

## **ORGANIC COVER CROPS: GROWING AND SEED SAVING INFORMATION**

**CULTURAL INFO:** Sow cover crops by broadcasting seed over the desired plot. Ideally, seeds should be spread evenly, about 1 square inch from each other. The “whirligig” and hand-pushed drop spreader (broadcast seeder) are very simple, efficient tools to achieve the same purpose. Raking or discing the grain 1 to 3 inches into the soil is recommended. Some larger growers use either hand- or tractor-pulled grain drills. This involves a hand-pushed single-wheeled seeder. This is the preferred method for those who wish to keep their food grain weeded in nice clean rows.

**SEED SAVING INSTRUCTIONS:** Harvest when seeds are nearly mature, but not fully dry. Using a hand sickle or scythe, cut stalks low to the ground, laying them in swaths. Tie small bundles with twine or fresh straw. These must be allowed to completely dry. We suggest either bringing them under cover or harvest them when there is no threat of rain for several days. Once dry, thresh with a hand flail to separate grain from straw. (Note: Buckwheat can easily be destroyed with this method. Be gentle.) Wait for a windy day or set up a fan outside to winnow the grain. Pour dirty grain over a bin so that chaff blows away and clean grain is collected. Combines are used for small-scale grain harvesting and processing.