribution of diverse seed resources. This sometimes goes beyond seeds to other propagules, such as cuttings (sweet potatoes and chaya) and pups (bananas)
- Community cooperation and conflict management
- Seed relief provision for re-establishing crops after a shock
- Coordination of seed fairs or other community-level seed swaps

*ECHO Asia staff take meticulous records of seed germination to understand the viability of different varieties and how to adjust their methods.*



## 6. Do farmers have to pay for seeds from ECHO's seed banks?

ECHO provides 10 free variety trial seed packets annually to individuals or organizations working with small-scale farmers around the globe. Each packet contains enough seed to plant a 30-foot row of the crop. Additional seed from seed banks can be purchased. Phytosanitary certificates can also be purchased for countries that require them. Visit [ECHOcommunity.org](http://ECHOcommunity.org), complete a seed request form, and connect with your local Regional Impact Center to learn more.

## 7. Seeds are ALIVE! So, how are seeds effectively stored for long periods under harsh climate conditions?

They are dried thoroughly and cleaned to ensure seeds are pest-free. Then, they are sealed in airtight containers with desiccants to control moisture. If possible, containers are kept cool. Every 6-12 months, a small sample is taken from the same harvest and germinated to see what percentage of the seeds sprout. ECHO seed banks require an acceptable germination rate that varies by type of crop. If that rate isn't achieved, the team examines the steps to improve the conditions for an acceptable germination rate or regenerates the seed harvest.

## 8. What could seed banks do with my donation this year?

With your support, thousands of seed packets will be shared with ECHO's network partners and reach farmers in need. Each packet represents a chance for a family to grow food, build resilience, and pass on abundance to others. Tens of thousands of seed packets were distributed in the first half of 2025 alone thanks to your support of ECHO's seed banks around the world!

*Tens of thousands of seed packets were distributed in the first half of 2025 alone thanks to your support of ECHO's seed banks around the world!*

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*This seed collection demonstrates the diversity of God's creation and the intricacies of God's design!*

**Flashback:** Check out this video from 2019 featuring ECHO Asia's work with community seed banks.



## ECHO Asia Impact Center Seed Bank:

# *A Legacy that Continues to Grow*

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*ECHO staff P'Chai posing in front of the ECHO Asia Seed Bank sign.*

*Asia Seed Bank began in the hills of Mae Ai in Northern Thailand. ECHO partnered with UHDF (Upland Holistic Development Foundation), operating there for nearly a decade before moving to its current location outside of Chiang Mai.*

Since its humble beginnings in Mae Ai, Thailand, in 2009, beginning with 170 accessions, the ECHO Asia Impact Center Seed Bank has flourished into a powerhouse for agricultural resilience across Asia. It is now a leader in affordable agricultural solutions in the region, focused on:

- **Storage & Drying:** Pioneering new research to extend seed life and viability.
- **NUS Trials:** Testing neglected and underutilized crops to improve food security.
- **Multilingual Learning:** Hands-on video series in multiple languages ensure practical knowledge reaches every farmer.
- **Hosting multiple Seed Bank Manager symposia,** gathering like-minded individuals to discuss challenges and share best practices.

With your help, these efforts are cultivating a future where food security is strengthened one seed and one community at a time.

## 2025 Impact Overview

# 500

Unique Crop Types

# 200

Available Varieties

# 29+

Countries Received  
Seed Packets

**The ECHO Effect:** In 2025, graduates of Asia's Seed Banking internship will launch seed banks in Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar, and other countries.

### Spotlight Story

## Hope in Myanmar

In early 2025, a new community seed bank was established at a children's home in rural Myanmar. Local leaders, trained at ECHO Asia's Small Farm Resource Center, returned with knowledge and starter seeds. Within months, gardens sprang up. Today, nutritious vegetables grown from ECHO seed packets help feed 300 children and their caregivers.

