TRansition paths to sUstainable legume-based systems in Europe

The place of legumes in small scale agroecological production-experience from Szezon Kert

Katalin Réthy, Ágnes Vinkovits

Szezon Kert

Abstract

Consumer perception of legume products is often based on negative stereotypes concerning digestibility, preparation time and lack of variety in recipes and use. Leguminous plants play an important role in all scales of organic production; therefore it is necessary to develop consumption and deal with negative stereotyping - starting with offering a wide variety of legume types, products and showing ways of varied uses. The role of leguminous plants in a small scale agroecological vegetable production, alternative fresh products and consumer education is presented here with examples from Szezon Kert.

Legume variety experiment

Garden overview

Chickpea plants

Fava bean

About Szezon Kert

We founded Szezon Kert in 2016 as a small scale, agroecological farm specialising in vegetables, edible flowers and herbs. The growing area in 2018 was about 1200 m2; delivering products weekly to 10-15 families and a couple of small restaurants. Agroecological production for us means working together with nature for building a healthy soil, protecting and nourishing plants and the environment. We aim for high diversity in types and varieties of crops and as well in products. Crops are grown in permanents beds with straw mulch, compost and local manure. It is also important for us to build a community around our farm and educate consumers about how healthy food is produced and used.

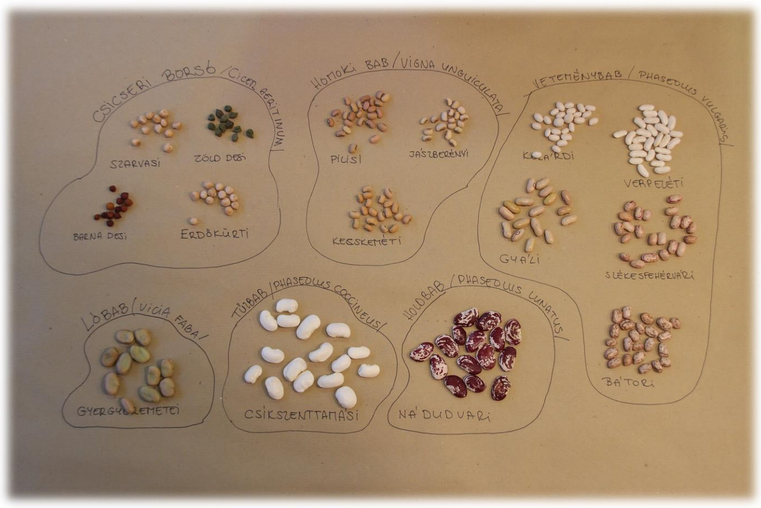
The role and benefits of legumes in agroecological production

- Nitrogen fixation: Reducing amount of organic fertilizers, crop residues are good as mulch and improve the compost
- Legumes as part of the crop rotation 25- 30%
- Short life cyle (8- 12 weeks to production)
- Diverse crop group: Lots of species and varieties, well adapted to Hungarian climate;
- Different seasonality allows for continous production throughout the year
- Challeneges: Generally high water requirements and strong pest pressure (Bollworms, stink bugs); changing climatic conditions

Traditional crops and products

Hungarian cousine uses certain types of fresh or dried legumes, these traditions often reflect in the expectations of consumers as well. Seeds for different local varieties are widely available; thus offering an afforidable option for larger scale production.
Products include:

- Shelling peas (*Pisum sativum*)
- Green beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris)*
- Dried beans (*Phaseoulus vulgaris, Phaseolus coccineus, Phaseolus lunatus)*



Legume variety experiment

Alternative crops and products

Alternative fresh products can come from traditional crops by utilizing unusual parts of the plants, or they can be legume species usually unknown in the Hungarian cuisine. Some new species can offer substitute products for traditional crops, while some products are utilized as curiosities in gastronomy, used as new flavors or decoration.
Products include:

- Snap peas, colored green beans (*Pisum sativum, Phaseolus spp., Vigna spp.)*
- Chickpeas – fresh or dried (*Cicer arietinum)*
- Fava beans – fresh or dried (Vicia faba)
- Edible flowers (all beans, peas, chickpeas)
- Decorative shoots (peas, chickpeas)

Contact Information

Katalin Réthy
katalin.rethy@gmail.com // szezonkert@gmail.com
Facebook, Instagram: @Szezonkert

www.true-project.eu