



Ed Hume, Ed Hume Seeds Puyallup, Washington

A personality-driven, family-run business, Ed Hume Seeds has a character unique among seed companies. If you visit the company's Puyallup headquarters and take a stroll through the Puzzle Garden you'll get a sense of what that means. Over the years, staff members, visitors, and even Ed's eight-year-old grandson have contributed visual garden jokes to the space. (What is a 36" square piece of turf with 3 shoes sitting on it? Answer: 3 feet in a yard!) And then there's Ed's television persona. He began in TV in 1965, and his show, *Gardening in America*, continues to reach millions of households. Puyallup, named after the local Indian tribe, means "home of friendly people," and the staff at Ed Hume Seeds takes this to heart as they welcome people of all ages to their 14 educational display gardens. "Gardening should be fun," says Ed, "because fun builds interest, particularly with kids." Garden themes include carnivorous plants, plants for the blind, annuals, perennials, and more, but the most popular of the 14 gardens is, without a doubt, the Puzzle Garden.



What flower might this be? A Buttercup, of course!

Ed Hume Seeds is a full-service rack company, primarily serving the northwest region. This means that a representative will deliver, assemble, and fill retail seed racks with seeds, and, at the end of the growing season, come back and take it all away. For twenty straight years, Ed Hume Seeds has been judged on the quality of its service, personnel, and product line, and has been rated as "Superior" by the Northwest Nursery Buyers Association. "We have fun, but we take our business seriously," says Ed.

Since 1976, the company has offered varieties well suited for the cool, maritime climate of the Pacific Northwest. In fact, it all started when Ed was having trouble locating certain short-season varieties of plants, particularly 'Early Girl' and 'Imur Prior Beta' tomatoes. From there, he began seeking out all sorts of plant varieties known to perform particularly well in cooler climates and high altitudes. Gardeners in warm climates that have both an early and a late growing season can and do check out the short-season selections as well. Online sales to more distant regions are a secondary part of the company's business.



Ed loves to give tours of his display garden in Puyallup, Washington

Ed Hume's Tips for Seed Growing

- Do not cover seeds too deeply. Some, such as impatiens and coleus, don't need to be covered at all!
- Avoid tamping down soil on top of planted seeds. This will press the oxygen (needed for germination) out of the soil.
- Intensify your vegetable garden space. You can grow a lot of crops in a small space!

A thorough seed-testing routine helps to ensure that the plants sold by Ed Hume Seeds will indeed grow in tough conditions. Ed's two sons, who now own the business, test their products in the company's own Puyallup test garden, in home gardens, at local colleges, and in Elfin Cove, Alaska where temps rarely reach 60°F, even in July.