

Seed vault now has over a million species

6th April, 2018



A special vault storing the world's most precious seeds has now amassed over one million different plant varieties. It recently took delivery of a consignment of seeds from 70,000 different crops.

Global Seed Vault is buried deep in an icy mountain in the Arctic Circle area of Svalbard, Norway. It was started ten years ago to safeguard the future of the world's food supply. Climate change is causing more and more droughts around the world, which are threatening different species of plants. The vault holds back-ups of seed samples stored in other seed banks around the world. Hannes Dempewolf, a senior scientist at the Crop Trust, said: "Hitting the million mark is really significant."

Workers at the vault were not sure they would reach the million mark so soon. The crisis in Syria meant there was a shortfall of 90,000 seeds at the vault. The latest delivery to the vault included cereal staples. There were also more unusual crops like the onion potato from Estonia and the Bambara groundnut, which is being developed as a drought tolerant crop in Africa. Marie Haga, executive director of the Crop Trust, spoke about the importance of the vault. She said: "Safeguarding such a huge range of seeds means scientists will have the best chance of developing nutritious and climate-resilient crops that can ensure future generations don't just survive, but thrive."

Sources: bbc.com / yahoo.com / ecowatch.com

Writing

Everyone should grow some of their own food from seeds. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

special / precious / plant / crops / mountain / food / drought / species / significant / million / crisis / delivery / cereal / potato / executive / chance / nutritious / survive

True / False

- a) The vault's latest delivery was a consignment of 7,000 seeds. T / F
- b) The vault was first opened in 1955. T / F
- c) The vault backs up the computers of other seed banks worldwide. T / F
- d) A scientist said it was significant to reach storing one million seeds. T / F
- e) Vault workers were surprised at how quickly they reached a million. T / F
- f) The crisis in Syria caused a shortage of seeds at the vault. T / F
- g) The onion potato seeds came from Estonia. T / F
- h) A director doubted whether future generations of seeds would survive. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. storing | a. endangering |
| 2. delivery | b. flourish |
| 3. safeguard | c. notable |
| 4. threatening | d. enormous |
| 5. significant | e. shipment |
| 6. mark | f. assortment |
| 7. crisis | g. protect |
| 8. range | h. level |
| 9. huge | i. emergency |
| 10. thrive | j. keeping |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How important are seed vaults?
- c) What are the world's most important seeds?
- d) How do seeds work?
- e) Which are better - seeds from packets or seeds from plants?
- f) How can scientists make seeds climate resilient?
- g) Can seeds grow on Mars?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the vault workers?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- took delivery of a
- safeguard the future of the
- Climate change is causing more and more
- The vault holds back-
- Hitting the million mark is really
- there was a shortfall of
- more unusual crops
- Safeguarding such a huge range s
- nutritious and climate-
- future generations don't just survive,
- but thrive
- significant
- resilient crops
- consignment of seeds
- world's food supply
- of seed
- ups of seed samples
- 90,000 seeds
- droughts
- like the onion potato

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about seeds?
- What do you think of the idea of a seed vault?
- What are seeds and plants threatened by?
- Have you ever grown anything from seed?
- Why do you think the vault is in the Arctic Circle?
- How much at risk is the world's food supply?
- How healthy are seeds to eat?
- Should we all grow things from seed?

Spelling

- the world's most epicrous seeds
- It recently took ildverey
- a ngsincemont of seeds
- gfesuaard the future
- more and more rudhgots
- really igiscifannt
- there was a hrsftoall of 90,000 seeds
- included eceral staples
- ltreoant crop
- ntrotuiius and climate-resilient crops
- future netnsiaergo
- don't just survive, but tievhr

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. e	3. g	4. a	5. c
6. h	7. i	8. f	9. d	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Corn

You think corn is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): garlic, wheat or strawberry.

Role B – Garlic

You think garlic is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): corn, wheat or strawberry.

Role C – Wheat

You think wheat is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): garlic, corn or strawberry.

Role D – Strawberry

You think strawberry is the most important crop. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their crops. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): garlic, wheat or corn.

Speaking – Crops

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- wheat
- onion
- cabbage
- strawberry
- corn
- rice
- garlic
- tomato

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.