

Open-pollinated varieties and organic breeding –

Basis for sustainable organic farming

Sustainable management, food sovereignty, biodiversity and nutritional quality – if you call at least one Bingenheimer Saatgut AG seed bag your own, you are right in the middle of those great questions of organic farming. The following pages shall support you, as specialised reseller to respond to any of your clients' questions regarding our seeds with confidence and certainty.



Natural food from the seed – a wish or reality?

At Bingenheimer Saatgut AG we exclusively trade open-pollinated varieties, cultivated in organically managed fields. Seed propagation is carried out by selected organic gardeners with whom we are sustaining strong partnerships for many years.

Despite stipulating the use of organically produced seeds in the current EC regulation on organic farming,

a large proportion of varieties are currently not yet available, resulting in an exemption clause allowing the usage of conventionally propagated seeds.

The broccoli in vegetable shelves as well as canned sweet-corn – the vast majority of vegetables, even in specialised organic shops still derives from conventionally bred varieties, which in some cases also originates from conventionally produced seeds.



Why should we choose open-pollinated varieties?

One of the conventional methods previously mentioned is hybrid breeding. Varieties emerging from this method do offer a few economic advantages, i.e. higher yield, even ripening of the crops or a greater homogeneity of plants and fruits; however these positive genetic characteristics may not be transferred equally to following generations. The result is a significant dependency for farmers, forcing them to constantly purchase seeds from the very few (market-)dominating corporations. Especially for small farming businesses and self-sufficient gardeners worldwide this situation threatens their existence. In order to counteract this phenomenon the slogan/mission/mantra of Bingenheimer Saatgut AG is: varieties are cultural heritage! We strongly believe that all varieties are cultural heritage of humanity and therefore must not become a property through patents or legal regulations.

Not only the sovereignty of farmers is being restricted, but also the diversity of varieties is decreasing further and further. Trade is already limited to a few main crops. Variety protection, for example through patents as mentioned previously has made trading of seeds a valuable business: More than half of the international seed market is dominated by only two main corporations. Ultimately they will also determine which vegetables will be served on our plates today and especially for future generations.

How to promote crop diversity?

Particularly organic farming definitely requires autonomous breeding and special varieties. Breeding objectives of organic cultivation, likewise organic farming are aimed towards a sustainable usage of our natural resources. Resistances against diseases, preferably short periods of development, high tolerance to weeds and enhanced nutrient efficiency are essential characteristics for varieties used for organic farming. Furthermore it is highly recommendable to promote a great diversity of regionally adapted varieties. Under the prevailing conditions, these should deliver healthy and reliable yields and above it all being a source of high nutritional quality.

Kultursaat e.V.

The non-profit association Kultursaat has dedicated its work to the preservation and further development of varieties for organic farming. The breeders are mainly working in accordance to biodynamic guidelines and attach great emphasis on taste and nutritional value. Varieties cultivated by Kultursaat are identified by a colourful (or grey) icon on our seed bags. With every bag sold yourself and your customers are automatically supporting the extremely valuable breeding work of Kultursaat.



bioverita:

**Organic right from the start –
From breeding to the final product**



bioverita

Currently, more than ever before, we have the opportunity to actively shape the future for sustainability, quality and taste due to the increased „organic boom“ and to promote the demand for „organic right from the start“.

The bioverita association aims to strengthen and popularise organic breeding of vegetables, cereals and fruit. There's a need for more open-pollinated, reproducible varieties especially for the cultivation conditions of organic farming. These varieties offer good yields, excellent taste and digestibility as well as a high resistance to diseases and at the same time a high degree of adaptation to climatic changes.

In addition, only methods and techniques that comply with the principles of organic farming are used in organic breeding. For the breeders, this is worth a lot of effort: the development of a new open-pollinated organic vegetable variety takes up to 15 years!

The quality label „organic right from the start“ of bioverita offers you as a retailer real added value as well as a unique selling point. As a marketing partner of bioverita, you can label all product stages: from seeds to young plants and fresh vegetables to processed products.

Our commercial range already offers a number of varieties marked with a bioverita label and many more new varieties will follow. You can also support organic cultivation by buying vegetables. The more these products are offered and the more customers are actively educated, the more often organic varieties will be cultivated by farms in the future.