

Buying, growing and then selling seeds of any kind can be breaking the law.

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Be careful

Buying seeds of any kind from anywhere doesn't give you the right to grow them and sell their seeds, and in some cases to even grow your own requirements from them. Developing some varieties can take decades and selling seeds from them, even if they are not patented and/or registered, is stealing. However, my recommendation is to think before sowing any seed that has restrictions that may get you into trouble. Doing so has cost some farmers thousands of dollars. Google for "Seed Restrictions" and learn the law as best you can.

From Jim Snyder, Edmore, MI, USA. 23 August 2010

For those wishing to save seed from Monsanto crops, I offer the following bit of info I dug up under For 'Your Seeds Information'.

"Monsanto's seeds are protected under an 'Intellectual Property' patent; the seeds are good for one season. When a farmer buys Monsanto seed, he also signs the Technology Agreement that stipulates he may not collect seed and replant it. While the farmer is free to plant any type of seed he wishes, the courts have maintained that farmers are not tied to Monsanto seeds in future seasons. However, it is difficult and costly to stop using Monsanto seed once a farmer has planted it because he may not collect and replant the Monsanto seeds collected after harvest, and must buy all new seeds for the new season. Even if a farmer, having once planted GMO seed, then wishing to switch back, faces the issue of "volunteers" (seeds in the ground from the previous planting) which appear and Monsanto has aggressively sued farmers for patent infringement".

End. Thank you Jim.

Breaking the law

Never import seeds into yours or any country without knowing the regulations. Google for 'Importing Seeds, Country'. Some plants have spread to cover whole countries and become noxious. A recent one in New Zealand is Bristle Grass and there are dozens of others going back to Gorse brought in from the UK in the 1800's on purpose for sheep to graze on poor soils, and for growing as hedges. It spread as a weed over most of New Zealand.

A farmer recently sold their farm because Bristle Grass had covered it. Another sold theirs because Couch had spread over it. See Weeds for more on this, and on controlling some weeds the easy way.

Poor quality

In the late 1990s, NZ Consumer tested lawn and garden seeds and was disgusted with the poor quality and bad germination. I bought lawn seed in 1986 and there were some turnip seeds in it. Seeds are even worse now, so we are keeping more of our own vegetable seeds. Sweet corn in 2011 had only 10% germination. I returned two packets of seeds because only a few germinated. Other gardeners have had the same problem. A neighbour told us that he'd found that The Warehouse seeds had the best germination rate. This could be because it is an air conditioned building, whereas many garden stores are not, so get very hot. Once seeds get to 25 degrees C, their germination decreases. We tried Warehouse seeds and got 90% germination in a shorter time (5 days) than those from two garden stores that were only 10% in 10 days and those that grew were stunted. Ryegrass seeds stored in hot buildings lose or suffer weakened endophyte.

Reasons for poor germination

A problem not allowed for is that germination can be satisfactory for a number of years, but the ability of the germinated seeds to grow into healthy strong seedlings and plants, declines with age because the endophyte dies. So check the age.

Whatever seeds you buy, inspect them and test at least 20 of them for germination on tissue paper and covered with well before sowing. At least 90% should germinate within five days. Also check that you get what you ordered.

An Oregon, USA company was fined \$100,000 for illegal labelling and in New Zealand I've seen Forager Chicory growing where Puna Chicory was ordered, and winter ryegrass growing where none was ordered.

Panicum, a bad weed grass that is very high in toxic nitrates, came and grew with Shirohie millet from Australia.

Amount to sow

Seed merchants, as sales people, should give instructions on preparing a seedbed, but few do, so read Cultivation.

Some seed sales people prefer you to have a rough soft seedbed that requires more seed per hectare because that buried too deeply fails. The professional seed growers in Canterbury sow ryegrass at about 14 kg per hectare. They know that if sown thicker, growth will be inhibited and more plants will die from over crowding and pulling, even years later. Drilling increases pulling of seedlings that are drilled, so too close together, so shallow rooted.

Broadcasting better

If you don't have a broadcaster, mix the seed with lime or LimeMagPlus and broadcast it. If you have a drill or seed box, weld a pipe across the back to have the seed fall onto it and spread.

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