



Seeds by Design, based in Maxwell, California, produces much of its own seed in the Northern California Sacramento Valley. This wholesale seed company has a reputation of creating market trends in a relatively traditional industry

Patty Buskirk, owner and chief breeder for Seeds by Design and its organic sister company Terra Organics, founded the business in 1994 to fill a niche—making quality seeds available to the home garden market. All breeding and selection is done using conventional breeding methods.

Seeds by Design and Terra Organics offer a unique blend of custom designed niche market items, and seeds for the professional trade.

True to Patty's mission, Seeds by Design breeds predominantly for the home garden trade. However, the company does not sell any of its products directly to the individual consumer. Rather, seeds are produced in large quantities and then packaged and sold nationally and internationally by seed retailers and mail order providers. The company's websites (Seeds by Design and Terra Organics) display details and photos of varieties that are produced at the farm in Maxwell and in other locations.

Terra Organics, created four years after Seeds by Design, was a pioneer in the Certified Organic Seed Market. It is the only U.S.-based Certified Organic vegetable seed wholesaler that offers a full product line to both domestic and international clients.

A smaller portion of Seed by Design's business is devoted to breeding and producing seed varieties destined for commercial growers' markets, such as pumpkins and triploid (i.e. seedless) watermelons.

The Making of a Seed Breeder

Patty Buskirk's breeding career began with a summer job that involved hand pollinating squash blossoms. She went on to study crop science and breeding, earning her Agronomy degree from CSU, Chico. Following a stint as Assistant Broccoli Breeder at Northrup-King Seed Company, she ventured out on her own. "At the time, the home gardening seed trade was not offering a good enough quality product," said Patty. With most seed breeders catering to commercial growers, she founded Seeds by Design, referred to as a "boutique breeding and production" company, to serve the diverse needs of the home gardener.

In recent years, Seeds by Design has been racking up national and regional awards for breeding well-adapted vegetable and ornamental varieties for the home gardener.

AAS 2014 Vegetable Award Winners:

Cucumber 'Pick a Bushel' F1
Pumpkin 'Cinderella's Carriage' F1
Pepper 'Mama Mia Giallo' F1
Tomato 'Chef's Choice Orange' F1
Cucumber 'Saladmore Bush' F1; Pepper
Pepper 'Giant Ristra' F1

AAS 2013 Vegetable Award Winners:

Watermelon 'Harvest Moon' F1

AAS 2012 Flower Award Winner:

Ornamental Pepper 'Black Olive'

Custom-designed, Custom-produced

At Seeds by Design, breeding and seed production projects often begin with requests from customers. The Mediterranean climate and fertile soils of California’s Sacramento Valley create a consistently dependable environment for the production of high-quality seeds. Areas of focus are as diverse as the product line, and include high-nutrient vegetable varieties, ornamental edibles, specialty peppers, unique salad greens, and heirloom vegetable varieties, among others.

Tips for the Home Gardener:

“Always try something new,” Patty advises. By taking advantage of the natural biodiversity of plant species, Seeds by Design does its part to increase the availability of the tried and true as well as the number and types of new hybrids.

“Soil happy, crops happy” is an old adage, but one that bears repeating—over and over. Add plenty of organic amendments and rotate crop families, and success will follow.

“Don’t underestimate the value of growing your own food,” emphasizes Patty, who believes that food gardening is a positive action that helps people take control of their diet and the quality of the food they eat.

And this is the powerful yet simple reality that inspires Seeds by Design’s line of unique, high quality seeds.



Seeds by Design produces seeds in California’s Sacramento Valley.