ECHO's partnership with these local leaders has spanned many years. The Asia team has been able to train, equip, and resource on many different topics, deliver seeds and cuttings, and enable the establishment of a community seed bank, all of which continue to support the people of Myanmar during its ongoing conflict!

The Full Moon home also implements community development engagement by going back to the villages of the children and engages in different economic and livelihood projects. This latest project was this new community level seed bank.

Encouraged by this success, the Full Moon staff continue in partnership with ECHO to host gardening workshops for neighboring villages, sparking a ripple effect of nutrition and self-sufficiency. Ongoing conflict and instability in Myanmar have made it especially difficult for families to access enough food, making these efforts all the more vital.

*"ECHO taught us new methods to improve our farm and how to build a seed bank. It will have 200 kinds of seeds we will use on the farm to grow crops."*

— Saw Shiesho, Full Moon Orphanage, Myanmar

*Above is an aerial photo of the seed beds in ECHO Asia's current seed bank in San Sai, located about 20 minutes north of Chiang Mai Thailand.*



*A community member of the Muang Noi village in Northern Thailand shares their beautiful harvest and experience with the ECHO Asia team on how they are applying agricultural techniques they learned from ECHO training in June 2025.  
Photo Credit: Napatsorn (Pat) Leerasantadkul*

## Seeds are Not Currency:

# Rethinking “Seed Banks” in Central America & the Caribbean

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*This is Lucrecia, a member of the local community of Panajachel in Lake Atitlan, Guatemala that teaches health-related workshops to serve her community.  
Photo Credit: Network member Penny Rambacher, of Miracles in Action.*

**I**n Central America and the Caribbean (CAC), indigenous and farming communities and advocates for food security and sovereignty often prefer not to use the term “seed bank.” For them, “bank” carries baggage reflecting control systems, debt, and exclusion. Instead, local groups uplift terms like seed reservoir, seed house, or community seedbed, each honoring the living, communal, and ancestral gift of seeds.

### Seeds: The Heart of the Community

Seed houses operate on the principles of care, reproduction, and solidarity instead of a transactional model. For example, the Agroecological Seed Bank of Bogotá, Colombia, loans seeds through a system reminiscent of a financial bank, where borrowers return what they borrowed plus a little extra. In contrast, community-run seed houses emphasize sharing, collective stewardship, and reciprocal exchanges without added interest.



For indigenous and peasant communities, seeds embody life and legacy. Caring for seeds is an act of generational love, not commercial exchange. Sadly, in some CAC countries, native and creole seeds lack legal protection; regulations may even prohibit using non-certified or patented seeds, threatening biodiversity and community autonomy. Patents and private ownership starkly contrast the belief that seeds are living beings, gifts to be shared, not commodities to be owned.

Through ongoing conversations with partners, ECHO identifies local community seed needs. A Panama partner recently shared the need for vegetable seeds suited to hot tropical climates. ECHO’s role goes beyond distribution—we also provide the training that enables communities to grow and preserve these seeds.



Meet Katalina Landaeta, ECHO’s Regional Director for Central America & Caribbean. Photo taken in downtown Antigua Guatemala. Photo Credit: Abram Bicksler



**Sustainable Seeds**  
*Spanish Style*

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Seed Reservoir	Reservorio del Semillas
Seed House	Casa de Semillas
Community Seedbed	Semillero Comunitario

## The Central America & Caribbean RIC Has a New Home

ECHO’s Central America & Caribbean Regional Impact Center (RIC) now has its headquarters in Antigua, Guatemala! The new home base will feature local leaders, host workshops, and build resilient networks to combat hunger and promote just, sustainable food models.

Looking ahead to 2026, Director Katalina Landaeta has outlined a two-part strategy for ECHO’s model seed reservoir in Guatemala:

1. Reclaim and elevate underutilized local species that are both resilient and crucial for food security, beginning with research and consultations to pinpoint these varieties.
2. Provide responsive support based on the expressed needs of local partners.

