Mehmet Öztan, Ph.D.

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Founder and co-owner

<u>Two Seeds in a Pod Heirloom Seed Company</u> Reedsville, WV, March 2019 – present Tampa, FL, January 2013 – July 2018

- Introduced more than 120 new agricultural seed varieties to the commercial seed market for small farmers and home gardeners to grow for homestead production, community-supported agriculture and farmers' markets.
- Gained more than 10 years of experience in business management and marketing for an online seed company that sells more than 150 commercial seed varieties and other items.
- Prepared contracts for and worked with farmers across the U.S. to produce commercial quality seeds for the company's seed catalog and to fulfill seed contracts.
- Prepared the only publicly available seed grower's manual to specifically walk beginner-level BIPOC seed professionals through the fundamentals of commercial seed production.
- Organized community seed saving workshops and farm tours on the company's farm for community-based experiential learning.

Founder, seed keeper, curator and farmer

Anatolian Seeds Recovery and Preservation (<u>ANATOHUM</u>) Project Reedsville, WV, July 2018 - present Tampa, FL, August 2012 – July 2018

- Evaluated and documented hundreds of open-pollinated seed varieties from Turkey via ANATOHUM Project for their cultural and traditional significance, and culinary use.
- Evaluated, documented, and commercially introduced dozens of open-pollinated agricultural crops and Appalachian heirloom seeds for yield, flavor, disease tolerance, and adaptability to changing climate conditions in Florida and West Virginia.
- Worked with the USDA plant germplasm system to evaluate various seed accessions for their potential of commercial production and plant breeding projects.
- Worked on open-field seed selection of various open-pollinated agricultural crops and stabilization of hybrid agricultural seeds for better performance, local adaptability and culinary use.
- Partnered with regional seed companies and organizations including Southern Exposure Seed Exchange (VA), Uprising Seeds (WA), The Utopian Seed Project (NC), Avoca Seed (OR), and Sow True Seed (NC) for interregional seed evaluations and preservation purposes.

- Worked with local farmers and community gardens to test plant performances in various field settings and growing conditions.
- Worked with a small restaurant in Safety Harbor, FL, from 2013-2018, to explore the market potential of various heirloom seeds for the restaurant kitchen.
- Co-founded Temple Terrace (FL) Farmers' Market, Temple Terrace, FL, 2015.

Co-founder and website administrator

<u>Seed Growers</u>, A Community Space for Seed Professionals March 2023 – present

• Conceptualized and organized an online forum platform that brings seed professionals together to create a free, publicly available information source on topics related to commercial seed production, American seed industry, community-based seed saving and cultural preservation as well as food and environmental justice.

Founder

Morgantown Seed Preservation Library August 2018-present

- Organized the Seedy Talks speaker series that focuses on food and environmental justice topics.
- Created a technical manual to create a public seed browsing and checkout system that can be used by the Morgantown Public Library's patrons.
- Worked with WVU Libraries' staff to create an online seed display system for Appalachian seed varieties.
- Organized community engagement events including community seed swaps that focused on story-telling and cultural preservation.

Course supervisor

EdD Program, Environmental & Sustainability Education Antioch University Fall 2023 – Spring 2024

- Supervised doctoral student Florentina Rodriguez for a special topic course that explores the experiences of minoritized seed professionals in American seed industry in Fall 2023.
- Planned to supervise Rodriguez for two special topic courses that will explore the 1) connection between food, seed, and farming as a pathway for cultural preservation, and 2) modern food justice movements that face disproportionate leadership by white affluent political groups in Spring 2024.