



Heirloom Crops of Africa

The African American Heritage Seed Collection

Brandon Merchant

- 7th Year of SVG
- Certified Pima County Master Gardener
- SmartScape Certified
- Former President of the Tucson Organic Gardeners



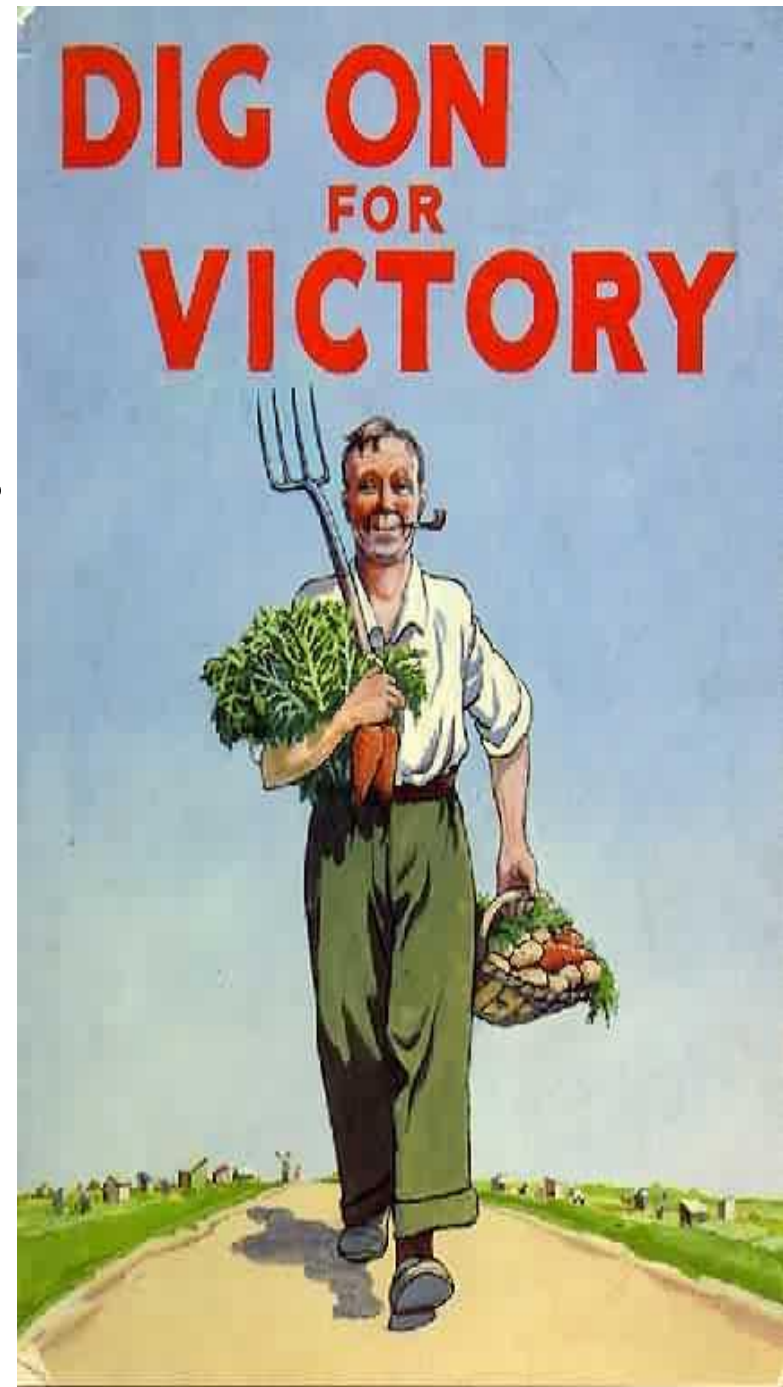
Find us Online:

- www.southwestvictorygardens.com/documents
- www.Facebook.com/southwestvictorygardens
- www.Youtube.com/southwestvictorygardens
- www.Instagram.com/svgtucson

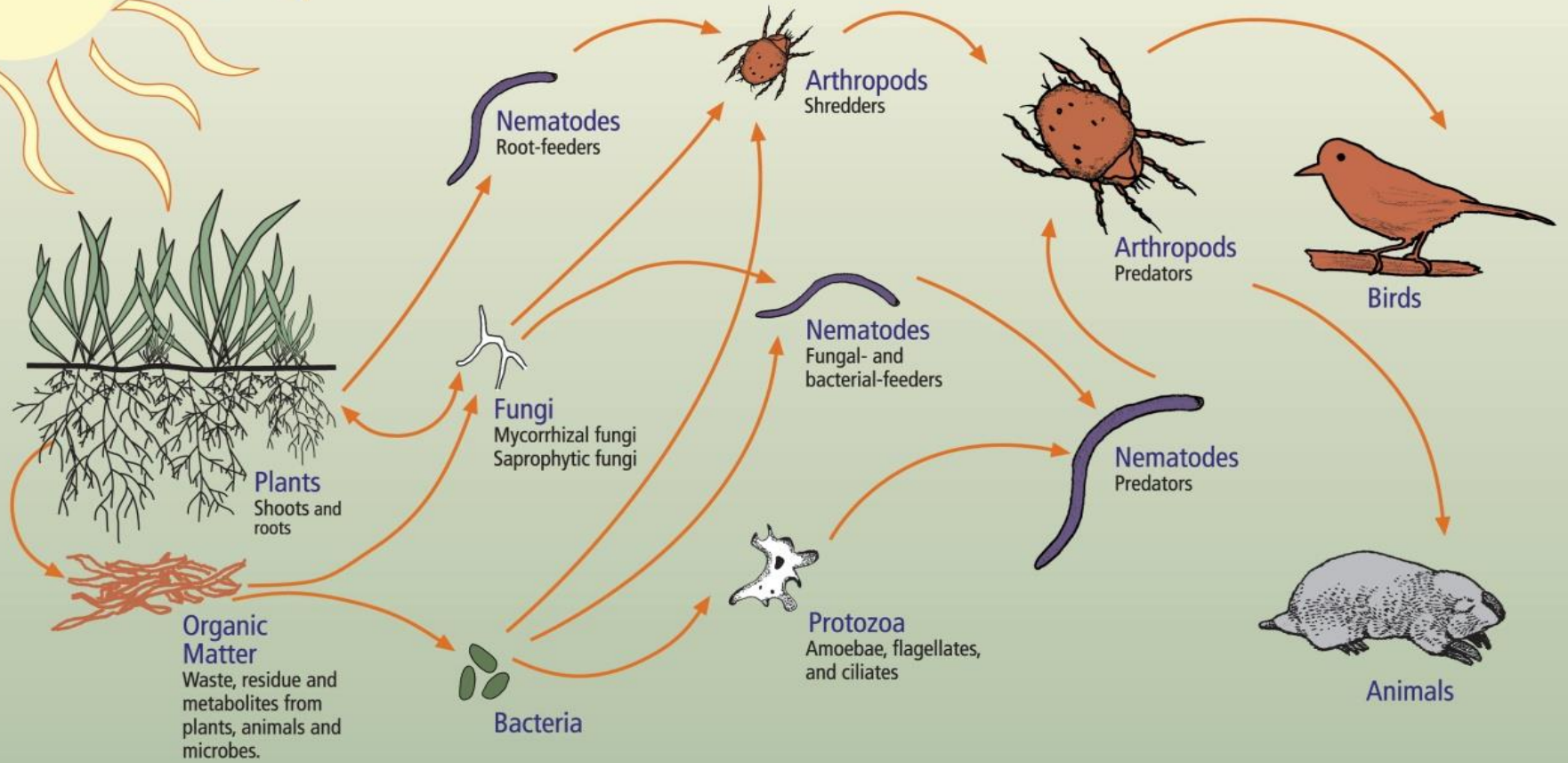


Our Philosophy

- Healthy soil encourages healthy plants
- Healthy plants care for themselves
- Limit external inputs
- Reduce water usage
- Garden with our climate not against it
- Encourage a natural ecosystem
- Build community through gardening



The Soil Food Web



First trophic level:
Photosynthesizers

Second trophic level:
Decomposers
Mutualists
Pathogens, Parasites
Root-feeders

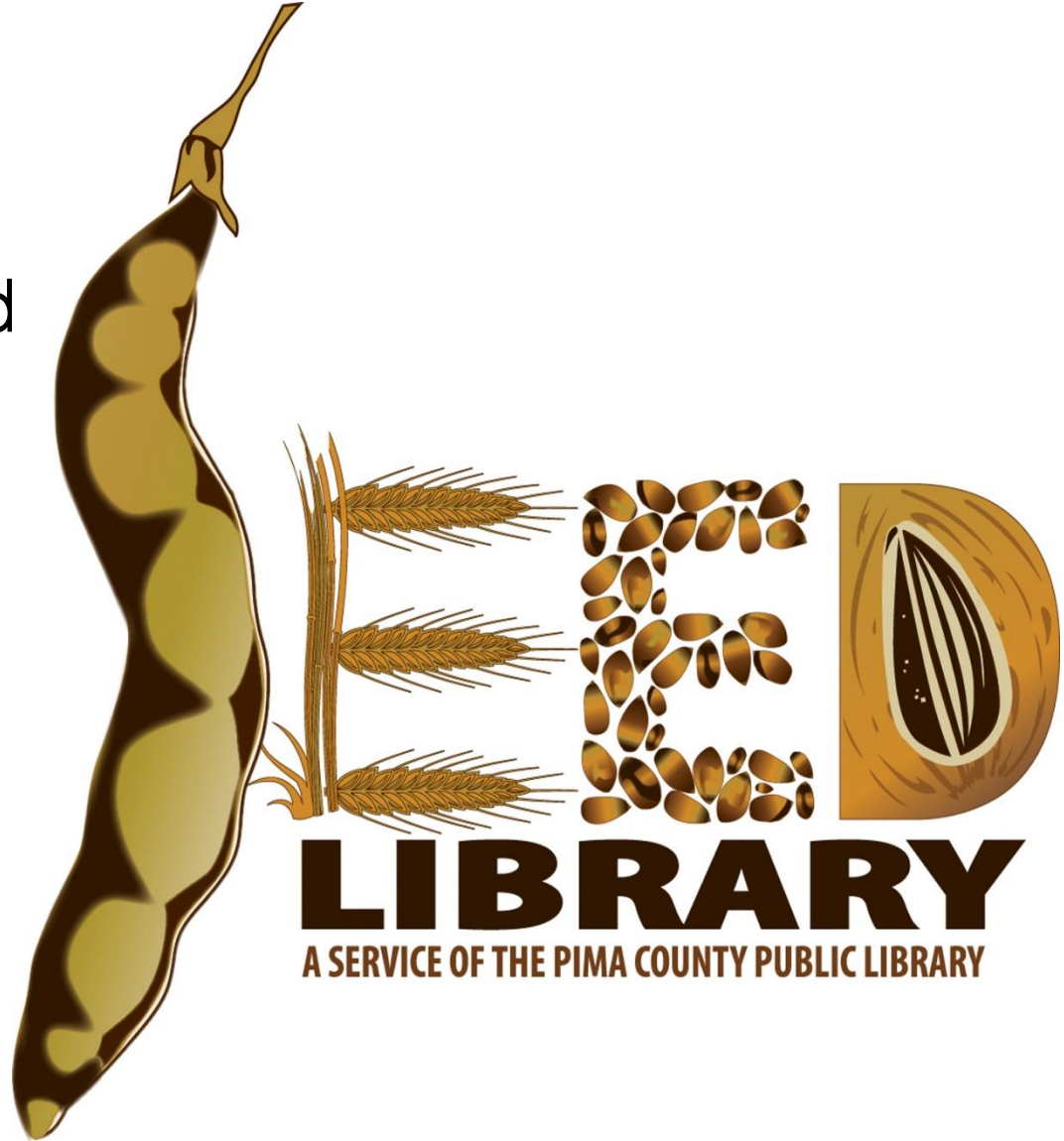
Third trophic level:
Shredders
Predators
Grazers