## Sowing Hope:

# The East Africa Seed Bank Story

*A local farmer shows their harvest in the Olkokola ward, a rural community outside of Arusha while the team visits to observe community farming activities.*

### IMPACT IN NUMBERS

From Two Dozen Seeds to 800+ Varieties: We Are Growing Food Security Together

816

Accessions\* conserved from 2022 to 2024

30,015

Free seed packets distributed from 2022 to 2024

10

Countries served from 2022 to 2024

50

Community seed banks launched in Tanzania

3

New seed banks set up this year with Compassion International in 2025

90

Future seed banks planned across East Africa

*“We abound with thanksgiving to God who has multiplied our seed sown in hope.”  
– East Africa*



Community members exchange seeds at the Tanzania Assemblies of God Kiruani Christian Center in Simanjiro during a seed-saving training event in March 2025. Photo Credit: Faith Juma

## A Seed Bank with a Mission

In 2014, ECHO East Africa’s seed bank in Arusha, Tanzania began in a modest cold room with just twenty-four seed samples from neighboring gardens and ECHO staff. Today, with innovative CoolBot technology, the cold room is bursting with hundreds of hardy varieties. Every year, at least ten free seed packets are distributed to each participating farmer, supporting food security throughout East Africa.

Seed Bank Seeds enter the ECHO seed bank through diverse channels: curated garden collections, strategic research partnerships, direct purchase from local farmers, and lively seed fairs. ECHO focuses on plants that strengthen local resiliency, especially:

- Green manure cover crops (GMCCs)
- Climate-resilient vegetables and legumes
- Underutilized local species

In 2025, community and collaboration are at the forefront. Building upon ECHO’s first Tanzanian training in 2020, we have seen:

- 50 village-managed seed banks established

- Two new Lablab purpureus varieties (NMD 19 & NMD 20) certified with help from Tanzania’s top research centers
- Three additional community seed banks launched in collaboration with Compassion International beneficiaries who have been trained on seed banking.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, ECHO East Africa is deepening research on overlooked varieties, gathering stakeholders at regional symposiums, and expanding community seed bank trainings across Tanzania and the wider region. We will spearhead 90 seed bank trainings to create 90 new seed banks for Compassion International over the next three years.

*\*Accession: A selection of seeds of a particular species and variety that has been brought into (or accessed) a formal seed or gene bank at a particular time and place*

# West Africa:

## *Investing in Seed System Integrity for Long-Term Food Security*

**F**ounded in 2024, the West Africa Community Seed Bank works to preserve local agricultural heritage by collecting, conserving, and sharing traditional seeds. In our region, most producers save and exchange seeds within their communities and store them in granaries, jars, or cans—often with ash or neem leaves for added protection.

We focus on gathering the most widely used seeds from regional farmers, carefully cleaning, sorting, and storing them to ensure quality. Over the past year, we've registered 30 varieties in the seed bank and completed initial trials with yellow corn, okra, millet, and red sorghum. A second yellow corn trial is now underway.

Our most significant achievements include:

- Preserving traditional seed varieties and maintaining their availability for local producers
- Training farmers to set up and manage their own seed banks, building resilience and expertise

However, we continue to face some challenges:

