

SEED SAVING & STORAGE

Once you have grown a second crop from seed you saved yourself, you'll appreciate how little effort it takes. It's really a matter of trial and error. Don't be deterred by charts and descriptions that make seed saving sound too complicated to try! Our ancestors have been saving seed for thousands of years without the benefit of such information.

Why Save Your Own Seed?

- Seed Security - Seed saving is a great way to assure a supply of your favorite veggie varieties that may be discontinued by seed suppliers
- It's cost-effective
- Seed saved from your plants are acclimatized to your growing conditions
- You can help perpetuate heirloom varieties that are no longer commercially available
- Many older crops grown from seeds are more nutritious than hybrids bred for high, yield, shape and long-term storage.
- You can participate in a seed swap or donate to a seed bank

Start with Easy-to-Save Self-Pollinating Seeds

Choose open-pollinated, self-pollinating varieties. These are non-hybrid plants whose seeds are true generation after generation. Seeds from self-pollinating plants are the easiest seeds to save. They will grow and yield the same plant like the original for generations, although it is possible for cross-pollination to occur on a self-pollinating species.

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|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Calendula | <input type="checkbox"/> Rudbeckia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce & Salad greens | <input type="checkbox"/> Cosmos | <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peas | <input type="checkbox"/> Echinacea | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peppers | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasturtium | |

Experiment with Cross-Pollinating Seeds

Cross-pollinating seeds have received pollen from other plants of the same type, usually delivered by insects or the wind. Seeds may or may not be true, depending on what your neighbor is growing. This is how Zucchini-kins or Pumpkin-hinis are created! Cross-pollinated seeds may be saved in a small garden, but there are several more steps that many weekend gardeners may not wish to bother with. If you are bitten by the seed saving bug, then you'll want to try those, too. There are many books and online resources to aid you. Among the many cross-pollinating vegetables that are relatively easy to isolate and save in a home garden environment include kale, spinach, parsley, Swiss chard.

When to Harvest Your Seeds

The best time to harvest your seeds for saving is when you see that the fruits or pods containing the seeds have matured or when the seeds are well formed and drying. Check your pods frequently. The optimum time to collect seeds is on a dry day. Saving seed can be a bit more difficult when we have a rainy autumn.

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Drying Your Seeds

Drying usually takes 5-7 days, and may be considerably longer for large, thick seeds, such as Scarlet Runner beans, which can become moldy, if packaged when too much moisture remains. Find a dry place where seeds will be undisturbed. Be sure to spread your seeds apart to keep them from clumping, and turn them or stir often. A ceramic plate works well. Seeds often stick to paper towels. Paper plates are too lightweight, and your seeds may end up on the floor.

Short-Term Storage

There are many ways to store seeds. The three most important things to remember are COOL, DARK, and DRY. Keep them in a location where storage conditions will remain stable.

Diggin' Shoreline seeds are stored in their original package or a folded paper packet (similar to ones used to store loose diamonds). Original seed packages should be resealed with tape or stapled to prevent spillage. These items work well for short-term seed storage:

- Folded paper packets
- Resealable plastic sandwich bags
- Recycled foil tea bag wrappers
- Mason or other glass jars
- Envelopes
- Pill bottles (sterilized)

These are placed in an inexpensive plastic bin with a lid, then in a file drawer or dresser drawer in an unheated garage away from the light. Many seeds in this box are more than 5 years old and still perfectly viable.

Long-Term Storage

Air-tight containers such as a glass jar are recommended for long-term storage. You can keep the seed for a longer period of time by storing them in freezer inside a glass jar.

Take Time to Label Carefully!

If you transfer seeds from their original packet, be sure to copy all of the pertinent information to your new container, too. Try to be consistent in your labeling. If these seeds are for your personal use, you don't have to be quite so exacting, but if you plan to share your bounty with a friend or for a seed swap, you'll want to be more careful, and print legibly:

<p>POLE BEAN Scarlet Runner Seed Saved 2015</p>

<p>TOMATO Yellow Pear (Indeterminate) Ed Hume, 2015 90 days from transplant. Start indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost. Planting depth: ¼"</p>
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Experiment and have fun! If you catch the seed saving bug, there are great book and online resources to tap for detailed information. The Elizabeth Miller Library at the Center for Urban Horticulture has a large collection of helpful books and periodicals.