



## No patents on life, no patents on seeds

Modern patent law was introduced in the 19th century. A patent grants the applicant so-called intellectual property rights to his invention, which allow him to prohibit the use of his invention for a certain period of time – in Germany that is 20 years. It also allows the inventor to issue licenses and be remunerated. This entails that anyone who wants to use the invention has to pay for it. This way, the inventor's work is supposed to be protected and remunerated.

However, patent rights are also controversial because they increase the manufacturing costs of goods and prevent technical progress by third parties. Furthermore, they hamper the use of more efficient or more effective products in less developed countries who often enough cannot afford paying for the patents or the related products. The result is increasing attempts to circumvent the patents or to copy the invention without permission.

Patents refer to technology, to new, commercially usable things. There can be no patents on air, water, or heat. But what about plant breeding? Seeds are never new. They are always a further development of the already existing. They are embedded in the cultural history of man within nature. Is the methodology and the breeding result of further development patentable? Anything that carries a developmental impulse can reproduce. Who invented life? Who invented genes? **Life stands beyond dead material**, is not solely determined by the engineering spirit of an individual person, but part of a cultural process as well as part of nature – and therefore, life is not patentable from our point of view. Many share this opinion, find and therefore there are many initiatives to ban and prevent patents on life.

Focusing on new biotechnology and genetic engineering, some inventors and international corporations have a different view on this. They expect their research commercially and exclusively gilded and are constantly trying to patent it – especially when it comes to seeds. But seeds are the origin of all life – and therefore we clearly demand: **No patents on life, no patents on seeds.**

For us, plant breeding is a cultural task of communities and humanity who strive to preserve and improve the fertility and nutritional quality of our crops. In their diversity, seeds are in the hands of humanity – even if they are commercially produced. A biodiverse world with many different plants has enormous significance for humans, animals, soils, and climate and thus for the future evolution of the Earth. The mental-spiritual energy of the gardener and breeder, in combination with physical and cosmic forces, is crucial to produce healthy, nourishing, beneficial seeds. With seeds, we have far more in our hands than only technical developments and innovations. Those who really want to protect the diversity of our seeds must prevent seed patents. That is why we of Living Seeds e.V. support the initiative [www.no-patents-on-seeds.org](http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org).