

AMASWELA (calabash)  
*Lagenaria siceraria*

UDHALI (pigeon pea)  
*Cajanus cajan*

UMMBILA (maize)  
*Zea mays*

UNYAWOTHI (pearl millet)  
*Pennisetum glaucum*

AMABELE (sorghum)  
*Sorghum bicolor*

UBHONTSHISI (kidney bean)  
*Phaseolus vulgaris*

A selection of seeds in Sophiwe Dlamini's seedbank. Following agro-ecology principles, and refusing GM seed, she grows 44 different types of food plants.

UMNGOMENI  
(mung bean)  
*Vigna radiata*

AMATHANGA  
(pumpkin)  
*Cucurbita maxima*

IZINDLUBU (jugo bean)  
*Vigna subterranea*

IMBUMBA (cowpea)  
*Vigna unguiculata*

IBHECE (watermelon)  
*Citrullus lanatus*

UDONCA (sesame)  
*Sesamum indicum*

AMAKINATI (groundnut)  
*Arachis hypogea*

### TRADITIONAL FARMERS ARE THE CUSTODIANS OF OUR FOOD

Seed selection, saving and exchange are at the heart of traditional agricultural systems for millions of African small-holder farmers, contributing significantly to livelihoods and the conservation of agricultural biodiversity. Traditional crops are culturally valued, locally adapted and genetically diverse. Farmers conserve this agro-diversity by growing many species and varieties, and using household seedbanks to manage plant genetic resources. In doing so, African small-holder farmers are reviving, enhancing and deepening understanding of traditional seed and knowledge systems.

Household seedbanks represent a rich repository of culture and tradition, and the display of seeds, and the pleasure that is taken in their exchange and use, also plays an essential role in strengthening social networks. Locally adapted and diverse crops build the resilience and adaptive capacity of farmers, which is vital in the face of global environmental change and uniformity in agricultural systems.

**Sophiwe Dlamini's household seedbank**  
Pongola, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Botanist and photographer: Mark Mattson



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# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO SEED AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY