



INTERNATIONAL

seed
day



| 26th April 2026

Our Seeds, Our Future

Seeds are the foundation of our civilization. At the dawn of agriculture, when humans first learned to cultivate and store food, they became the silent architects of culture. These tiny capsules of life gave us the power to move from nomadic hunter-gatherers to settled communities





International Seed Day honours farmers' rights to save, share, and protect seeds, a global effort to sustain biodiversity and food sovereignty. Traditional seeds, shaped over generations, carry memory and resilience across India's rainfed landscapes. This makes seed saving a practical wisdom that is climate resilient, requires few inputs, and supports both soil and community.



► Challenges to Seed Diversity

Traditional seed diversity is steadily disappearing. Globally, nearly 75 percent of crop diversity has been lost since the 1900s, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. Today, most of the world's food comes from just 12 plant species, sharply narrowing what we grow and eat.

Hybrid seeds are replacing traditional varieties. Traditional knowledge is fading. Market demand favours uniform crops. Fewer farmers cultivate indigenous seeds. Research and policy support for local seed systems remain limited.



» Promoting Traditional Seeds

WASSAN works with farming communities, NGOs, government and researchers to conserve traditional seeds through community-led initiatives:

- Promote community seed systems and seed banks
- Document and map traditional seed diversity
- Support seed exchange among farmers
- Conduct Participatory Varietal Trials (PVTs)
- Promote millets and other traditional crops in rainfed areas
- Build farmers' capacity in seed conservation and production

*Saving indigenous seeds
Safeguarding our heritage*



» Stories from the Field

Farmers, through their lived knowledge, experience, and practices, continue to sustain seed traditions.

On the eve of International Seed Day, our team published a series of stories across digital media platforms, highlighting how communities are protecting, reviving, and nurturing seed diversity

Each story is a reminder that seed conservation is about shaping a more secure and sustainable future.



THE WOMEN BEHIND ODISHA'S MILLET REVIVAL

Susanta Sekhar Choudhury, Pritesh Sundar Roy,
Pulak Ranjan Nayak, Bikash Das, Suresh Kumar Sahoo,
24.04.2026, Down To Earth.

Odisha's women farmers show seeds and traditional knowledge sustaining resilience and food security.

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IN BENGAL'S FRAGILE LANDSCAPES, TRADITIONAL SEEDS ARE HOLDING THE LINE AGAINST CLIMATE STRESS

Shubhadeep Mondal, Marreddy Leelavathi,
Abhijit Mohanty, Bhagyalaxmi, 23.04.2026, Down To Earth.

Seed conservation in West Bengal increasingly intersects with local markets, nutrition and climate adaptation.

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HOW PASTORALISM QUIETLY PROTECTS INDIA'S SEEDS

Kavya Chinda, Abhijit Mohanty,
23.04.2026, Down To Earth.

A moving herd disperses seeds, sustaining biodiversity, culture, and agriculture across India.

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ODISHA'S MAIZE BOOM IS LEAVING INDIGENOUS VARIETIES BEHIND

Abhijit Mohanty, 09.04.2026,
Good Food Movement.

The disappearance of indigenous corn robs farmers of agricultural heritage, while cultivating hybrids impoverishes them.

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WHY RED GRAM MATTERS IN MAHARASHTRA'S DRYLANDS

Aniket Likhari, 23.04.2026,
Down To Earth

For farming families in Vidarbha and Marathwada, red gram feeds, supports livestock, and sustains climate-resilient traditions.

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DEDI TODA: A KUTIA KONDH SUMMER PORRIDGE FROM THE HILLS OF ODISHA

Abhijit Mohanty, 16.04.2026,
Goya Media

For Kutia Kondh in Kandhamal, dedi toda of millet, cowpea, and rice cools the body.

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A PAUDI BHUYAN FAMILY SAVES IT'S HERITAGE THROUGH SEEDS

Rajesh Kumar Pradhan, 26.04.2026, Village Square

Using indigenous farming knowledge, Odisha's Paudi Bhuyan farmers are preserving traditional seeds, sustaining food security, strengthening climate resilience and supporting cultural heritage.

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HOW ODISHA'S ADIVASI FARMERS PRESERVE TRADITIONAL SEEDS

Abhijit Mohanty, 26.04.2026, Scroll

These diverse varieties have been shaped over generations by local soil, altitude and climate, and can withstand the changing the weather.

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HOW ASSAM'S FARMERS ARE LOSING THEIR INDIGENOUS SEEDS

Monuhar Pegu, 26.04.2026,
The Wire

In Assam's Mising villages, the fading aroma of joha rice signals a deeper loss of indigenous seeds, cultural identity and ecological resilience.

