

The Chile Institute

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1 SPRING, 1993

N E W S L E T T E R

Message From The Dean: Dr. John Owens

Seventeen exciting years in New Mexico have taught me there is definitely something "magical" about chile. The potential existence of magical properties is difficult for a scientist to admit, but still, something about New Mexico has the world beating a path to Las Cruces. *Time* magazine, *The New Yorker*, CBS Sunday Morning, and more of the media want to learn about chile.

The Smithsonian Institution honored chile at a recent celebration in Washington, D.C., featuring NMSU Extension horticulturist, George Dickerson, and our College's video production, *Green Gold: From the Maya to the Moon*. The video, which places chile front and center, is touring America with the Smithsonian's "Seeds of Change" exhibit and already has won two major awards.

Green Gold recounts some of the remarkable impacts of Capsicums. Chile in worldwide cuisine. Chile instead of mace. Chile instead of artificial colors. Chile instead of morphine. This is magic! The magic has already attracted incredible interest in The Chile Institute. Already, at this writing, there are 269 members from forty states and five foreign countries!

If chile is magic, I selfishly want New Mexico to be considered to be the "magic kingdom." Fortunately, our public decision-makers feel the same way. We are fighting to preserve our corner of chile heaven with aggressive and coordinated chile research and Extension programs at New Mexico State University. These programs are approaching a million dollars a year investment in the future of chile.

You can count on the Land of Enchantment and its "University of Choice" to support chile. In a sea of chileheads, there is no question about the importance of Capsicums.

New Mexico Chile Conference Roundup


The 18th annual New Mexico Chile Conference, held in Las Cruces February 2, 1993, was the biggest ever, with 430 attendees. Some of the highlights included:

Dr. John Owens announced that the Fabian Garcia Founder's Award of Excellence was awarded to Javier Vargas for ten years of service to the New Mexico Chile Conference.

Bill Gomez reported that total chile acreage in New Mexico topped 30,000 in 1992, and that there was a significant increase in processing plants in the state.

Dr. David Riley of the Texas A&M Experiment Station, gave a complete report on the pepper weevil, emphasizing the importance of cultural controls—rather than insecticides—to control the pest.

Dr. Paul Bosland reported

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The Chile Institute Newsletter

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The Chile Institute

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A Non-Profit, International Organization Devoted to the Study of Capsicums

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Capsicum Communique

• New Seed Packet for Members

Enclosed with this newsletter is our second packet of chile seeds, this time a cultivar of Aji called *Capsicum baccatum* var. "Serranito." Usually, anything called "Serrano" is a chile pod type from Mexico that is *C. annuum*, thought to have originated in the mountains north of Puebla and Hidalgo. This chile, however, was acquired from Octavio Pozo of Mexico, and is an unusual plant called "Serranito" (little Serrano). It is a *baccatum* found growing near Tampico. The fruits start green, then turn yellow to a pale orange/red as they mature. As with other *baccatums*, the fruits have a unique flavor and aroma not found in other species. This chile is not available from any seed company. If the seed arrives in poor condition, as is possible with any mass mailing, please send a SASE and the Institute will mail another seed packet to you.

• Board Approves Chile Museum Concept

The Board of Directors of The Chile Institute, meeting on February 1, 1993, unanimously approved the concept of a museum to educate the public about Capsicums. The museum idea is now under study by the Board. In other news, Board members Dave DeWitt and Gene Baca are drafting a proposed Mission Statement for The Chile Institute, a set of by-laws is being drafted.

• Reception a Big Success

The first Chile Institute reception, held the evening of February 1, was quite a success, with nearly 200 people attending. The program featured discussions of Chile Institute projects and the proposed Chile Pepper Museum. A showing of *Green Gold* topped off the evening festivities. Another reception is planned for '94.

• Two Pepper Conferences in '94

Las Cruces will be the site of two major pepper conferences in 1994. The New Mexico Chile Conference will be held the first week in February, and the National Pepper Conference will be held the first week in August. Both will take place at the Las Cruces Hilton. To get your name on the mailing list, contact Mr. Javier Vargas, 150 W. Lohman, Las Cruces, NM 88005, (505) 525-6649, FAX (505) 525-6652.