Fourth trophic level:
Higher level predators

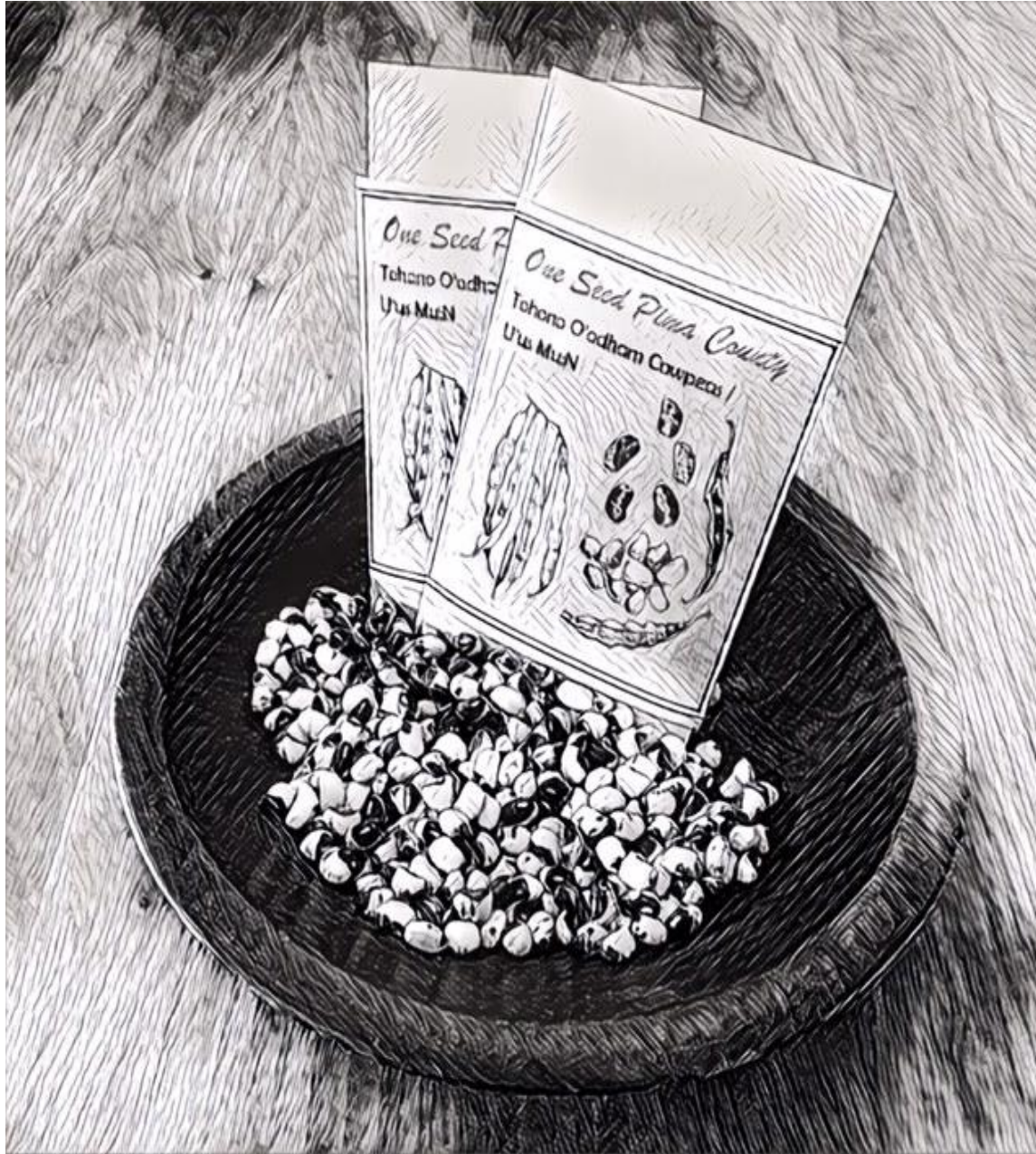
Fifth and higher trophic levels:
Higher level predators

Pima County Seed Library

- OP and Heirloom Seed Collection
- Borrow and Return Saved Seed
- Better Acclimation
- More Diversity
- Community Education

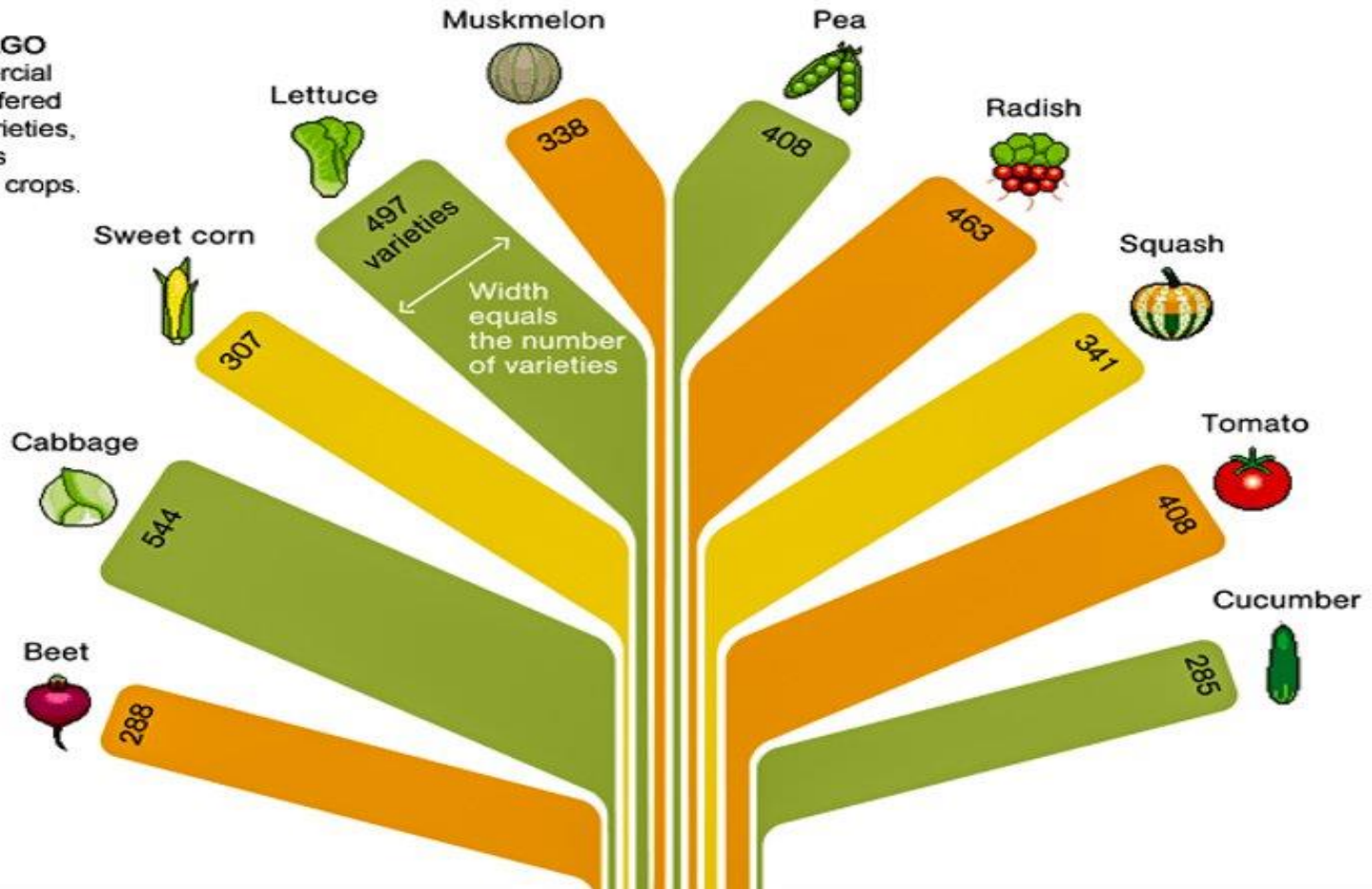


One Seed Pima County

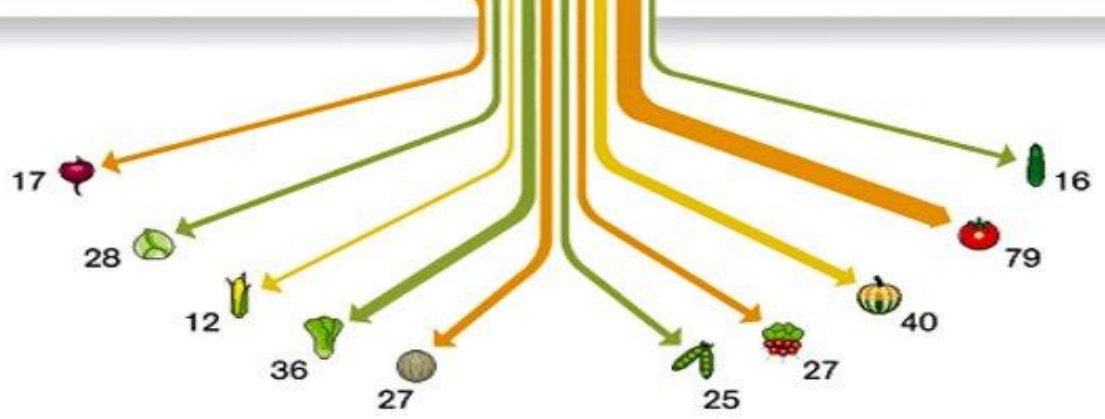


- County Wide Seed Saving Initiative
- Community Involvement
- Grow, Harvest, Appreciate

A CENTURY AGO
 In 1903 commercial seed houses offered hundreds of varieties, as shown in this sampling of ten crops.



80 YEARS LATER
 By 1983 few of those varieties were found in the National Seed Storage Laboratory.*



* CHANGED ITS NAME IN 2001 TO THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR GENETIC RESOURCES PRESERVATION

JOHN TOMANIO, NGM STAFF. FOOD ICONS: QUICKHONEY SOURCE: RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

LANDRETH'S SEEDS

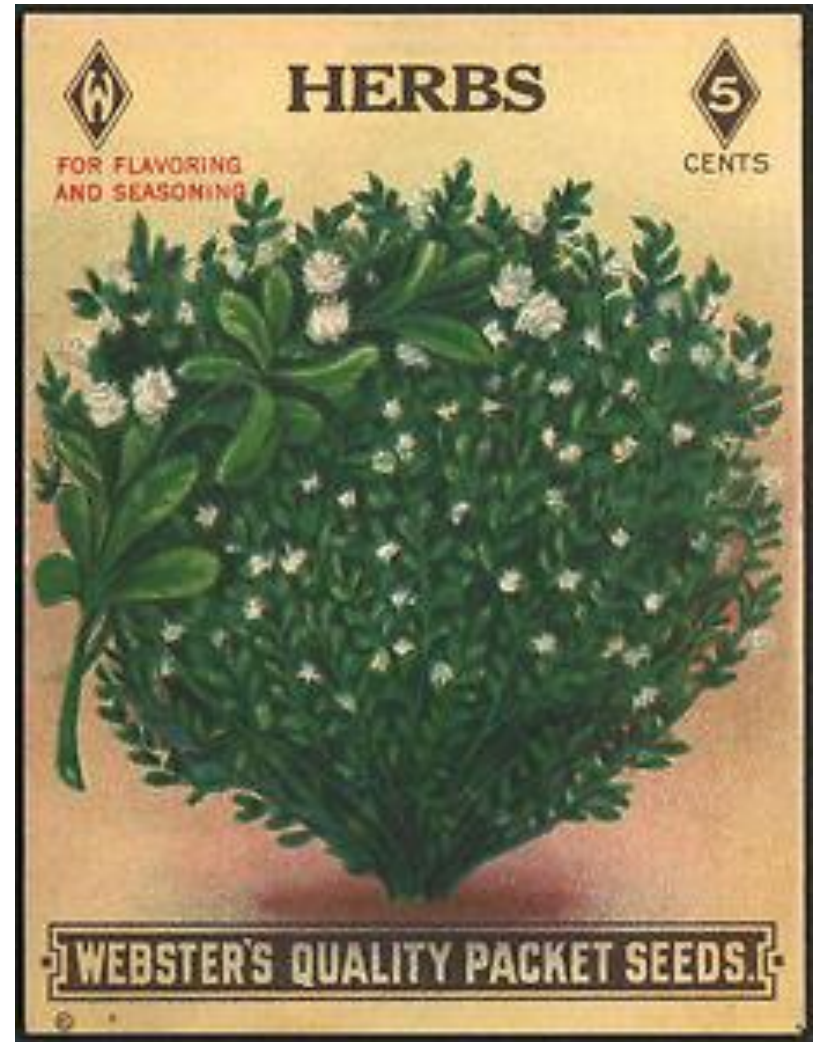
BRISTOL, PA.