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IN ODISHA'S SAURA VILLAGES, TRADITIONAL SEEDS HOLD THE MEMORY OF RAIN

Pratyusa Kumar Panda, 05.06.2026,
Counter Currents.

As climate uncertainty grows, Adivasi farmers in Odisha continue to conserve seed diversity that has sustained communities through generations of change.

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With the loss of each indigenous seed, we lose its recipes, food traditions and centuries of wisdom

» Testimonials



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“Our indigenous seeds know our hills. In Meghalaya’s shifting weather, they stand with us when hybrid crops fail.”
Sentinary Diengdoh, Custodian Farmer, Kynrud village, Eastern West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya.



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“These seeds carry the wisdom of my grandfather. The traditional finger millet and barley he grew still live in my fields. They help me endure and adapt to an everchanging climate.”
Kala Devi, Community Resource Person, HimRRA Network, Seri Banglow village, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.



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“Our indigenous seeds carry the story of our land and our people. I will keep saving them, because if they live, our heritage lives.”
Savara Ganesh, Custodian Farmer, Jagathipalli Burjaguda, Manyam, Andhra Pradesh.



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“Little millet, sorghum, and paddy I grow carry our recipes, our festivals, and how our mothers cooked. If these seeds are lost, our food culture will disappear. I protect them with pride, because saving seeds is saving who we are.”
Killo Parvathi, Custodian Farmer, Arama village, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Andhra Pradesh.

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“Seeds are the source of life. They grow with our soil and forests. We save them for food. We save them for our children. Our forefathers did the same for generations. And we are doing the same.” **Sunamani Paroja, Custodian Farmer, Chendijhila village, Koraput, Odisha.**

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“Indigenous seeds are good for our soil. It is good for our lives. We must save seeds. Once they disappear, we cannot bring them back.” **Kudeladu Jani, Custodian Farmer, Bulrubaru village, Kandhamal, Odisha.**

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“In indigenous seeds live our soil, our songs, our way of life. If we lose them, we lose ourselves. To save our seeds is to save our future.” **Padma Shri Haldhar Nag, Gness village, Bargarh, Odisha.**

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“We will save it if we are capable. We will lose it if we are incapable. What? Thousands and thousands of indigenous varieties and enormous wisdom gifted by our ancestors. We may never fully know what we lose when our rich biodiversity disappears.” **Padma Shri Sabarmate, Sambhav, Nayagarh, Odisha.**

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“Indigenous seeds carry the ecological memory of a place, its soil, seasons, stresses, and sustenance. To abandon them is not just to lose seeds, but to lose our way, like walking in the dark, unaware of the land beneath our feet.” **Anshuman Das, Lead Expert - Agroecology and Food System, Welthungerhilfe, India.**

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“Indigenous seeds are our strength. They grow in our land, in our climate, without much cost. Saving them empowers farmers, and protects the environment.” **Harsita Priyadarshini Mohanty, Seed Conservator, Koraput, Odisha.**

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“On paper, indigenous seeds may look outdated, but in the field they prove their strength. When farming becomes too uniform, it becomes more vulnerable to a changing climate. Promoting indigenous seeds is our insurance for the future.” **Susanta Sekhar Choudhury, Programme Manager-Seed, Watershed Support Services and Activities Network, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.**

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“Desi seeds are memory, sovereignty, and resilience. Shaped over millennia as shared commons, they now confront control through seed and intellectual property laws. Indigenous varieties hold diversity and climate strength no lab has replicated. To lose them is to lose our ability to feed ourselves. To defend them is a radical act of agricultural sovereignty.” **Soumik Banerjee, Independent Researcher and Practitioner of Agroecology and Heirloom Seed Conservation, Kolkata.**

*Indigenous seeds hold our past and sustain our future.
Safeguarding them is our responsibility.*



MILLET GATEWAY ADAPTIVE TRIAL
OF MAJOR AND MINOR MILLETS
RABI - 2023

LOCATION - 3
BLOCK - CHITRAKONGA, DIST - NALKANDUR
AGRO ECOLOGY CENTRE, CHITRAKONGA

Cultivar - 24 no/s	TRIAL DESIGN
Fonstal Millet - 05 no/s	Block - 01
Latha Millet - 04 no/s	Block - 02
Fonstal Millet - 04 no/s	Block - 03
Fonstal Millet - 02 no/s	Block - 04
Bombard Millet - 02 no/s	Block - 05
Songram - 04 no/s	Block - 06

Date of Nursery Seeding: 03.02.2023 Date of Transplanting: 03.02.2023

MSRB

Fonstal Millet-3

Fonstal Millet-4

Fonstal Millet-1

Fonstal Millet-2



Watershed Support Services and Activities Network

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