

WSARE Heritage Grain Case Study

Hardy Seeds

Name of Farm: Hardy Seeds, Ashland, OR

Website: [Hardy Seeds](#)

Point of Contact: Chris Hardy

About the farm: Since before 2019, Chris, who often started with not much more than a teaspoon of seed, occasionally only a single head of grain, has been growing, selecting, collecting data on the growth characteristics of different dry-farmed varieties and types of heritage grains, as well as sourcing seeds from a global grower network, collecting and sharing them with seed growers throughout the region and beyond.

Participated by: Hardy Seeds is a three acre low/no-till vegetable seed and grain farm with loam-type soils. Chris is seeking to increase the number of local growers and acreage heritage grains accessible to local producers to grow as seed for most heritage grains that are available in extremely limited quantities.

Bed preparation: Producer Hardy will use no tillage in the trialing beds and use straw mulch on the beds. No fertilizer was added prior or after planting. All varieties were dry-farmed using no supplemental irrigation.



-Each farmer in the project measured yield and noted lodging % for each of the four different grain crops (Tibetan Purple Barley, Ukrainka Wheat, Banatka Wheat, Rouge de Bordeaux Wheat).

Goal of the project is to grow 4 heritage grains (Tibetan Purple Barley, Ukrainian Wheat, Banatka Wheat, Rouge de Bordeaux Wheat) to determine:

- best yield,
- biomass yields between varieties
- compare tolerance for low input, dry-farmed conditions between varieties
- note best suited for ease of processing and cleaning



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Growing Heritage Grains: Hardy Seeds Farm

| Date | Activity | Notes |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| Nov 2023 | Seeded 25 ft (4 rows per bed, 9 in apart) | 25ft x 3.5 ft |
| Feb 2023 | All varieties have emerged and growing | |
| Late April | All varieties are flowering | |
| Early July | Harvest begins | |
| Late July | Harvest complete- harvest during farm tour | |

Harvest Grains Observations:

| Grain Variety | Harvest Amount | Biomass Amount |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| -Tibetain Purple Barley | 2076 g | 4679 g |
| -Ukrainka Wheat | 2850 g | 4634 g |
| -Rouge De Bordeaux Wheat | 2095 g | 4710 g |
| -Banatka Wheat | 2655 g | 5510 g |

| |
|--|
| -Tibetain Purple Barley - height: 38 inches |
| -Ukrainka Wheat - height: 46 inches |
| -Rouge De Bordeaux Wheat Bourdeaux - height: 52 inches |
| -Banatka Wheat - height: 52 inches |

Farmer observations: Tiller production was high on all varieties grown, each at least 15 tillers, with the Banatka expressing the greatest number of tillers and biomass potential.

Lodging - all 3 wheat varieties experienced nearly zero lodging. The Tibetan purple barley had minimal lodging with most plants standing fully upright.

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No pest or disease pressures were observed in the trials.

Image from Heritage Grain Community Education Event where heritage grains from this project were milled, and then baked into bread for participants to taste and experience.



As a result of this project: Hardy Seeds will also expand their heritage grain operation. Hardy Seeds is working closely with area bakeries to offer heritage grain flours for their value-added products. To date, the Rogue Valley Heritage Grain project is one of the most diverse heritage grain “Living Seed Banks” in the Western USA thanks to diverse grower participation, from new gardeners to tenured large scale farmers. Significant to the Rogue Valley, more than 100 unique varieties of heritage grains and legumes have

demonstrated favorable productivity in this region thus improving the region's food security and resilience to a changing climate.