

Underground Vault Protects World's Seeds



Scientists and world leaders recently took part in the grand opening of a giant underground vault. The vault has been built to store seeds from around the world.

The new seed vault is built into the side of a mountain on an island between Norway and the North Pole, where it is very cold. The Norwegian government built the vault to save seeds in case something happens to any of the plants we grow for food.

The vault can store 4.5 million different types of seeds. Since each sample includes 100 to 500 seeds, the vault will hold up to 2.25 *billion* seeds.

On the first day the vault opened, 268,000 different seed samples were deposited. Some of the seeds were for maize (a type of corn), rice, wheat, and different kinds of eggplant, lettuce, barley, and potato. Those are important crops for people in many parts of the world.

Scientists want to make sure the seeds are very safe, so they built the vault 427 feet inside the frozen mountain. A refrigeration system keeps the vault at about 0 degrees (Fahrenheit) all the time. Between the cold temperatures on the island and the refrigeration system, scientists will be able to store seeds for very important crops for many years.

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE SEED VAULT

- The Norwegian government spent about \$9.4 million to build the seed vault.
- The seeds are stored in sealed packages, which are put in sealed boxes.
- The vault's mountain location is 430 feet above sea level, which will ensure that the site remains dry even if the icecaps melt.

NEWS WORD BOX

vault government
deposit system
refrigeration ensure

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Why, do you think, do scientists want to keep seeds safe from harm?
From what kinds of harm do scientists hope to protect seeds?