



Saving Seed: A How To Guide



Tomatoes

*Note: Most open pollinated tomatoes won't cross and therefore should hold true year to year. Potential exceptions are some varieties of cherry tomatoes and potato leaf tomatoes, such as Brandywines, which may cross with each other, but not common tomatoes

1. Pick tomatoes when ripe, or better, overripe and starting to rot.



2. Slice your tomatoes in half.



3. Squeeze out tomato pulp, juice and seeds into a container. Glass ball jars work best.



4. Allow the tomato pulp, juice, and seeds to ferment by leaving them in the glass containers for two to five days (fermentation depends on temperature, among other factors). Mold may develop, which is normal. Fermentation is complete when the gelatinous seed coatings rise to the top and the seeds remain at the bottom of the jars.



5. Pour the fermented mixture through a strainer and rinse with water to remove everything but the tomato seeds.



6. Spread seeds across a plate and allow to dry until seeds easily crack in half. Store in an air tight container in a cool, dry and dark location.



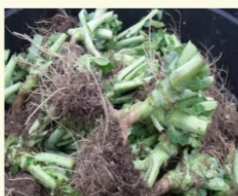
Biennial Brassicas

The brassica family includes: rutabaga, turnip, kohlrabi, cabbage, collard greens, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kale, mustard greens, mizuna and tat-soi. Most of the hardier brassicas are biennial and require separation to avoid cross pollination. Refer to the Seed Savers Crop Specific Seed Saving Guide for more details.

1. Plant crops intended for seed slightly later than you normally would for harvest as younger plants overwinter better than mature plants. Most can be transplanted out in early August.



2. When temps drop into the 20s at night, dig the plants up, making sure to include the entire root system. Cabbage should have small heads while leaf producing plants should have multiple small leaves. Leaves should be trimmed, with the stem remaining intact.



3. Carefully transplant the plants into a slightly damp (but not wet) soil-less medium. Popular choices include straw, sand or shredded dried leaves. Store them in a humid environment with temperatures in the high thirties. Root cellars or refrigerators work well.



4. Transplant the plants out as soon as the ground can be worked. Allow for unlimited growth. Seed pods will develop in late spring to mid-summer and can be harvested as soon as they are brown and dry. Winnow the seeds and seed pods to separate them using a fan and multiple containers.



Simple Savers

The following crops are all relatively simple, seed saving wise. We recommend starting off with some of these varieties, as their simplicity ensures your successful seed saving adventure.

Arugula: Allow arugula to bolt (go to seed) and let seed pods dry fully before harvesting and winnowing. Seed may need bird protection. Lettuce, radish, spinach and many flower seeds can all be saved in a similar fashion.



Potatoes and Garlic: These two are not often reproduced through regular seed saving. They are instead propagated by saving individual bulbs or tubers. Pick the largest, healthiest cloves or potatoes and store in a cool, dark place until planting.



Beans and Peas: Allow pods to dry fully on the vine. Harvest and winnow. Beans and peas are self pollinators and don't easily cross, but seed savers should watch out for heavy late summer rains that can develop mold on the seeds.



Peppers: Allow to ripen fully before harvesting and removing seeds to dry until brittle and crackable with a thumbnail. Peppers of the same species will cross-pollinate, so separation is wise. However, peppers of different species can be grown together without risk, such as a Thai chili next to a sweet bell.

