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## Update on Nuñas (Popping Beans)

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The international research center CIAT in Cali, Colombia is working (on a small scale) with nuñas. Dr. Jeffery White, CIAT bean physiologist, says the beans do not produce well and are susceptible to most bean diseases, so farmers grow them less and less. "In fact, the crop is probably disappearing." Dr. Julia Kornegay at CIAT has crossed popping bean varieties with disease-resistant common beans and sent the progeny to Peru for testing. But when crossed with ordinary beans, the offspring lose their popping ability. Special breeding techniques are needed to recover that trait.

"There are about 30 types of nuñas that differ in seed size, shape and color, but all taste similar. ...They retain their popping ability for years if stored at low temperature and low humidity. But they lose the popping trait in a few months if stored improperly." Dr. Kornegay would like to see popping beans marketed internationally.