

Saving Seeds from the

EDIBLE GARDEN



How to Save Seeds from the Edible Garden

One of the exciting parts about growing your own edible garden is that you have the chance to save seeds from it and plant them the following year. You can keep growing and enjoying your vegetables (and many fruits) without paying any money to purchase seeds. Here are some tips to determine when to collect seed from your edible plants and how to prepare and store it.



Open-Pollinated & Hybrid Seed



Seeds are primarily saved from open-pollinated plants or naturally hybridized plants. Open-pollinated plants are mainly pollinated by insects and wind. The offspring of these plants will have the same characteristics as the parent plants. The offspring of hybrids will not have the characteristics of the parent plants and may revert back to the traits of just one of the parents.

Cross-Pollination



Cross pollination is when one plant pollinates a different kind of plant. If you collect the seeds of plants that have cross-pollinated, the offspring will have traits off both of the plants.

Saving Dry Seeds

It is easy to save seeds from vegetables such as peas, beans, and spinach, and herbs. Wait until the seeds have completely formed and dried on the plant. If the seeds are in pods, ensure that both the seeds and the pods are dry. On a dry day, collect your seeds by carefully pulling or cutting them from the plant. To fully dry the seeds, spread them out on newspaper or parchment paper, and allow them to sit in a cool, dry area in your house for several days.

Saving Wet Seeds



If you're growing pumpkins, zucchini, or tomatoes, you'll know that the seeds are located inside the fruit, and that they are protected by a pulpy coating. For squash, remove the seeds from the stringy pulp and wash and dry them well before storage.

Tomatoes should be soaked in a container of water for one or two days to remove the pulpy coating. Gently shake the jar periodically to help the seeds along. They can then be rinsed and dried for storage.

Label & Store Your Seeds

Don't forget to label your seeds with their full names. Add the date that they were harvested so that you can refer to it later.

Store seeds in airtight containers such as glass jars, paper envelopes, or small plastic tubs. Keep them in a cool, dry place. The germination (formation of a seedling) rates of seeds decrease the longer they are in storage, so be sure to plant them within a couple of years.



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