

Start With Open-Pollinated Seeds

Open pollinated varieties retain their distinct characteristics as long as they are mated with an individual of the same breed. With a little planning, the seeds you produce will be true-to-type as long as they do not cross-pollinate with other varieties of the same species.

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. Long-lived plants like apple trees and asparagus are perennial, surviving and flowering for many years.

Start With Easy Crops

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.

Where Can I Learn More?

Please visit our website:



<https://plymouthlibrary.org/resources/seeds/>

PLYMOUTH
DISTRICT LIBRARY

P.D.L.

How to Save Seeds

FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS

How do I save seeds?

By returning a portion of the seeds you save from your strongest, tastiest, and most vigorous plants, you'll help keep our seed library growing!

Dry Seed Processing

For plants with seeds that grow in pods or on the outside of the plant. (Examples include bean, onion, and carrot):

- Allow the seeds to dry on the plant, and collect the seedpods before they break open.

For plants with seeds that develop in the center of the flower.

- Allow the plant to dry. When the stem holding the seedhead turns brown, harvest the seeds.

Tip: Collect dry seeds under dry, warm conditions to prevent mold and reduce drying time.

Wet Seed Processing

For seeds that grow inside the fleshy fruit of the plant. (Examples include eggplant, watermelon, and some squash.)

- Rinse off the seeds and dry them thoroughly. If the seeds have a gel-like coating, use the fermentation process.

Fermentation Seed Processing

For seeds with a gel-like coating. (Examples include tomato, cucumber, some squash, and some melon.)

- Mix the seeds and the seed juice with a little water in a small plastic or glass container with a lid. Allow the seeds to ferment for 4 to 6 days.
- When a layer of mold has formed on top of the water and the seeds sink, the fermentation is complete. Add more water, swish it around, and remove the mold and pulp. The good seeds will sink to the bottom, while the bad seeds will float to the top. Remove the bad seeds.
- Drain the water from the seeds and set them out on a plate, screen, or piece of glass to dry thoroughly. Once the seeds are completely dry, place them in a moisture-proof container.

Tip: If you're not sure whether your seeds have a coating, float them in a small amount of water. You'll be able to see the coating in the water.

Where can I learn more about seed saving?

Check out our gardening collection in the 600s section of the DIY collection! here are a few suggestions:

Saving seeds : a home gardener's guide to preserving plant biodiversity, CALL NUMBER: 635 J

The manual of seed saving, Andrea Hesitinger, CALL NUMBER: 635 H

Saving seeds : a home gardener's guide to preserving plant biodiversity, Dan Jason, CALL NUMBER: 635 J

Saving our seeds : the practice & philosophy, Bevin Cohen, CALL NUMBER: 635 C

Explore these websites:

<https://www.seedsavers.org/learn>

<https://seedalliance.org/>

<https://www.almanac.com/how-save-vegetable-seeds>