LANDRETH'S
SEEDS
SUCCEED

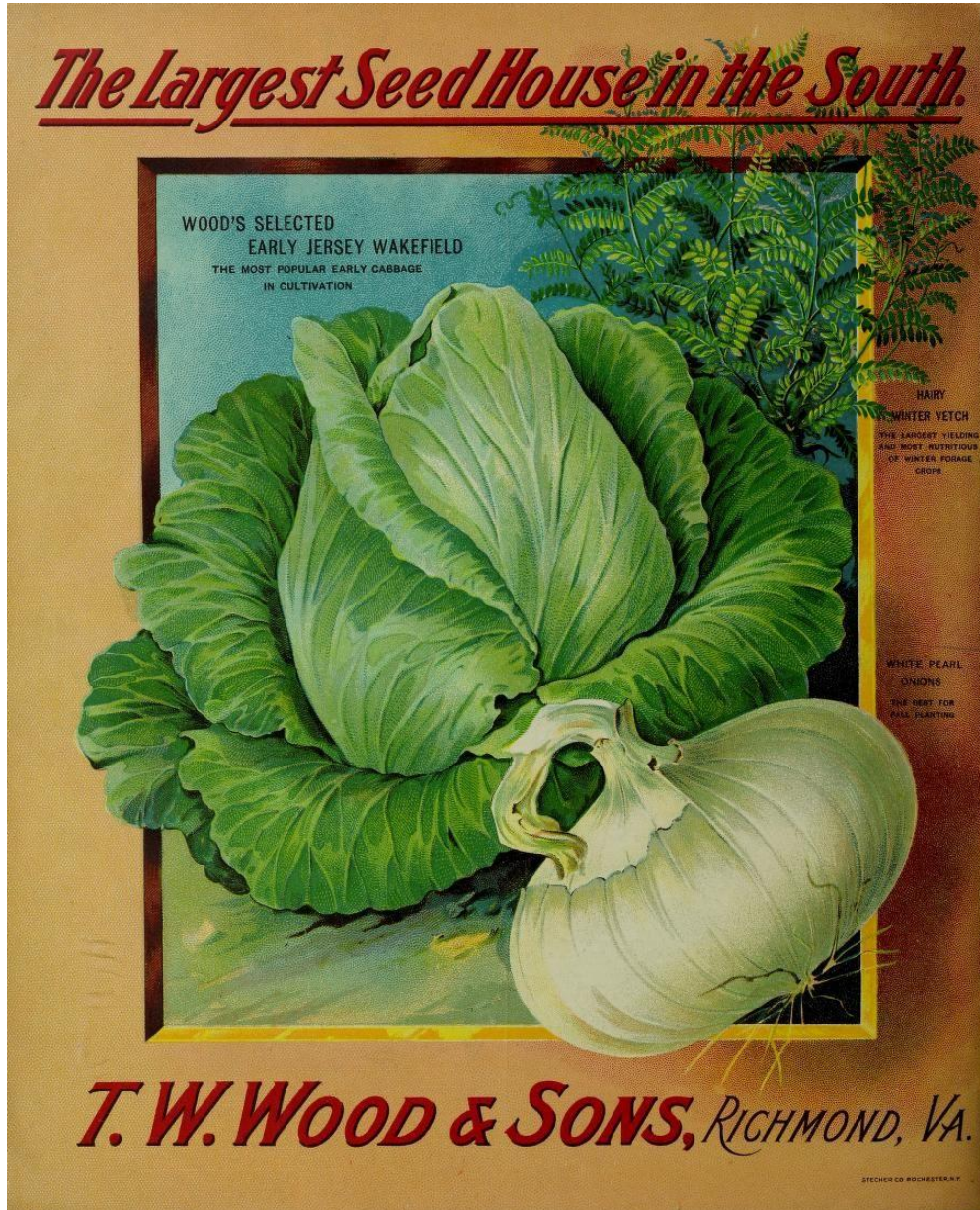
Basil – Genovese (Italian)

- Summer Annual Herb
- Originated in Africa and Domesticated in India
- Grown for good luck
- Traditionally grown near doorway for good energy





Cabbage – Charleston Wakefield



- Native to Mediterranean and Central Asia
- Fall planted
- Used by black cooks for generations as base for Low Country “vegetable bunch” soup
- Early Jersey Wakefield is good variety for Tucson

Cabbage – Late Flat Dutch

*“Bile them cabbage down, down
Bake that hoecake brown
The only song that I can sing is
Bile Them Cabbage Down...”*

- Traditional Virginia Folksong



Caribbean Red/Red Habanero

GIANT CRIMSON PEPPER

The earliest maturing and most productive⁷
very large sweet pepper.

(See opposite page)

- Summer annual, loves heat
- Native to South America
- May have been grown in South since 18th century
- Key ingredient in Jamaican “jerked” chicken
- Orange variety most common





Long Red Cayenne

“As had many a determined escapee before him, Watkins would not be daunted. He reached Pennsylvania on a second attempt in 1844, defeating the bloodhounds by lacing his tracks with snuff and cayenne pepper.”

*- Resistance to Slavery in Maryland:
Strategies for Freedom*



Fish Pepper



- African- American heirloom mutated from Serrano in 1870's
- Used exclusively in the Upper South as a seafood seasoning and as medicine.
- Sold at African-American run produce markets in Baltimore



Chichiquelite – Garden Huckleberry

- Common summer “weed”
- “African nightshades” are tropical natives to Western Africa and now naturalized in the US
- Arrived to North America in late 17th century through the slave trade
- Used primarily to make pies and preserves but also for cooked leaves





Collards – Georgia Southern

COLLARDS

GEORGIA OR SOUTHERN



Everitt's Seed Store

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

SCHMIDT LITHO. CO. S. F.
MADE IN U.S.A.

No. 79

www.thelabelman.com

“The negroes here raise great quantities of snaps and collards they have no cabbage here” – Capt. William Feltman, Virginia, 1781

World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Life of Slaves in the United States

Cowpea – California Black-Eye

- Heat loving summer legume
- Native of Africa, they have been cultivated in Egypt since 2500 BCE
- This prolific variety has assumed mythical properties – known for attracting money, giving fertility, and bringing good luck on New Year's Day



Cowpea – Brown Crowder

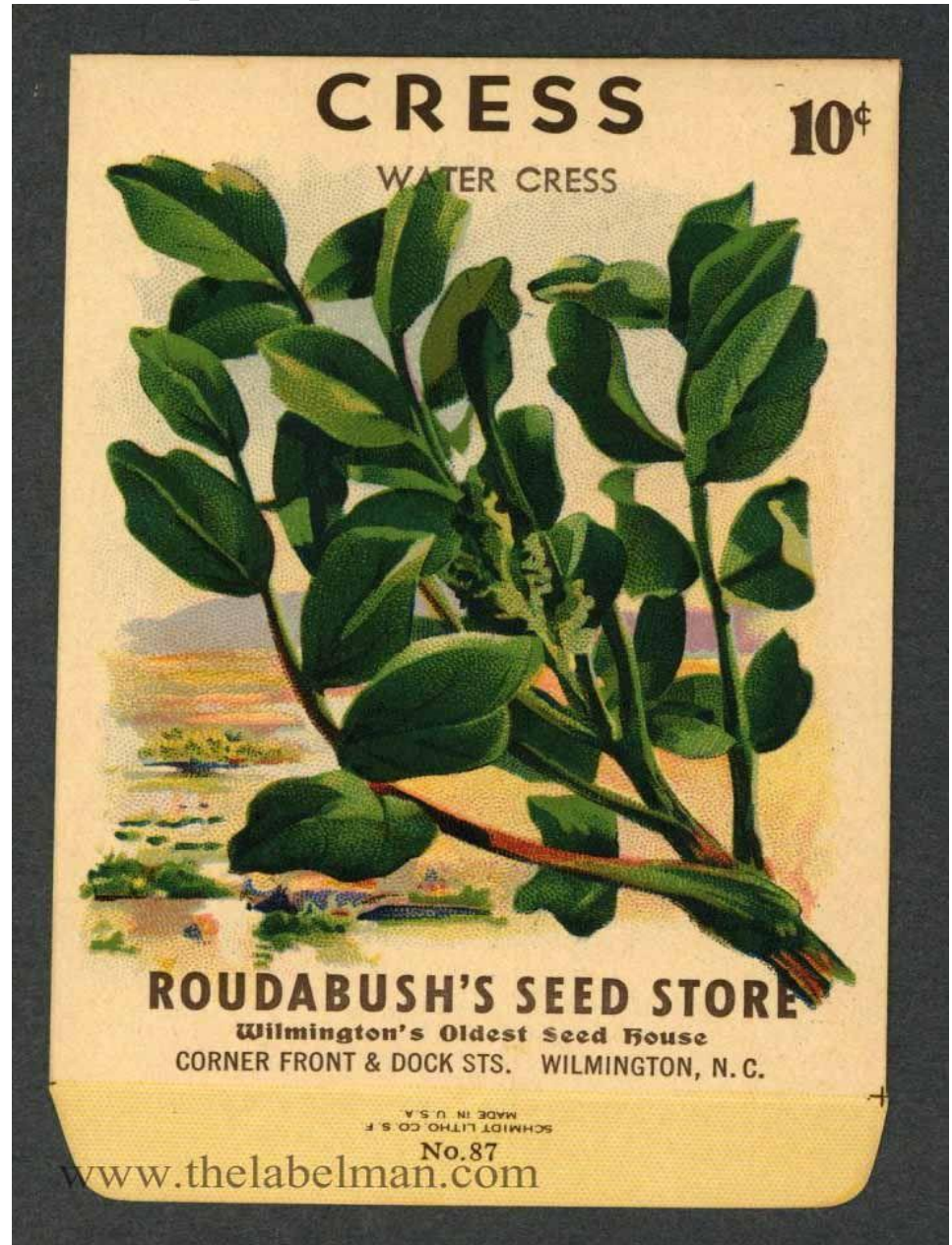


- Trellis for best harvest
- “Crowder” derived from Scotch-Irish word “crowdy”, a porridge.
- Popular variety in antebellum Mississippi



Cress – Upland

- Winter annual, used as an herb
- Mediterranean native, upland cress is a cousin of cabbage and other greens
- Known as “creasy greens”, they provided a spicy contrast to other leafy vegetables



Cucumber – West Indian Burr Gherkin



- Summer melon, will grow like a weed
- Originally thought to have come from Jamaica, Gherkins originated in Angola
- Introduced to America in 1793 from Caribbean seed
- Abundant and prickly, the fruits are best picked when small and pickled



Dandelion Greens

- Not common in SW gardens, but will grow in cool season
- Dandelion varieties found on all continents, but Eurasian varieties are the most cultivated
- Among the richest sources of vitamins and minerals of any the greens, an important medicinal plant
- Flowers used to make dandelion wine, which tastes similar to sherry.



