


# Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding

*By Noel Kingsbury*

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Disheartened by the shrink-wrapped, Styrofoam-packed state of contemporary supermarket fruits and vegetables, many shoppers hark back to a more innocent time, to visions of succulent red tomatoes plucked straight from the vine, gleaming orange carrots pulled from loamy brown soil, swirling heads of green lettuce basking in the sun.

With *Hybrid*, Noel Kingsbury reveals that even those imaginary perfect foods are themselves far from anything that could properly be called natural; rather, they represent the end of a millennia-long history of selective breeding and hybridization. Starting his story at the birth of agriculture, Kingsbury traces the history of human attempts to make plants more reliable, productive, and nutritious—a story that owes as much to accident and error as to innovation and experiment. Drawing on historical and scientific accounts, as well as a rich trove of anecdotes, Kingsbury shows how scientists, amateur breeders, and countless anonymous farmers and gardeners slowly caused the evolutionary pressures of nature to be supplanted by those of human needs—and thus led us from sparse wild grasses to succulent corn cobs, and from mealy, white wild carrots to the juicy vegetables we enjoy today. At the same time, Kingsbury reminds us that contemporary controversies over the Green Revolution and genetically modified crops are not new; plant breeding has always had a political dimension.

A powerful reminder of the complicated and ever-evolving relationship between humans and the natural world, *Hybrid* will give readers a thoughtful new perspective on—and a renewed appreciation of—the cereal crops, vegetables, fruits, and flowers that are central to our way of life.

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**Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding By Noel Kingsbury Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

Review
"A magnificent achievement-Kingsbury tells this gripping story, with a large cast of characters across the entire span of human civilization, with wit, passion, and erudition." -- Tim Richardson, author of The Arcadian Friends

I will never look at a slice of bread or grain of rice the same way, having read Hybrid. By recounting the history of plant breeding, the author has revealed the many choices made in creating the crops of today and yesterday, and challenges us to think about our choices for tomorrow.Cathy Maloney, author of Chicago Gardens -- Cathy Maloney, author of Chicago Gardens

In plant breeding, just as in evolution, genetic variety is the raw material of success. Hybrid is the story of how the genes that make a fat corn cob, a luscious apple, a brilliantly orange carrot or a high yielding strain of rice have traveled by serpentine paths to reach the genomes of the crops that we so depend on and yet so take for granted. In Hybrid we learn that there was a green revolution in eleventh-century China when a visionary emperor imported new strains of rice from Indochina; how working men in nineteenth-century Britain made a sport of competitive gooseberry breeding, and how a German doctor discovered hybrid vigor in plants. Hybrid the book displays, like hybrids themselves, all the marvelous fruit of miscellany.Jonathan Silvertown, author of An Orchard Invisible: A Natural History of Seeds -- Jonathan Silvertown

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Thoughtful, well researched and refreshingly broad in scope, Noel Kingsburys Hybrid took me out of my immediate area of expertise (plants and garden history) and opened my eyes to the way previously unsung plant breeders have transformed societies. Accessible to specialists and non-specialists, it should be essential reading for anyone wishing to take an informed view on the future direction of biotechnology.Jennifer Potter, author of Strange Blooms: The Curious Lives and Adventures of the John Tradescants -- Jennifer Potter, author of Strange Blooms

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"The reason you and billions of other people will eat today is a century-long effort to increase the yield of crop plants. "Hybrid "tells the story of the quiet heroes behind this triumph. Noel Kingsbury has written a fantastic history of a subject that should become much better known."--Gregg Easterbrook, author, "Sonic Boom"

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About the Author

**Noel Kingsbury** is a horticulturalist and writer, and the author of many books, including *Designing with Plants* and *Natural Gardening in Small Spaces*, and coeditor of *Vista: The Culture and Politics of Gardens.*

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Janette Collins:**

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always try and and must have the free time or they will get great deal of stress from both day to day life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, often the book you have read is usually Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding.

**Rene Pina:**

Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding can be one of your starter books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into delight arrangement in writing Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding yet doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial pondering.

**Kim Deyoung:**

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