• Capsaicin Research Increases

According to Rob McCall, writing in *HerbalGram*, in 1991 and '92 there were more than 650 studies of capsaicin, including 114 clinical studies in humans. "Most of these studies take advantage of the unique mechanism by which pepper relieve pain," he wrote, "either to research the pain mechanisms or to relieve chronic



“Green Gold” Video

The 30-minute video documentary, "Green Gold: From the Maya to the Moon," traces the phenomenal influence of three New World treasures—corn, potatoes, and chile peppers—on human history. These plants from the Americas have played major roles in nurturing entire societies. It highlights the life's work of internationally recognized plant explorers, molecular geneticists, anthropologists, authors, and ethnobotanists. Produced by a consortium of land-grant universities, "Green Gold" is the finest video to date on chile peppers and related New World plants. A VHS copy is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. To order, contact the Department of Agricultural Information, Box 30003, Dept. 3AI, NMSU, Las Cruces, NM 88003, (505) 646-2701.

Chile Slides Available

A set of professional quality chile pepper slides is now available from The Chile Institute. The slides cover the following cultivars: Bell, Wax, Cherry, Piquin, Rocoto, Jalapeño, Serrano, New Mexican, Pasilla, Ancho, Cayenne, Pimiento, Cuban, Habanero, Squash, De Arbol, Aji, European Paprika, and two Ornamentals. The slides sell for \$7.50 each or \$100 for the 20-slide set. Contact the Institute for ordering information.

pain." The most common use of capsaicin is to relieve arthritis pain, and more than eighty percent of arthritis patients who used capsaicin cream during clinical studies reported less pain. Says McCall: "Far from being limited to arthritis research, external use of capsaicin may be useful in over a dozen chronic pain syndromes, including postherpetic neuralgia, postnasectomy neuroma, reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome, diabetic neuropathy, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, hemodialysis-associated itching, and vulvar vestibulitis."

• **Snack Bell**

A bite-sized Bell pepper the size of a Jalapeño has been patented as a snack food. It is a sweet, bright red pepper that can be eaten in two bites. Its high vitamin C content will be emphasized in the marketing of the pepper, which was developed by DNA Plant Technology Corp. of Cinnaminson, New Jersey and E.I. Dupont de Nemours Co.

• **Advisory Board Appointed**
The Board of Directors of The Chile Institute has announced the

appointment of the following people to the Institute's Advisory Board:

- Alton Bailey
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Las Cruces, NM
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Randy Tognazzini
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Everett Wood
Cal-Compack
Santa Ana, CA

Chile Conference

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progress in multi-tiered projects to combat viruses and phytophthora fungus. He said that resistant varieties are not the only answer—cultural practices are very important in controlling disease. He also reported he has selected one line of *chinense* to adapt to New Mexico conditions.

Dave DeWitt gave a slide show of Quetzal Food's Rica Red Habanero growing operation (over 200 acres) in Costa Rica.

Lawrence Salazar (NM Dept. of Labor) and Bill Belt (U.S. Dept. of Labor) presented a discussion of new labor laws in the chile fields.

Bibliographies Available

Capsicum:

A Comprehensive Bibliography
by Paul W. Bosland



The
Chile Institute

The Chile Institute has published two bibliographies devoted to the study of peppers. **Chile Peppers: A Selected Bibliography of the Capsicums**, by David A. DeWitt, has more than 1,100 citations primarily concerned with non-technical articles and books on the history and culinary arts of Capsicums, with other sections on gardening and nutrition/medicine. It is available on 3.5-inch diskette, 5.25-inch diskette, or hard copy for \$20 postpaid.

CHILE PEPPERS:

A Selected Bibliography of the Capsicums

By David A. DeWitt



The
Chile Institute

Capsicum: A Comprehensive Bibliography, by Paul W. Bosland, contains 5,000+ technical citations in thirteen categories including taxonomy, genetics, breeding, biochemistry, production, and disorders. It is available on 3.5-inch diskette, 5.25-inch diskette, or hard copy for \$50 postpaid.

Persons wishing to order bibliographies should indicate format desired, make checks out to NMSU Foundation/Chile Institute, and send them to The Chile Institute, Box 30003, Dept. 3Q, NMSU, Las Cruces, NM 88003.

Join the Institute!

New members receive a 1-year subscription to the newsletter, our Chile Institute decal, seed packets, and other chile items.

Membership Categories:

Member..... \$25

Charter Member..... \$50

Associate Member... \$100

Corporate Member... \$1,000



Send your donations to The Chile Institute address on our masthead.
Make checks out to "NMSU Foundation/Chile Institute." Thanks for supporting The Institute.

New Associate and Corporate Members

The Chile Institute appreciates the generosity of the following people who have become Corporate and Associate members. They are special not only for their donation, but also for their commitment to the future of The Chile Institute.

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