Eggplant – Louisiana Long Green

Vilmorin
1743



VILMORIN - ANDRIEUX & C^{ie}
8^{me} Boulevard

Aubergine
Violette de Bardentane

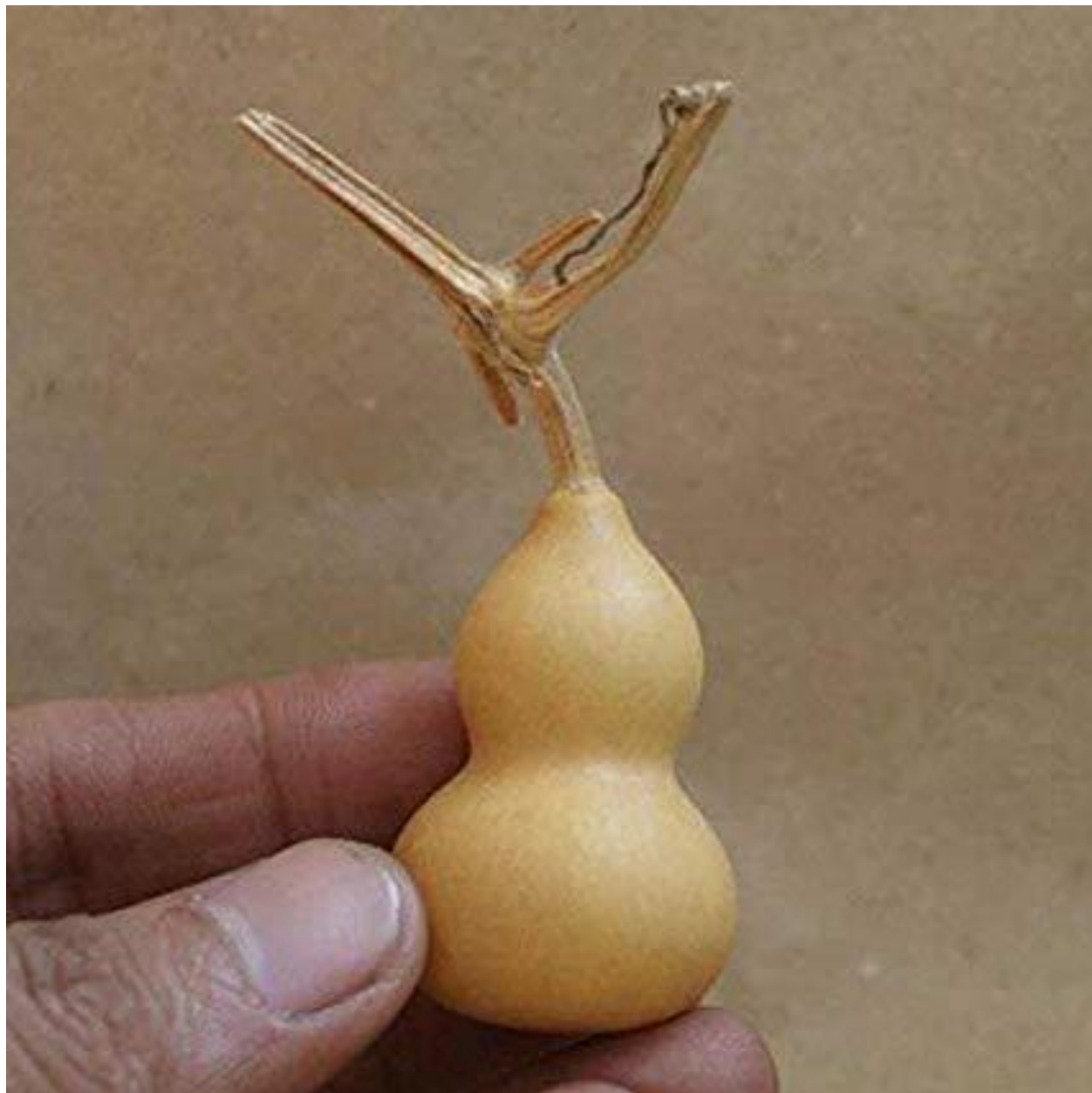
- Summer annual, will overwinter if protected
- The only major nightshade crop from the Old World
- Thought to have originated in Africa or India and domesticated in Southeast Asia; it was brought back to Africa by Spain
- Long Green variety known to grow in the gardens of enslaved Louisianans



Gourd – African Mini Bottle

- African member of the Squash Family, it quickly spread across continents
- Known throughout history in almost every culture the gourd is an important symbol and tool
- This ancient variety was probably used to carry medicinal herbs. Great choice for kids to make crafts





Gourd – Long Handled Dipper

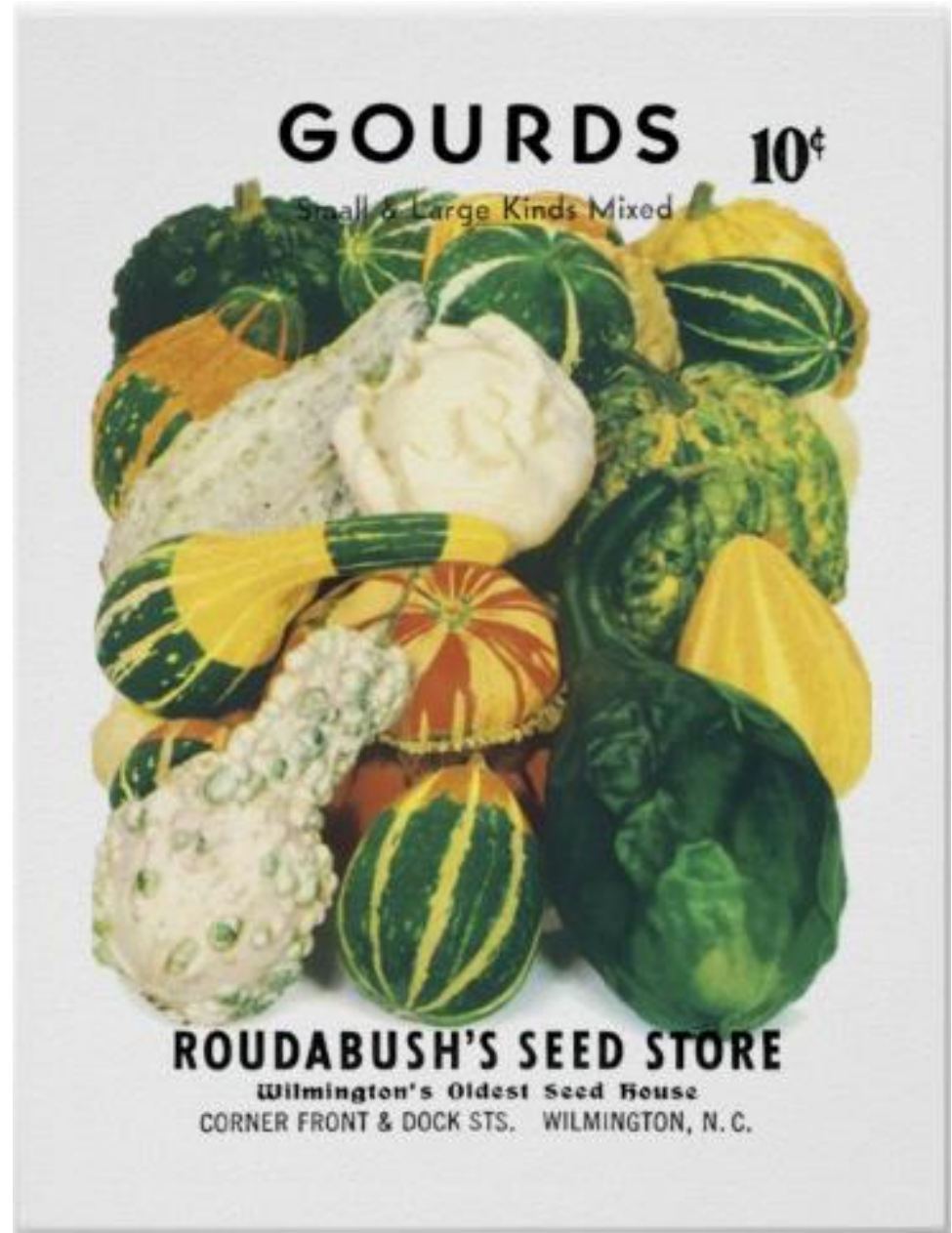


- Immortalized in “Follow the Drinking Gourd” this was the most common vessel used in the rural south, gracing most fences.

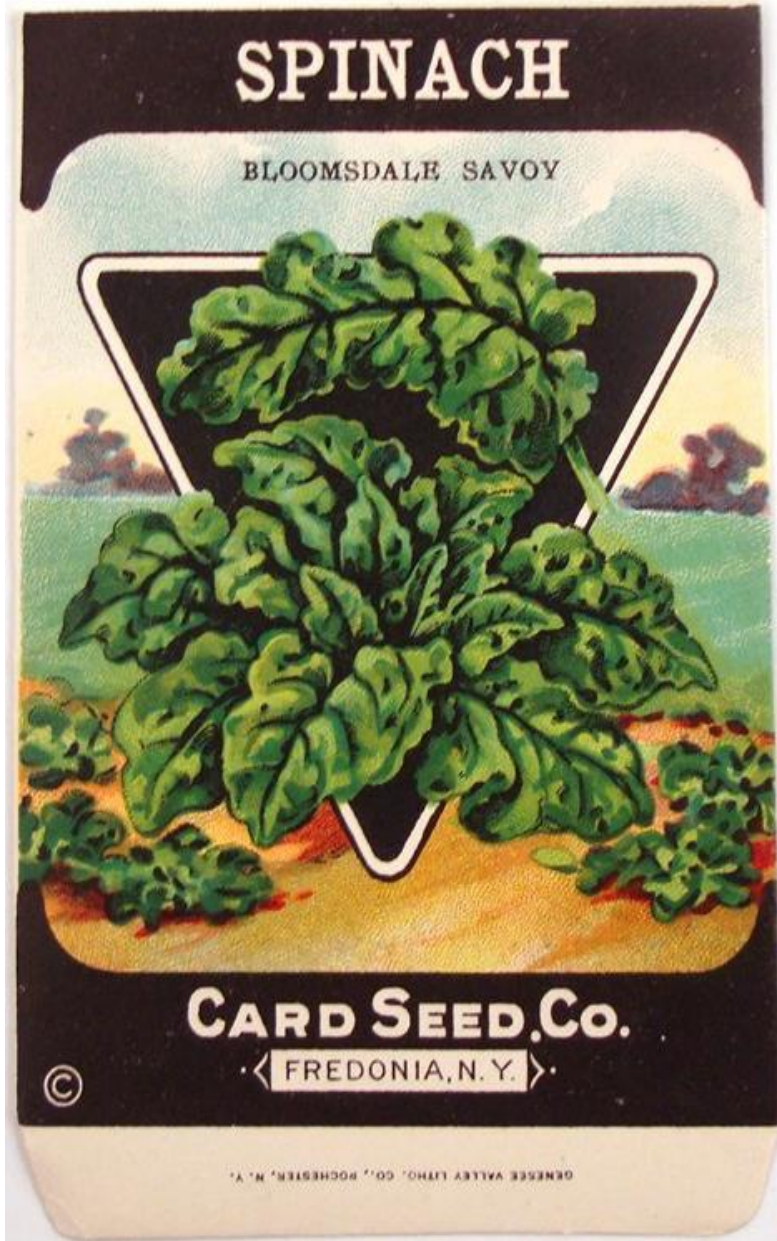


Gourd – Birdhouse/Bottle

- Grow squash during the warm season
- Use trellises to make “gourd tunnels”
- Used as a carrying vessels or to attract Purple Martins used to consume insects and deter other birds from crops



Malabar Spinach



- Heat loving summer green that needs to climb
- Native of South Asia, it has naturalized throughout the world
- In West Indies this green is known as callaloo



Amaranth – Green Callaloo

- Tough summer “weed” will grow almost anywhere
- New World amaranth used mostly for seed while old world varieties used mostly as a leafy green
- Green leaves used to make Callaloo, a popular Caribbean soup that originated in West Africa
- Used primarily in Jamaica, Guyana, and Belize



