

North University Seed Library

“Plant, save & share”

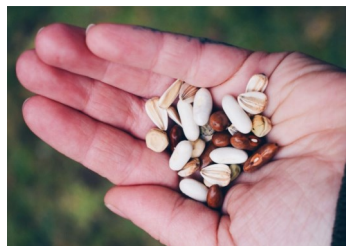


Newsletter

The entire fruit is already present in the seed-

Tertullian **SEED SAVING**

Collecting and saving seeds adds a new dimension to gardening. It's an adventurous experiment to shepherd a crop through the seed production phase—especially a crop you don't normally grow from seed, such as lettuce or radishes. The basics are easy to learn and some seed-saving tasks, such as collecting and cleaning seeds, are pleasant, light weight pastimes. In agriculture and gardening, seed saving (sometimes known as brown bagging) is the practice



of saving seeds or other reproductive material from vegetables, grain, herbs, and flowers for use from year to year for annuals and nuts, tree fruits, and berries for perennials and trees. This is the traditional way farms and gardens

were maintained for the last 12,000 years.

Know your space.

Mapping out the garden for efficient use of space to produce both vegetables and seeds should also be considered when planning a seed garden. In addition, a gardener needs to determine what the primary goal is in saving seeds: Are seeds being collected simply for sowing in the garden the following season, or for the conservation of a rare variety? A careful consideration of these factors (bearing in mind how much effort you want to invest) is the starting point of planning a seed garden, whether you are a new seed saver or a practiced veteran.

to save seeds from, make seed saving part of your overall garden plan. It's easy to do, and you'll get the best results if you plan. Figure out how you might need to adjust planting times, gather the equipment you need for seed collection and cleaning, and decide how you'll store your seeds.

Know your plants

Annual, Biennial, Perennial

Not all plants flower, set seed, and die in a single growing season. Those that do, like lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers, are called annuals. Biennials, such as carrots and onions, don't flower until their second growing season, after they have gone through a cold period. Some long-lived plants, like apple trees and asparagus, are perennial, surviving and flowering for many years.

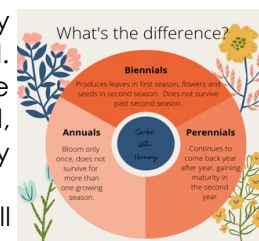
Annual: a plant that completes its full life cycle—including germination, reproduction, and death—in one growing season

Biennial: a plant that requires vernalization and usually completes its life cycle in two growing seasons, growing vegetatively during the first season, undergoing vernalization, and producing flowers and seeds and dying during the second season

Perennial: a plant that can live for more than two years, usually producing flowers and seeds for many years.

Vernalization: the exposure of a plant to low temperatures, enabling the plant to flower.

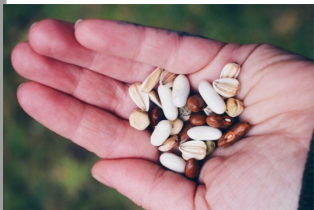
Open pollinated varieties will retain their distinct characteristics if they are mated with an individual of the same breed. This means that with a little care and planning, the seeds you produce will be true-to-type, keeping their distinct traits generation after generation if they do not cross



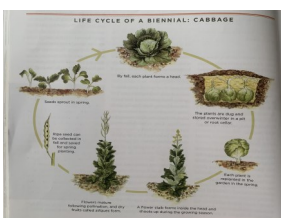
-pollinate with other varieties of the same species.

Start With Easy Crops

As a beginning seed saver, choose easy crops for your first seed-saving projects, then save seeds from more challenging crops as you gain skills. Even as you gain experience, keep in mind that there's no need to save seeds from every crop you grow every year. Properly stored seeds can last for years—easily 3 years, and for some crops as long as 10 years.



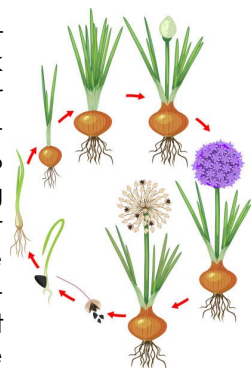
It's easy to picture saving seeds from tomato and squash plants because the seeds are right there in your hand when you harvest the crop to eat. However, there are crops which we grow for their leaves, such as lettuce, or for their roots, such as carrots or radishes that also produce seeds. As we have seen, lettuce sends up a central stalk, and once it forms, the leaves turn bitter. By allowing the stalk to grow, it will develop flowers and then seeds. Biennial crops – such as carrots, onions, and cabbage—also produce a tall flower stalk, but not until their second year of growth. They need a period of cold weather to stimulate the formation of the flower stalk, so before you can harvest seed, you need to shepherd these crops through the winter. You may be able to leave the crops right in the garden, protected by mulch or you may need to dig them up and store them in a cold, but freezing, place over the winter. It is also important not to



overcrowd these crops as they produce seed stalks, because it takes much more energy to produce flowers and seeds than it does leaves. Some crops like peas, beans, lettuce, and tomatoes are great for beginning seed savers. These annual, self-pollinating crops require little to no isolation, and only a few plants are needed to reliably produce seeds.

