

Gardening takes on new meaning with antiques

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Iowa, which has a collection of more than 18,000 types of heirloom seeds.

"It has only been since the cheap nickel packet of seed that it became easier to buy seed than to save it."

Whealy and his wife, Diane, were among a handful of people in the nation to save heritage seeds when they opened their exchange in 1975. They had just two varieties of seed: one from a pink German tomato and the other from a purple morning glory, both handed down by her Bavarian grandfather, they said.

Now, the 8,000 members of the Whealys' seed exchange pay \$25 a year to receive a catalog and other publications.

And Underwood, who turned a lifelong hobby of collecting seeds into a business in 1993 after a

debilitating accident, found herself with a mailing list of 11,000 in less than four years.

"People are interested in history and like the idea of being able to grow something that they know was in Thomas Jefferson's garden," Whealy said. Other unusual items, he said, are beans and corn said to be the descendants of seeds once carried by the Cherokee.

Like anthropologists in search of the past, Underwood and Whealy rely heavily on oral and family histories.

They require that seed contributors submit a written history, which may include newspaper articles and gardening awards, describing the plant, how it was used and how long the family has had it.

In addition, many of the fruits and vegetables do not look, smell

or taste like typical produce and cannot be found at garden outlets and in mainstream gardening catalogs, collectors say.

Before making a particular seed available to other gardeners, they grow the seeds for two or three seasons to make sure that they consistently produce as expected. Modern seeds, if they grow at all, typically don't perform reliably because they have been treated and altered, collectors say.

The Pennsylvania-based Burpee seed company has combed its archives and store-rooms to compile its first catalog devoted exclusively to heirlooms, some of which date to the company's founding more than 120 years ago.

Among Burpee's most popular heritage items is a pumpkin from France that is said to have

been used by the artist who drew the pumpkin coach for Cinderella.

"It's not that great of a pumpkin in terms of size and quantity, but it is the pumpkin used for the carriage, and right there I got you interested," said George Ball Jr., president and chief executive officer of Burpee.

"Society has changed so fast in the last 10 years; the Internet and other pressures, that when people go into their gardens, they want to go into a different time," Ball said. "It's all a part of going back to our grandmother's and grandfather's way of doing things."

Others would simply call it getting in touch with roots.

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COVER TO COVER

Classic tome a must read

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his autobiographical "Black Boy" and to his essays on black culture.

Fabre and Ellen Wright present Richard Wright in astounding color and depth by bringing his lesser-known works to the forefront. In "F B Eye Blues," Wright writes of the horror and frustration of the constant scrutiny he received at the hands of the FBI because of his supposed leftist leanings.

The book also excerpts Wright classic nonfiction works, "The Outsiders," "Native Son" and "The Long Dream."

Definitely a must read.

Prostate cancer risk high

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bladder is empty.

If you think you may suffer from BPH, it's nothing to be ashamed of. By age 60, more than half of all men, and eventually most men, will develop BPH.

Each year, an estimated one million men are treated for BPH in the U.S., with about 350,000 men needing prostate surgery.

Treatment for BPH cost an estimated \$5 billion each year, and as the U.S. population ages, these costs will increase.

National Institutes of Health is sponsoring a nationwide study to determine if long term use of medications will prevent the progression of BPH, thereby eliminating the need for surgery.

It is important that African Americans be involved in clinical

studies, yet most do not participate. Less than one percent of the men involved in several highly respected and often cited studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s were Black, Stone said.

"We are concerned that health-care policy makers will continue to use data based on studies of large numbers of Caucasian males to make decisions for those who are at the greatest risk for prostate cancer," Stone said.

To find out if you are eligible to participate in the nationwide project (800) BPH-1221.

There are 17 medical centers around the country that are involved in the study a

You must be 50 years or older and have not previously been treated for BPH or prostate cancer. All treatment and medications are provided free of charge.

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WILLIAM "BILLY" LINNEY
 Maintenance Engineer, Billy Linney is a 10 year Veteran. Born in Helendale, CA, in the Mojave Desert Territory he now lives in Midland, N.C.
 He does a splendid job as maintenance engineer, and is liked by all.
 When co-workers are down, he jokes to pick them up.
 Billy is married has 4 children and 3 grandchildren. The family attends Green Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte.
 His hobby is working on cars and small engines.

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