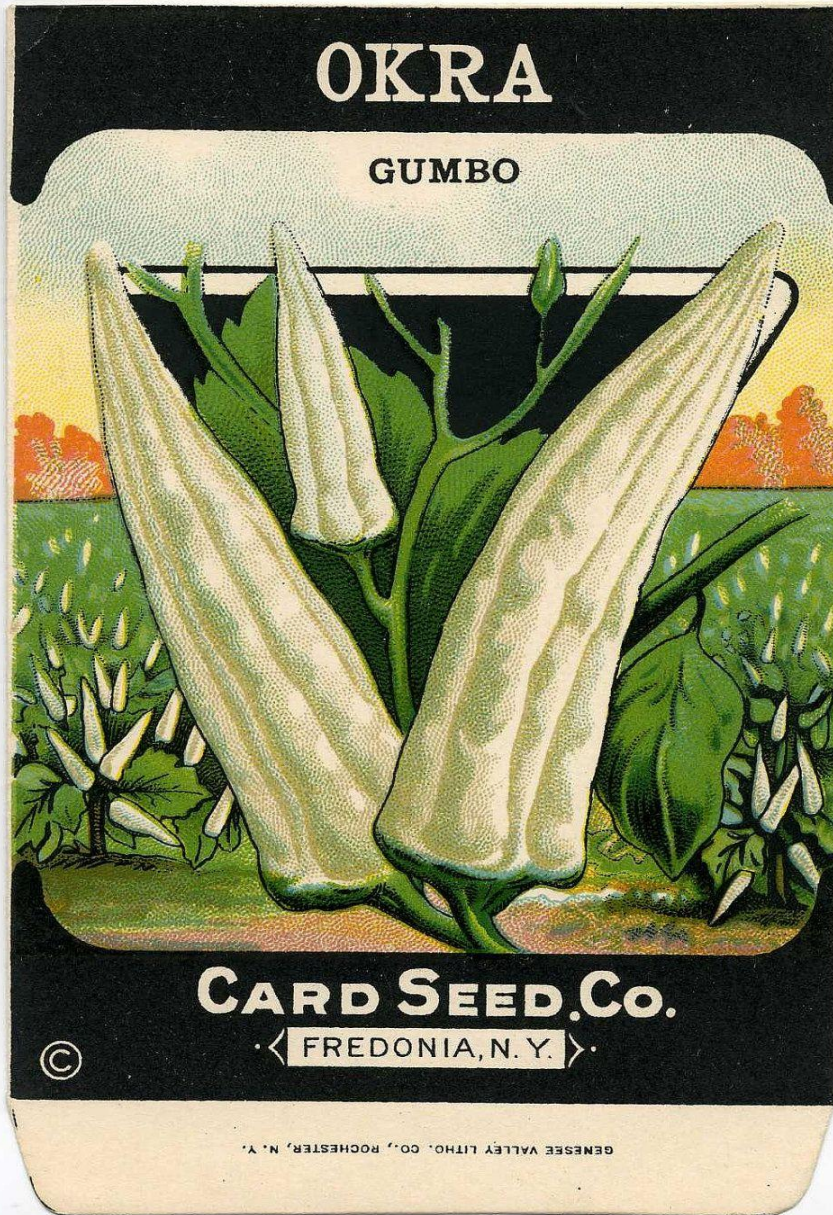


Mustard – Southern Giant Curled

- This tough winter green does well grown in the fall
- Sturdy foliage stands up better to frost
- Grown in Upland South since 1740's
- Sown with tobacco to deter pests



Okra - Burgundy



- Tall growing summer annual, loves heat
- Young fruits taste best, harvest when young and tender
- Native of South Asia or East Africa, it's a cousin of cotton and hibiscus
- Beautiful red okra that turns green after cooking



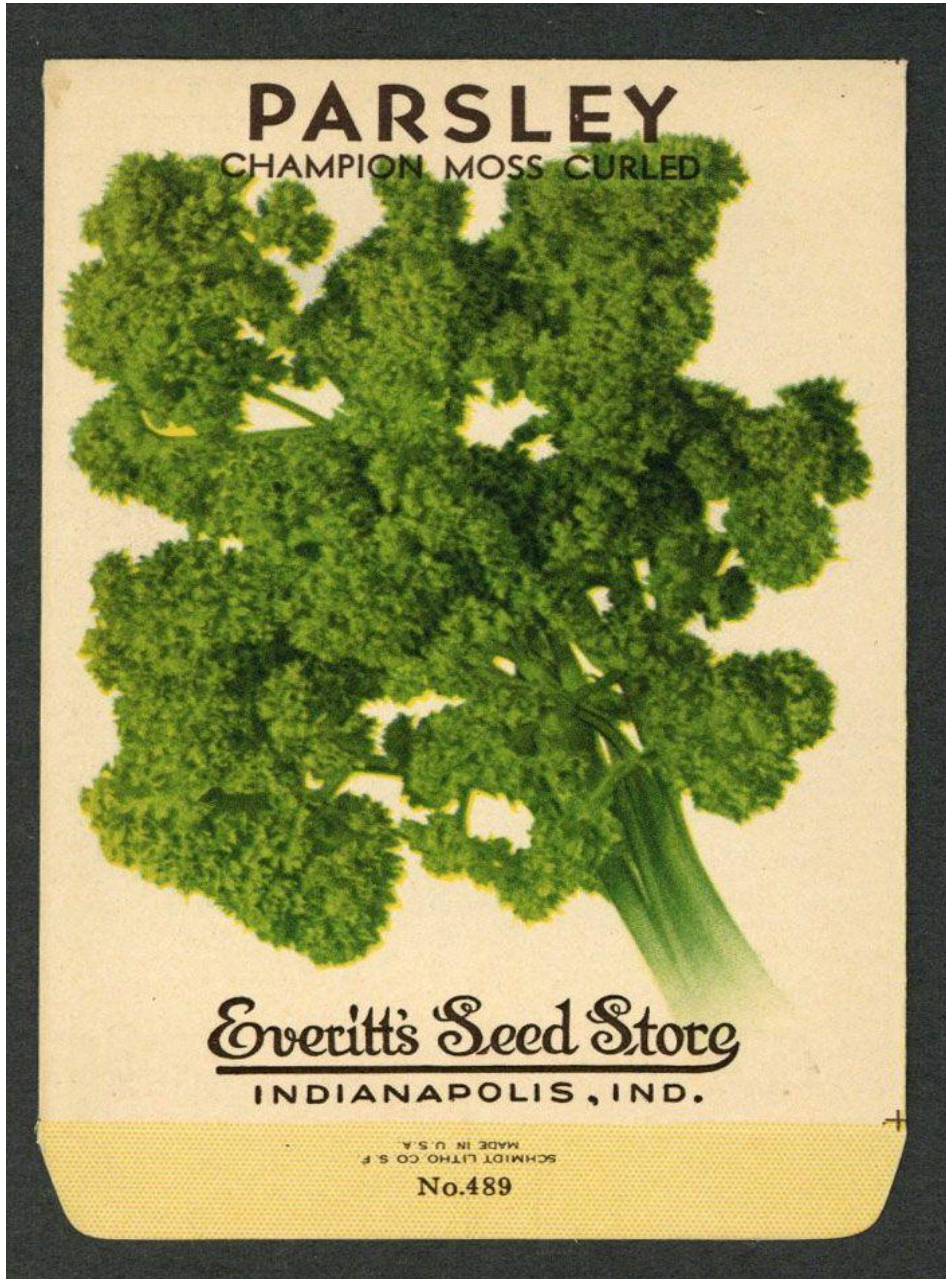
Okra - Cowhorn

- Oldest variety of okra, it is less slimy. Great for soups and gumbos
- Arrived in America from West Indies in the early 18th century
- Stubby or Dwarf Green Okra are more typical of Heirlooms





Parsley – Plain or Common



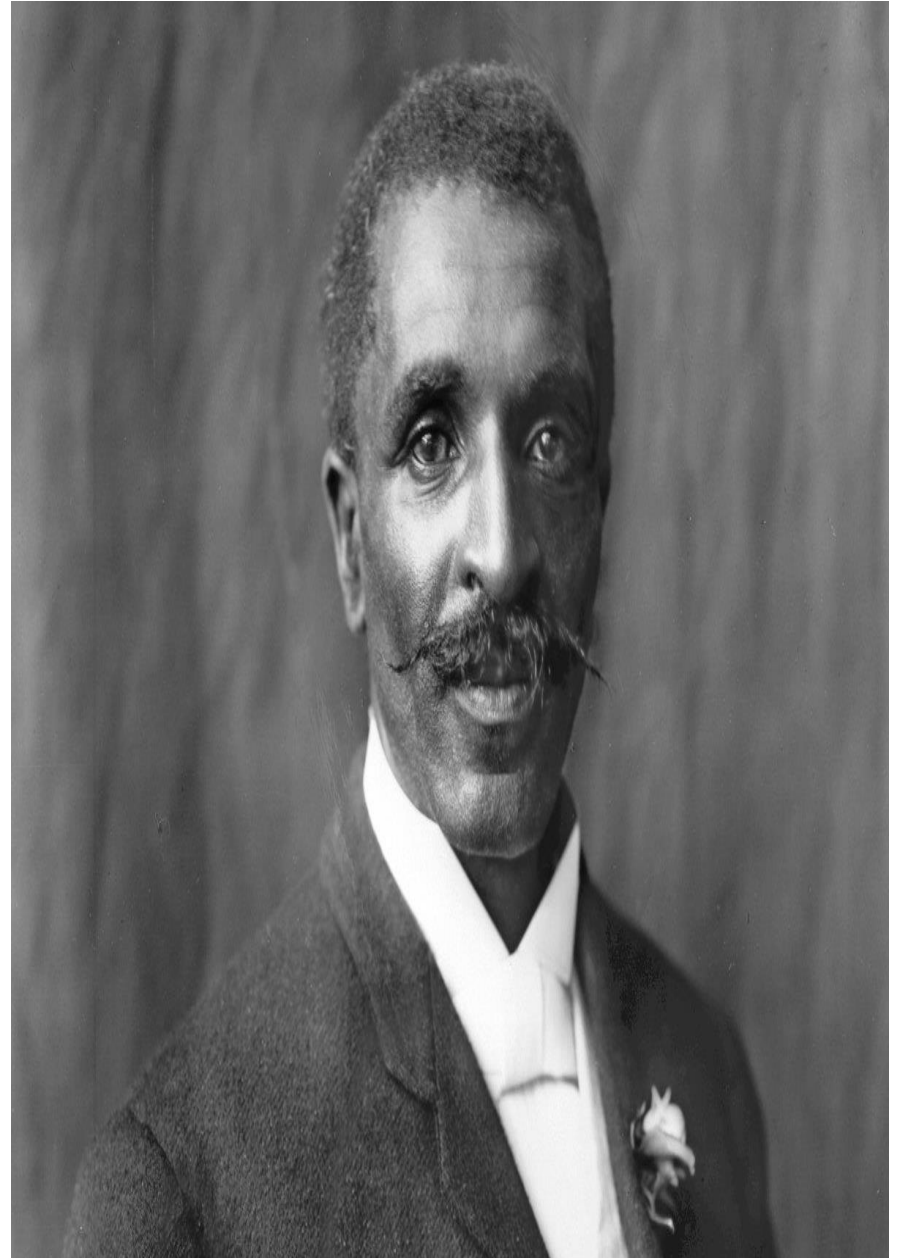
“Cut them up as for the fricassee, dredge them well with flour, sprinkle them with salt, put them into a good quantity of boiling lard and fry them a light brown; fry small pieces of mush and a quantity of parsley, nicely picked, to be served in the dish with the chickens...”

Fried Chickens

Mary Randolph, The Virginia Housewife, 1824

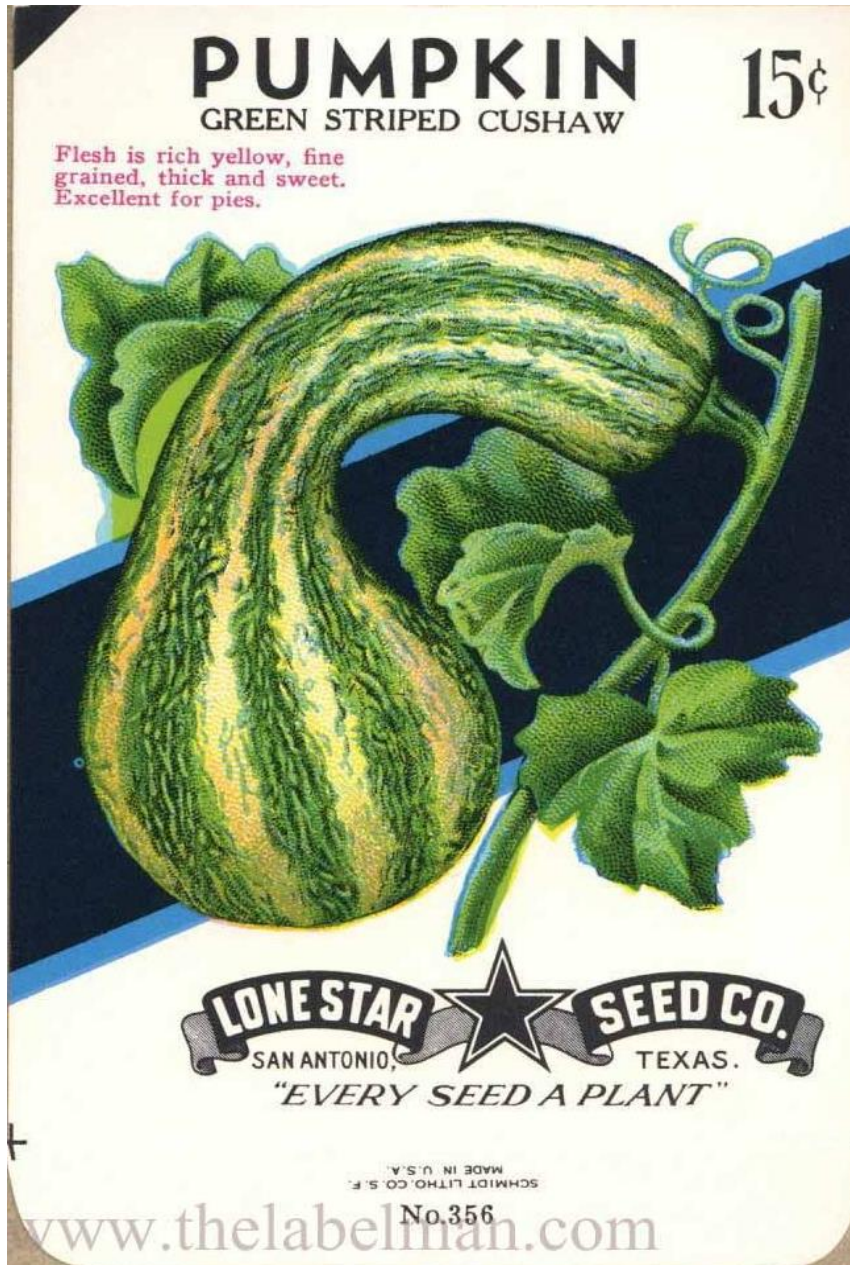
Peanut - Jumbo

- Peanuts are the seed of a small leguminous bush. They grow underground in summer
- Peanuts were domesticated in South America and brought to Africa by the Spanish. They were called “goober” by the Kimbundu people of Angola
- Peanuts were brought to Virginia during the Slave trade
- George Washington Carver was instrumental in promoting the peanut as replacement for soil depleting cotton