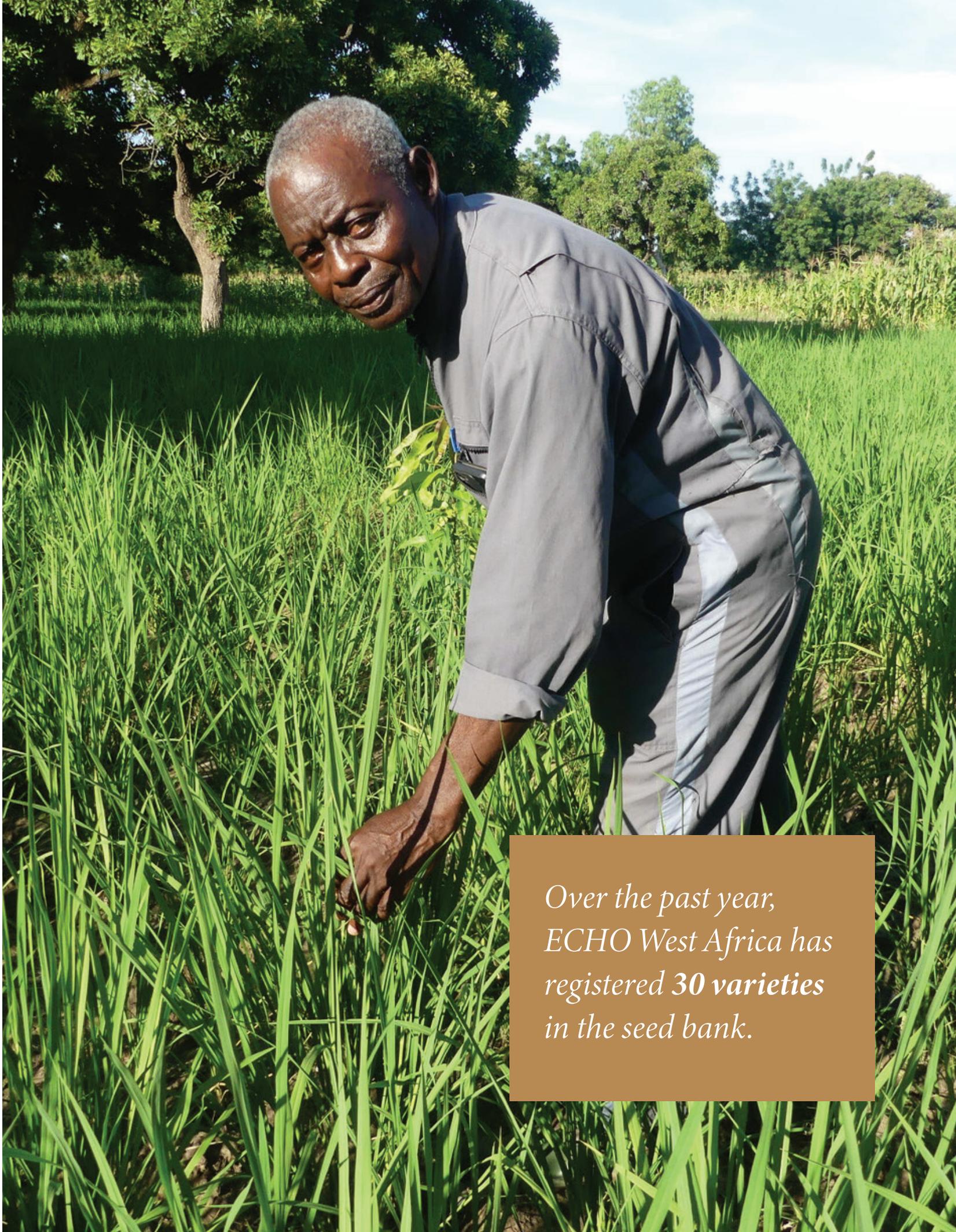
- Sourcing larger quantities can be difficult, as most farmers retain only small amounts for personal use
- Some collected seeds do not germinate well, likely due to improper previous storage, which affects their viability and growth.

Looking ahead, our objectives are to expand our seed collections, trial and multiply each variety, and distribute seeds for local production. We also aim to support producers in establishing their own community seed banks to ensure sustainable access to quality seeds across the region.