Planting for seed

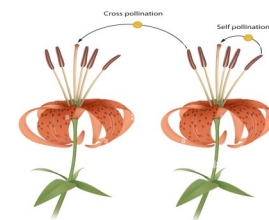
To add seed saving into the equation of gardening, you may rethink planting dates of some crops. For example, a lettuce crop won't produce a mature seed until about 6 weeks after the normal harvesting time. Also, the seed matures best during dry weather. Schedule planting so the crop matures during the dry period, or at least not during the usual wet season. One more thing to consider is the planting schedule of biennial crops which need to be overwintered. Plan your planting time so that the crop is at the right stage of maturity when cold weather arrives



and growth stops.

Controlling Pollination

Open-Pollinated varieties work well for seed saving because you can count on the offspring having the same characteristics as the parent plants. However, that's true only when the plant is pollinated by pollen from the desired variety. Corn, squash, cucumbers, and all the cabbage-family plants are subject to accidental cross-pollination unless you take steps to avoid it. You can isolate your crop by distance or barriers.



The simplest way to avoid cross-pollination complication is to grow only one variety of cross-pollinated crops. You just need to make choices, such as whether to grow a slicing cucumber or pickling variety, but you may be to grow both in one season if you stagger the crops: plant one early in the season and other for a late harvest.

Harvesting seeds

One seed-saving task that's satisfying and fun is harvesting.

Seed harvesting and cleaning techniques fall into two main categories according to whether the fruits and seeds are dry or wet when mature.



Dry Seeds: "Dry" seeds include beans, okra, peppers, basil (and most herbs), and members of the onion and carrot families. Almost all flowers fall into this category.



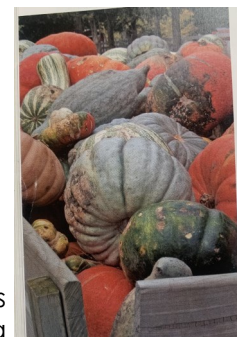
Wet seeds: "wet" seeds are found in such plants as tomatoes, eggplants and many squashes. Cleaning wet seeds requires washing the seeds and separating them from the surrounding pulp.

Timing the harvest just right.

The timing of fruits and seed harvest is critical because maximum seed viability and seedling vigor occur only when fruits are physiologically mature, which often differs from their horticulturally mature stage. Horticulture ripeness refers to the stage at

which people like to eat a fruit but that same fruit is physiologically mature only after its seed has ripened.

Both harvesting? too early or too late is not good for future crops. Estimating seed maturity correctly is difficult because the rate of seed maturity is



▲ Harvest seeds from dead-ripe fruit only. Fruit color is often, but not always, a good indicator of ripeness.

influenced by weather, plant characteristics, site locality, location (sun facing or not) and other aspects. Cucumbers planted on sandy, drier soil ripen faster than those planted on deep silt loam soil. Some seeds, such as tomato seeds, are ripe and ready for harvest when the fruit is ready to eat. On the other hand, lettuce and onions may take several weeks to mature after the flower first blooms.

One general rule to keep in mind at seed-harvest time is to save your biggest seeds for planting. There are general guidelines: a mature seed is usually plump but seeds that are flat and/or green are often immature

Harvesting dry seeds

Dry seeds are simple to harvest as long as you're aware that the seedpods may shatter, break open and release their seeds. It's better to cut the plants than to pull them up by the roots. This is the best way to avoid soil mixing with the seeds.



Harvesting wet seeds



"Wet" seeds come encased in a fruit. For some wet-seeded crops, harvesting the seed is the same as picking ripe fruit to eat. For some other crops, like cucumbers, the seeds aren't ready to harvest at the same time as the same time the fruits are. When seeds are mature you wouldn't want to eat it.

Seed Library Pick-Recipe -Chia seed pudding

Chia seeds 2 tbsp

Yogurt 16 oz

Maple syrup 2 tbsp

Nuts or fruits of your choice.



Mix yogurt and chia seed and keep it aside for an hour. Cut fruits of your choice into small pieces like mango, berries, apple, or you can add nuts like pistachio, almonds, walnuts, and pumpkin seeds. Then, it can be mixed in yogurt. A healthy and tasty breakfast is ready.

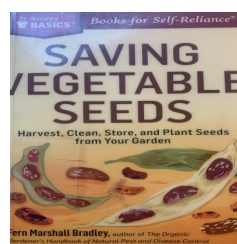
Seed Library Pick- Plant- Tomato

Tomatoes are the top home garden crop for a reason. These plants are tender, warm season crops that love the sun and cannot bear frost. It's important not to put the plants in the ground too early. Tomatoes take 60 days to more than 100 days to harvest, depending on the variety.

Collect your seeds from fully ripe fruits. Cut the tomato open then scoop out the fleshy pulp. The gel surrounding the seeds inhibits germination and must be removed. Place the pulp with the seeds in a jar and leave for two to five days to begin fermenting. Check and gently swirl the jar every day. The seeds are ready for cleaning when the pulp floats to the top. Put seeds in the strainer and wash gently, dry it in the shade.



Seed Library Book Suggestion –



Saving Vegetable Seeds Become more self-sufficient by saving your own seed from one year to the next. Call No 635/BRADLEY

Garden Events

The library has several events going on this month if you are interested.

Garden Share- Every 3rd Friday of the month

There are multiple resources available at Scripps Ranch Library that are not cited here.

We request that you share pictures of your garden and tells us about your experiences, which can be helpful for other gardeners. Also, we invite you to send in your garden related questions and we will answer them in the next newsletter.

This newsletter is composed by Ashu Agarwal and edited by Jeff Lash.

For any questions, please contact **NUSEEDLIBRARY@GMAIL.COM**

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