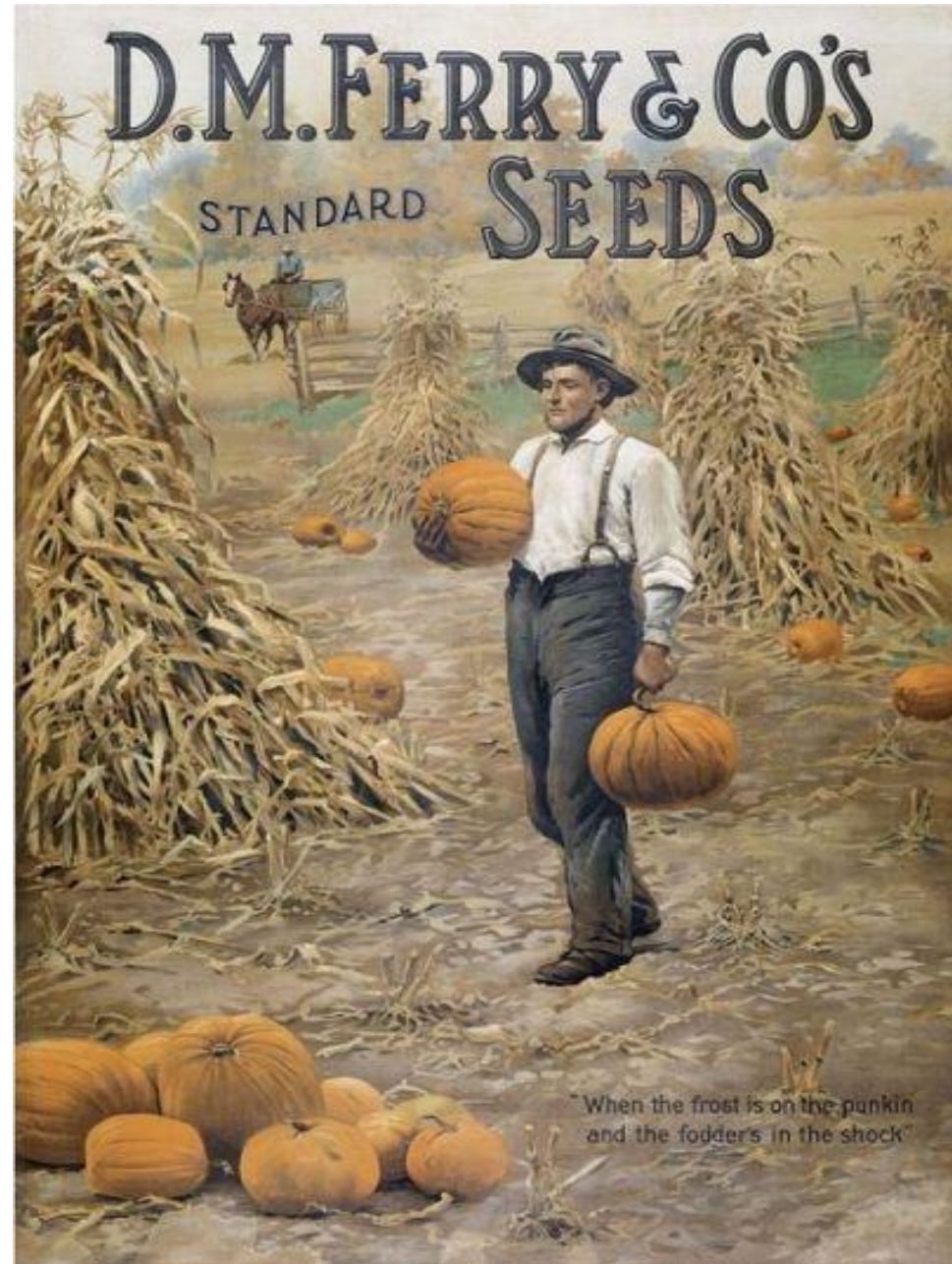
Pumpkin – Stripped Green Cushaw



- Pumpkins are a type of “winter squash” but they grow over the hot summer months
- Winter squashes domesticated in the Americas around 5000 BCE
- Known as the “Sweet Potato Pumpkin” it was brought from Jamaica to the Chesapeake in the late 1700’s

Pumpkin – White Cushaw

- Plant pumpkins in March for a June harvest. Store in cool dry place until Halloween
- Another “potato” type pumpkin, this variety is more common in the lower south





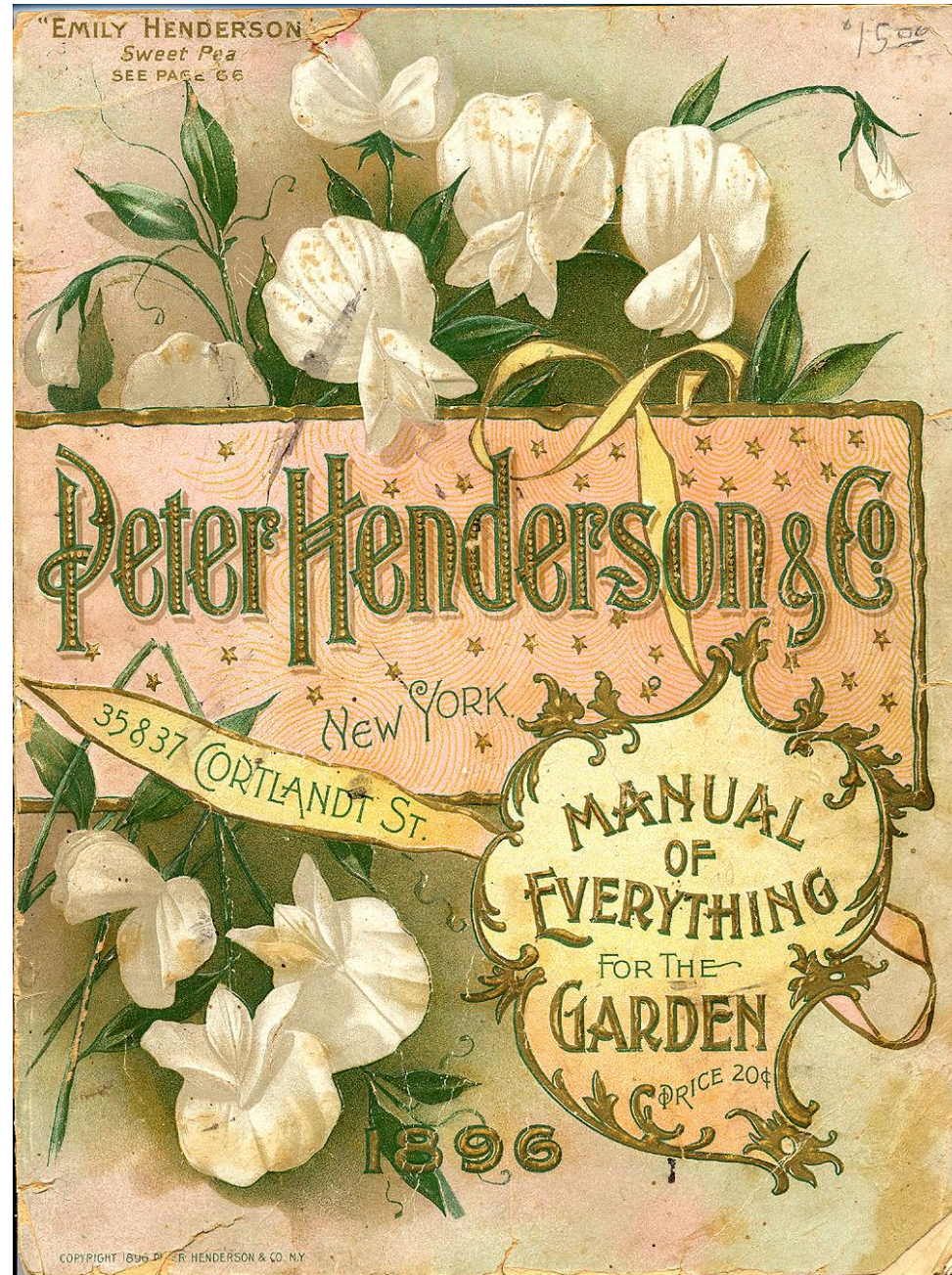
Sage



- Mediterranean native, grows perennially in Southern Arizona
- Traditionally associated with longevity, sage has a reputation for restoring memory.
- Used to season “kush” an enslaved precursor to southern cornbread stuffing
- Also made into a medicinal tea

Sesame - Benne

- Summer annual, well adapted to arid climates around the world
- Native to the African Savana. “Benne”, the African word for sesame, is also the name of the best variety to grow
- The term “sesame” comes from two words in the ancient Middle Eastern Akkadian language that meant “oil” and “plant”





