



40 Years of Conservation of Crop Diversity: the work of the UK Vegetable Genebank 1980-2020

The UK Vegetable Genebank was officially opened on the 8th October 1980, paving the way for a collection of ~14,000 seed samples to be amassed. The UKVGB is a living repository of samples of crop genetic diversity, conserving the key raw material of genetic diversity needed by plant breeders in their continual task of producing better crops. Changes in the environment, and increase in the number of people on the planet and a need to reduce irrigation, pesticide and fertilizer inputs in farming mean that plant breeders and researchers need to constantly innovate so that vegetables can continue to provide vital nutrition in our diets.

To mark the 40th Anniversary of the UK Vegetable Genebank, we are holding an online event at www.warwick.ac.uk/gru/genebank/40th to celebrate our collections, the work we do and show some of the ways in which our seed is used. We will highlight different themes on each day from the 5th to the 9th October.

Event Programme

Monday 5 th October	<p>Conserving crop diversity matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about the UKVGB and take a virtual tour • Read about the samples we send to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault earlier in the year
Tuesday 6 th October	<p>Innovation and technology – accessing diversity using new approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how projects such as the Vegetable Genetic Improvement Network are developing research and breeding tools from our material • See how newer technologies such as gene editing can aid in developing better crops for the future
Wednesday 7 th October	<p>Seeds – by No Stone Theatre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UKVGB is delighted to support the launch of this podcast. Seeds is a bold new dramatic narrative podcast that tells the incredible story of the world's first seed bank and explores the current climate and biodiversity crisis.
Thursday 8 th October	<p>Public Webinar: Forty Years of Seeds for the Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an online event highlighting the importance of collections like the UKVGB and considering how their use and development will change over the next forty years. Speakers include Sujit Tha (Head of Plant Breeding at CN Seeds), Hannes Dempewolf (Senior Scientist at The Crop Trust) and Luke Bell (Lecturer in Temperate Horticulture, University of Reading). More information is on the registration page
Friday 9 th October	<p>How can we use Genebank resources to create better crops?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers share how they are using UKVGB and other genetic resources to support crop production – how can farmers control pests and diseases without increasing pesticide applications?