*Above: Sankara Minata of Kouritenga, Burkina Faso shows their corn variety is maturing and growing seeds.*

*Right: Kam Simon stands in a rice field in Dédougou, Burkina Faso, demonstrating the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technique that uses agroecological methods to intensify rice production with fewer inputs.*



*Over the past year,  
ECHO West Africa has  
registered 30 varieties  
in the seed bank.*

# Planting a Legacy:

## *Cultivating Diversity from Local Roots*

**I**t all started with a small refrigerator in the A-frame structure and the passion of Martin Price. From those first seed-saving steps, the North America Seed Bank has grown into a trusted resource serving domestic and international field workers who request seeds and cuttings to nurture new life wherever they serve.



*Above Left: This is the original ECHO A-Frame in 1981 where former President Dr. Martin Price established ECHO's first seed bank by bringing back 26 seed packets from the USDA station in Puerto Rico.*

*Above Right: This is ECHO North America's seedbank today. Built in 2002, it is made from remodeling a garage and shipping container to create additional space for seed germination and seed storage. More recent renovations were made to improve the seedbank in 2016.*

### Impact at a Glance

- 385 active accessions in rotation
- 2,400 total accessions preserved (some safeguarded at the US National Seed Bank, Ft. Collins)
- An online seed catalog that keeps information accessible worldwide
- Ongoing variety trials with every batch of new interns bring fresh insights and keep the collection vibrant
- Participate in seed exchanges at major gatherings like the Seed Savers Exchange National Conference, Iowa

### Providing Real-World Seed Support

Every season, the NASeed Bank receives inquiries from frontline workers, community growers, and organizations asking for hardy seeds, rare varieties, or reliable cuttings. Berries, vegetables, and cover crops now help restore land and provide nutrition in countless projects across North America and beyond.

## Partner Spotlights

**Local Seeds Coalition:** The Local Seeds Coalition helps farmers and gardeners build climate-resilient seed systems through landrace development, ultra-crosses, and community seed libraries. While currently focused on North America, the coalition hopes to expand globally with volunteers and partnerships to adapt seeds for local food systems.

**Seed Library Partnership:** The Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College Seed Library advances seed sovereignty, youth agricultural education, and Indigenous food security in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. ECHO is working to support them through seed donations and educational resources.

Projects like these are vital for addressing food insecurity because they strengthen local seed systems and make communities more resilient and self-sufficient in producing nutritious food despite climate and economic challenges.

## Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

ECHO's North America Seed Bank is poised for meaningful growth and more profound impact by:

- Expanding our variety trials to discover crops with stronger climate resilience and regional adaptability.
- Deepening our collaboration and building a more connected, resourceful community with Seed Savers Exchange and like-minded networks.
- Enhancing our online inventory and knowledge-sharing tools to equip even more people globally to grow, share, and sustain resilient food systems together.

## Help Us Grow the Future of Seeds!

Do you have experience gardening and saving seeds? We're looking for partner gardeners willing to grow designated crops and donate seeds to support ECHO's seed bank. Join us in cultivating hope, one seed at a time.



**Become a Garden  
Partner Today!**

*Email the North  
America Impact Center's  
Seed Bank Manager  
Emma Mudd at  
[emudd@echonet.org](mailto:emudd@echonet.org) to  
get involved*

*Underutilized plant propagation and seed saving is ongoing at ECHO North America! Dedicated volunteer, BJ Phelps, waters freshly potted plants.*

*Photo Credit: Laurana Gonzalez*



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## Join the Movement

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### QCD's: A Simple Tax-Wise Way to Make an Impact

If you are 70½ or older, you can make a meaningful difference through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA. In 2025, you can transfer up to \$108,000 directly to ECHO, supporting smallholder farmers and communities in need, while also satisfying your required minimum distribution, tax-free. To count for the 2025 tax year, gifts must be completed by December 31.

**To learn more about how to give through a QCD, contact us at [advancement@echonet.org](mailto:advancement@echonet.org).**

*A community member of the Muang Noi village in Northern Thailand shares their beautiful harvest and experience with the ECHO Asia team on how they are applying agricultural techniques they learned from ECHO training.  
Photo Credit: Napatsorn (Pat) Leerasantadkul*