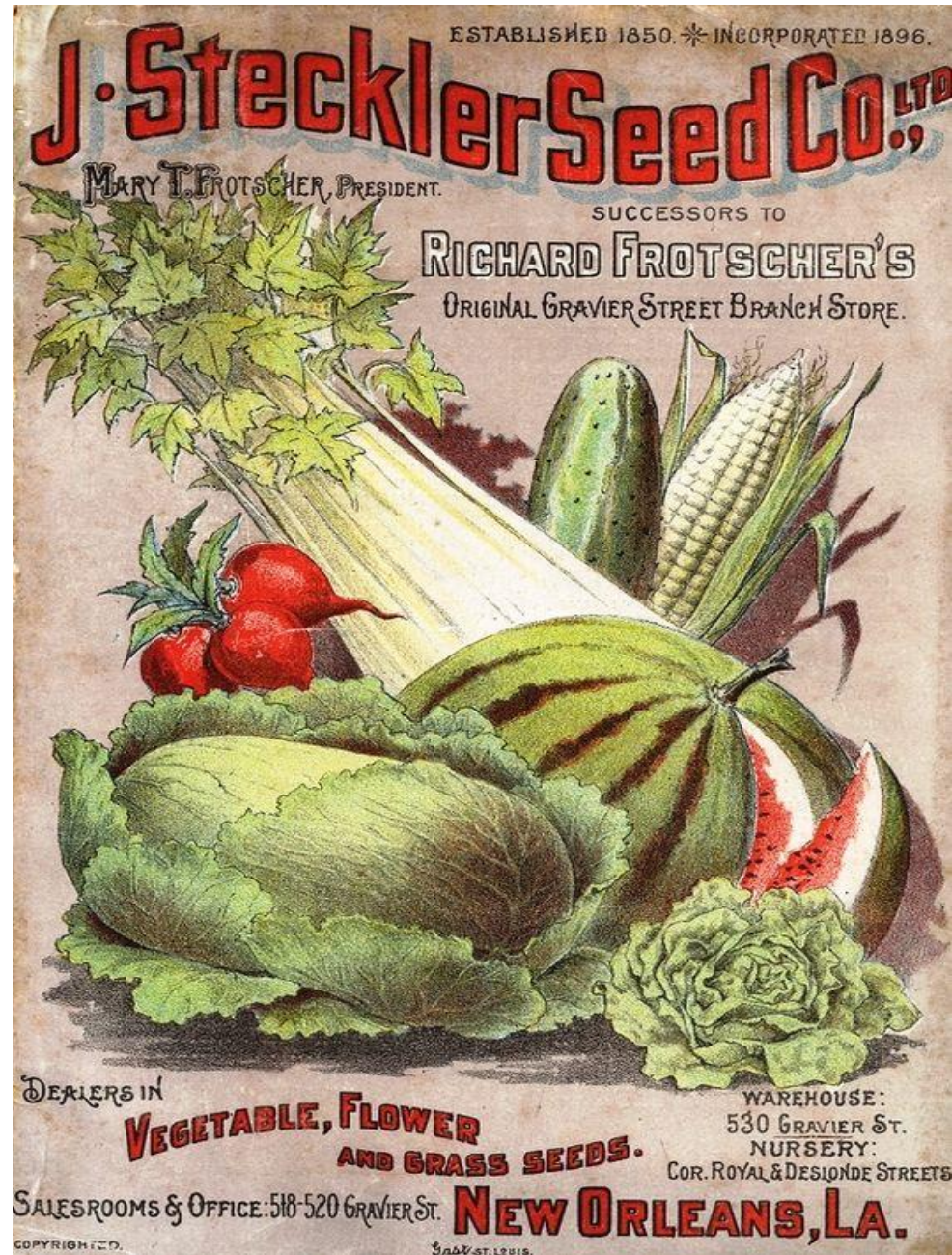
Sorghum



- Evolved in the steppes and savannas of South and Central Africa and domesticated in 2000 BCE
- Highly Tolerant of drought, heat, and poor soil conditions
- Fruit can be boiled like rice, popped, and used in porridges flatbreads, couscous, and beer

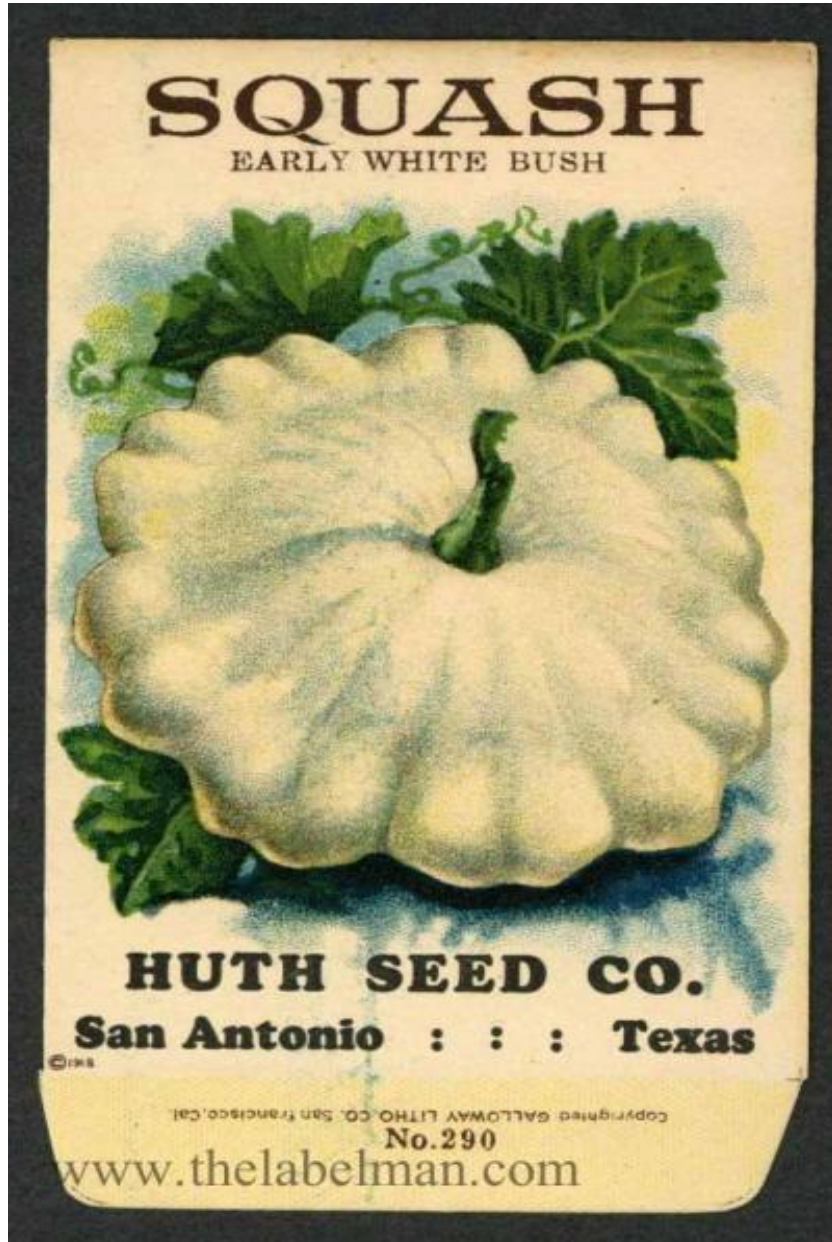
Spearmint

- Perennial Herb, grows best in containers
- True mints are native to damp areas of Europe and Asia
- Widely used throughout Eastern Mediterranean as well as India and SE Asia
- Used for centuries in West Africa to make mint tea and in the South to make mint juleps





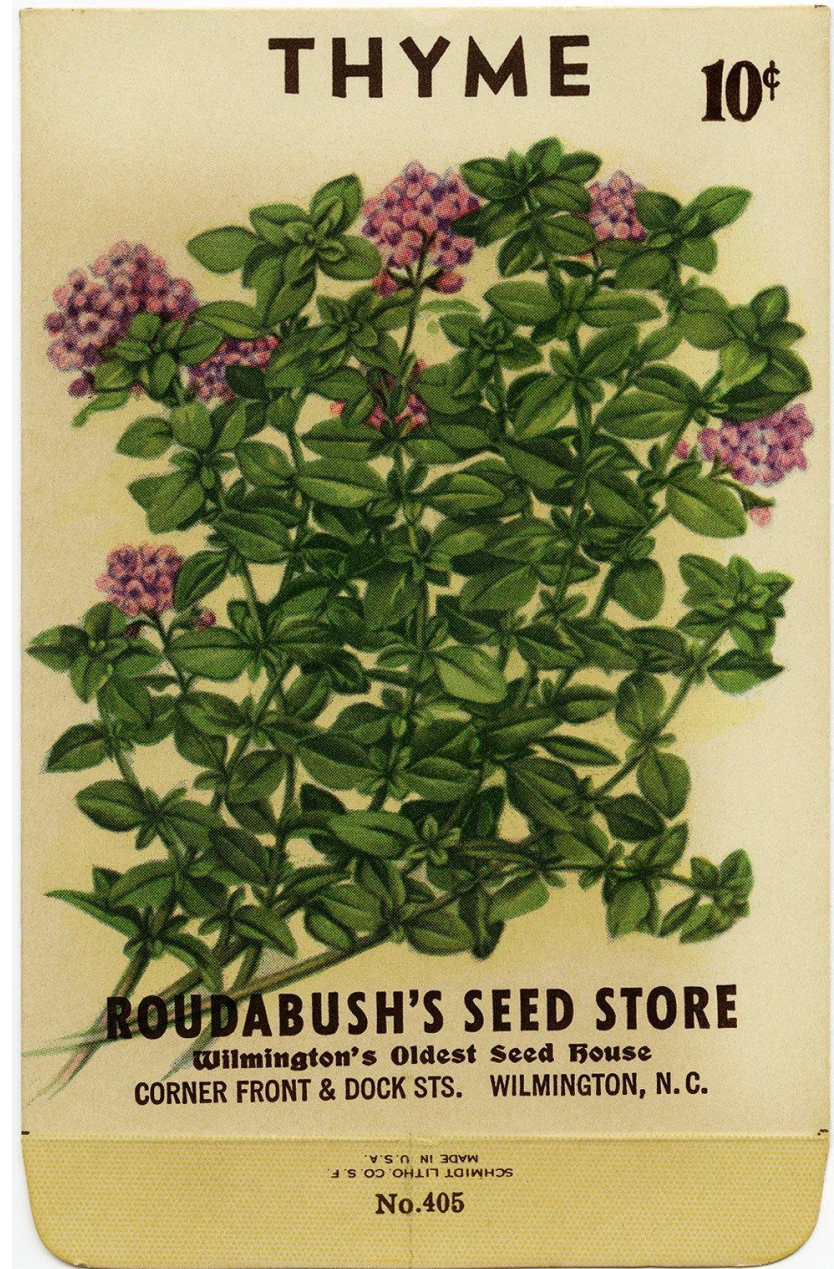
Summer Squash – White Bush Scallop



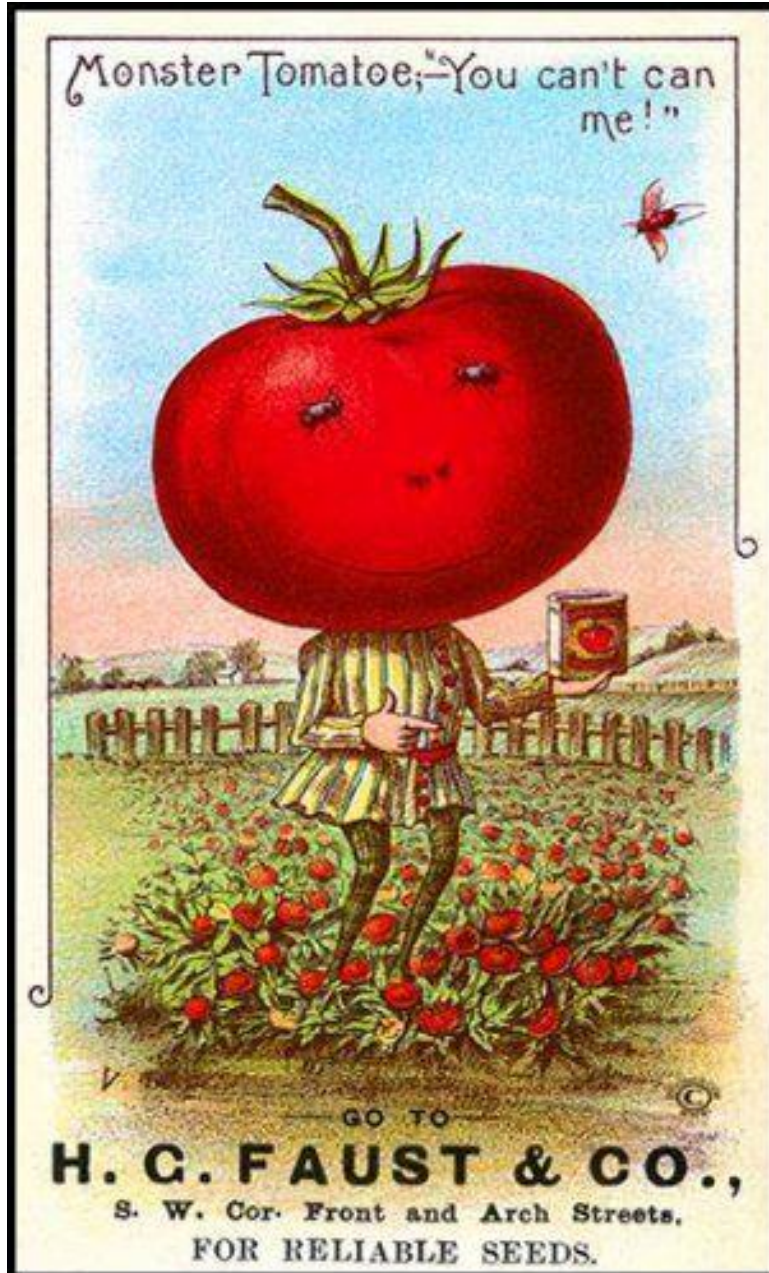
- Called “summer squash” because they are eaten when young and tender
- New World crop, domesticated over 10,00 yrs. ago
- Know as “cymling squash” this was one of the most common vegetables purchased by the Jefferson family from their enslaved workforce
- The term “Squash” comes from a Narragansett word meaning “a green thing eaten raw”

