



Online Certificate in Organic Vegetable Seed Production

April 10th to November 3rd, 2017

***Summer break, no lessons scheduled, July 10th to September 3rd ***

Instructors:

Mary Brittain of The Cottage Gardener & Patrick Steiner of Stellar Seeds

E-learning Course Host:

Canadian Organic Growers <http://www.cog.ca>

Course login: www.moodle.cog.ca

Introduction to the course of study:

This 5-course, 22 week COG certificate offers a comprehensive intermediate curriculum in **Organic Vegetable Seed Production**. The certificate is delivered in an online, blended-learning format that includes live, online instruction with teachers and guest experts. The bulk of this course will focus on intermediate topics, however introductory and advanced lessons will bookend the intermediate curriculum on Organic Seed Production and Harvesting; Organic Seed Quality Assurance; and the Business of Organic Seed Production.

Estimated Weekly Time Commitment: 3 to 6 hours but will vary by student

Students are required to purchase textbook on their own. After registering, wait till course is confirmed on March 31st to order.

Required Textbooks:

- The Organic Seed Grower: A Farmer's Guide to Vegetable Seed Production, John Navazio (\$50)
- Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties: The Gardener's and Farmer's Guide to Plant Breeding and Seed Saving, 2nd Edition, Carol Deppe (\$28)

The course of study includes:

<p>1.0 Organic Farming Practices <i>Introductory Lesson and Review</i></p> <p>April 10th to April 23rd, 2017</p>	<p>1.1 Define organic farming practices</p> <p>1.2 Transitioning land</p> <p>1.3 Agronomic performance of seed crops</p> <p>1.4 Available seed types</p> <p>1.5 Seed saving in organic farming</p>
<p>2.0 Organic Seed Production and Harvesting</p> <p>April 24th to July 2nd, 2017</p>	<p>2.1 Botany and plant reproduction</p> <p>2.2 Basic genetics and seed saving</p> <p>2.3 Producing seed for biennials</p> <p>2.4 Isolation through crop choice and variety selection</p> <p>2.5 Planning for seed crop isolation</p> <p>2.6 Common disease risks</p> <p>2.7 Factors that affect selection choices</p> <p>2.8 How and when to harvest</p> <p>2.9 Cleaning techniques</p> <p>2.10 Equipment options</p>
<p>3.0 Organic Seed Quality Assurance <i>Part 1</i></p> <p>July 3rd to July 9th, 2017</p>	<p>3.1. Define varietal purity characteristics</p> <p>3.2. Define seed lot characteristic</p> <p>3.3 Isolation distances for maintaining purity of genetics</p> <p>3.4 Specify healthy population sizes to ensure seed vigor</p>

<p>SUMMER BREAK – July 10th to September 3rd, 2017</p> <p>No lessons or webinars</p>	
<p>3.0 Organic Seed Quality Assurance <i>Part 2</i></p> <p>September 4th to September 10th, 2017</p>	<p>3.5 Evaluate conditions that negatively affect seed storage</p> <p>3.6 Assessment factors that demonstrate early seedling/plant vigor</p> <p>3.7 Identify ways to disclose seed quality information</p>
<p>4.0 Business of Organic Seed Production</p> <p>September 11th to October 8th, 2017</p>	<p>4.1 Bringing seed to market</p> <p>4.2 Different seed business models</p> <p>4.3 Trends in the marketplace</p> <p>4.4 Budgets for various crops and scales of production</p> <p>4.5 Seed sales as a secondary income</p> <p>4.6 Integrating seed production into an existing operation</p>
<p>5.0 On-Farm Organic Plant Breeding <i>Advanced Lesson, Concluding Webinar</i></p> <p>October 9th to 15th, 2017</p>	<p>5.1 Advanced Topics on Organic Plant Breeding</p>
<p>Final Assignment & Presentation</p> <p>October 16th to November 3rd, 2017</p>	<p>Finalize Organic Farm Seed Crop Plan and Present to Students and Instructors (remotely)</p>

In addition, learners will develop a seed growing plan over the duration of the certificate, based on the needs and attributes of their particular growing region.

An optional 40-hour in-field practicum placement is also offered to support learning with a mentor on a farm. The certificate's subject experts have contributed to a practicum guidebook to steer the learning and reporting of this practicum. This practicum exercise is an important and distinctive offering which brings practice-based learning to the online learning format.

Online resources and interactive media elements of COG's certificate include:

- A knowledge repository built for and by learners
- A video repository of instructional materials and learner contributions from their farms and growing regions
- Online polls and quizzes
- Written submissions (250-500 words/1-2 pages)
- A variety of self-directed learning activities
- 10 Webinars
- Downloadable reading materials rich in graphics and images
- Social media channels by which a virtual community of learners is built
- Synchronous instructional chat sessions with teachers and mentors
- Text books and other print resources

Technical requirements:

All courses require Internet service of sufficient quality to view online videos and interactive media. The digital media used in COG's courses have been selected considering low data requirements. Learners can also acquire lessons in a self-organized group setting by regional meet-ups in local libraries or schools.

Courses require the use of COG's GoToMeeting conferencing service. GoToMeeting is an easy-to-use conferencing system that can connect up to 50 participants in an online group meeting. Users can share screens, chat together, and speak to the group by either a computer microphone (VoIP) or by a telephone toll-free number. Your instructor will issue a log-in link for each session. Students may wish to gather in-person with other learners in their region for these online meetings.

Technical support: Contact COG at 1-888-375-7383 or email education@cog.ca