Thyme

- Perennial herb, another member of the mint family
- Named by the Greeks, it was used as an aromatic in sacrifices
- Used primarily as an antimicrobial agent in mouthwash and skin cream



Tomato – Cherokee Purple

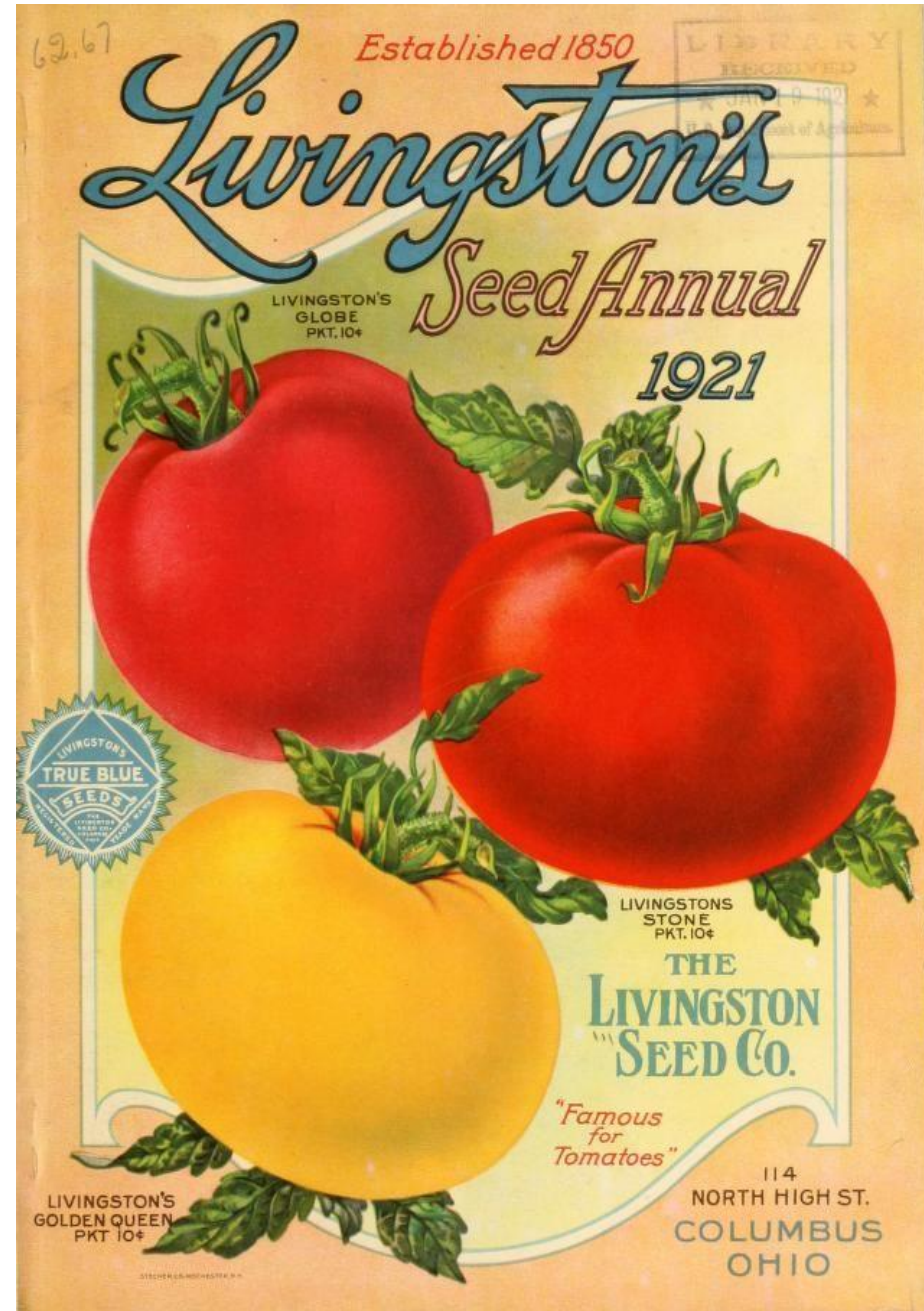


- Tomatoes are summer annuals, best planted around Valentine's Day
- Small "cherry types do best", look for varieties that are early to mature
- Native to South America, they arrived in Europe in the 17th century



Tomato – Purple Calabash

- Enslaved Africans were a month the first to popularize the tomato in the American South
- Representative of the great southern folk tomatoes grown on family homesteads
- Flavorful and cold tolerant





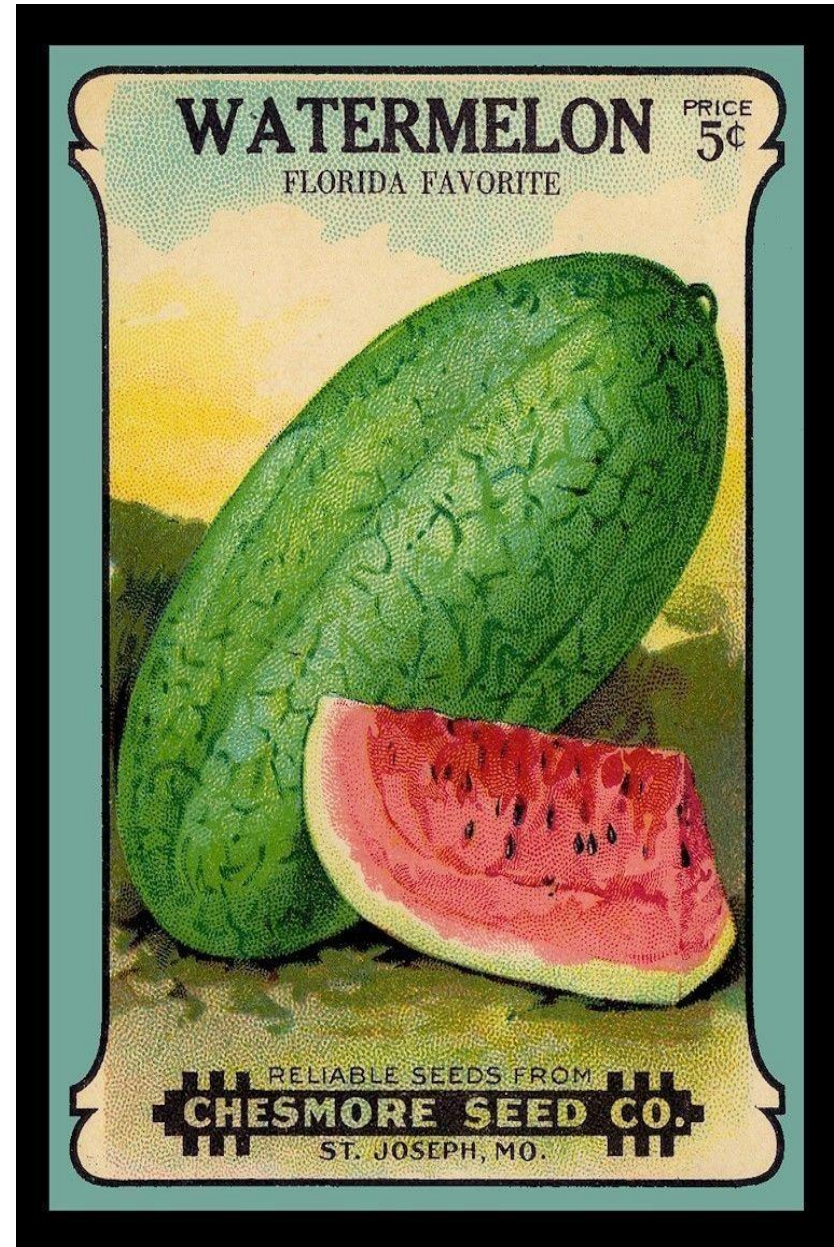
Turnip – Seven Top

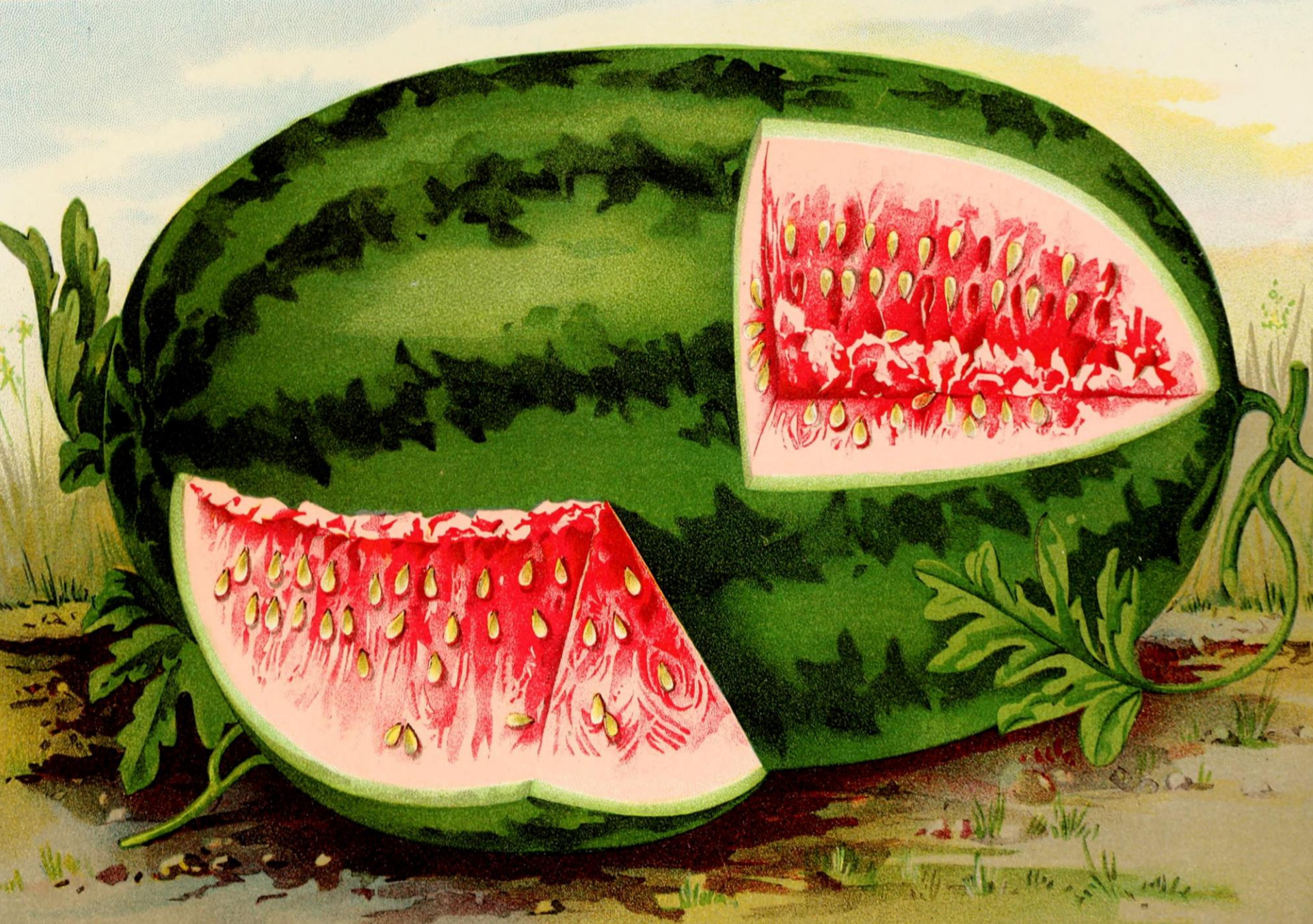


- Winter annual that grows well in our desert soil
- Native to Central Asia, turnip have been cultivated for over 4,000 years
- The classic southern “turnip green”, this variety produces a woody, inedible root, but delicious cut and come again greens

Watermelon – Georgia Rattlesnake

- A summer annual, watermelons are a vining plant that loves our summer heat
- Watermelon is native to arid parts Southwest Africa. It's been domesticated over 5,000 years
- Introduced to the Americas during colonization, this variety reflects heirloom varieties that were grown from 1830's onward





RATTLESNAKE WATERMELON

RESOURCES

- Pima County Seed Library
- Community Food Bank
- Southern Exposure
- Seed Savers Exchange
- Kitazawa Seed Co.
- Local Business
- Friends and Family





Thank you!

www.southwestvictorygardens.com/Documents

(520) 576-7085