

Planning Your Garden For Seed-Saving - Seed Saving 101

Goal Setting:

1. To start, pick FIVE kinds of seeds at the most
2. Think about your culinary interests/vegetable passions
3. Consider how much time/space you have
4. Think about your own personality and habits
5. Choose open-pollinated varieties of seed

Your Goals:

Seed Varietals I Want to Try:

Vegetables/Flowers, easy to hard

Easy/Breezy:

Lettuce	Peas	Beans
Many flowers		Many herbs
Many bulbing flowers		Perennial alliums

Moderate Challenge:

Tomatoes	Eggplants	Squash	Cucumbers
Melons	Mustard	Arugula	Kale
Radish	Broccoli	Amaranth/Spinach	

Difficult - for the fanatic:

Carrot	Beets	Brussel sprouts
Parsley	Cabbage	Parsnip
Corn	Celeriac	

Approaches/techniques that you might need:

1. Knowing when your seed is ripe
2. Staggering crops for isolation
3. Choose several fruit for seed saving
4. Pollination - hand pollinating/isolating
5. Overwintering living vegetables

Germination issues:

1. Make SURE you harvest seeds in a ripe stage
2. Make sure they are stored properly
3. Know whether you will need stratification/nicking
4. Soak overnight just before planting (6-12 hours)

Issues I Need to Pay Attention To/Plan For:

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange www.southernexposure.com

Seed saving resources: -Free manuals at www.savingourseeds.org -Organic Seed Alliance www.seedalliance.org/ -Seed Savers Exchange www.seedsavers.org/

Dry Seed Saving for Home Use

Crop	Isolation		Planting Time	Population Size		When and How to Harvest
	Self Distance	Cross		Maintenance	Improvement	
Beans, String	40 ft.	Self	Last Frost to Mid June	6 plants	30 plants	After pods have turned leathery and begun to turn brown, pick off the pods and allow them to dry in a single layer out of direct sunlight until 1 week after the seeds rattle in the pods 1. When flowers are in "half feather" dig up the root ball and let the top sit on a tarp for 2 weeks. Clean the seeds from the chaff. 2. After the plants have begun to "feather", knock the seeds off into a bucket by vibrating the plants.
Lettuce	40 ft.	Self	Over winter or Spring Planted	6 plants	40 Plants	After pods have turned leathery and begun to turn brown, pick off the pods and allow them to dry in a single layer out of direct sunlight until 1 week after the seeds rattle in the pods.
Peas, Garden	40 ft.	Self	Early Spring	10 plants	60 plants	Pick the pods when the seeds rattle inside them and allow them to dry in a layer no more than half an inch thick for 2 weeks.
Peas, Southern	75 ft.	Self	May through Early July	20 plants	70 plants	After the fruits are completely ripe (in their last color phase), cut them open, scrape the seeds on to a paper plate in a single layer, and allow them to dry for 2 weeks.
Peppers (can also be processed wet)	40 ft.	Self	Last Frost to Late May	10 plants	25 plants	Allow overwintered plants to bolt in spring and harvest the siliques (long slender seed pods) when they and the seeds inside them are brown. Allow them to dry in a layer no more then 1/4 inch thick for 2 weeks.
Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage, mustard, collards, Chinese cabbage, radish, etc)	600 ft.	Cross	August through mid October	75 plants	150 plants	Harvest ears after they are dry and allow them to dry in the shucks in a single layer for two weeks.
Corn	600 ft.	Cross	May through June	250 plants	1000 plants	Allow plants to bolt. They will segregate into male and female plants. Harvest the seed from the female plants when they are brown and allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.
Spinach	600 ft.	Cross	All Year	75 plants	150 plants	Harvest beets as normal in fall and store over winter in a root cellar. Replant the best ones without the tops in March. Chard may be simply overwintered. Harvest the seeds in late spring when they are brown and allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.
Beets and Chard	600 ft.	Cross	April-July	75 plants	150 plants	

Carrots	600 ft.	Cross				Not for beginners in the southeast as they will cross with wild Queen Ann's Lace for a half mile.
Leeks	600 ft.	Cross	August through mid October	50 plants	150 plants	Overwinter and allow to flower. Harvest seeds when they are brown and allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.
Parsley	600 ft.	Cross	April through mid October	50 plants	150 plants	Overwinter and allow to flower. Harvest seeds when they are brown and allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.
Annual Flowers	40 ft.	Self	After last frost	30 plants	75 plants	Let the flowers dry on the plant. When the seeds in the flowers turn to look like the ones that were initially plants, spread them out to dry for 2 weeks in a thin layer.

Wet Seed Saving for Home Use

Crop	Isolation Distance	Self / Cross	Planting Time	Population Size		When and How to Harvest
				Maintenance	Improvement	
Eggplant	75 ft.	Self	Transplant from last frost through mid May	15 plants	35 plants	Harvest after the fruits turn dull yellow. Cut into 1-2" cubes and cover with water for 24 hours at room temperature (stirring once midway). Use your hands to squish seeds out of the fruit. Let sit 12 hours more if seed is still difficult to remove. Rinse and spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.
Tomatoes, heirloom	10 ft.	Self	Transplant from last frost through mid May	15 plants	35 plants	Harvest fruits when fully ripe and mash into a container with a loose fitting lid. Let sit at room temperature until bubbles stop forming (usually 36 hours), stirring every 12 hours. Pull off all remaining large hunks and rinse seeds. Spread into a thin layer and allow to dry for 3 weeks.
Tomatoes, modern	35 ft.					
Cucumber	600 ft.	Cross	Last frost through late May	20 plants	50 plants	Harvest fruits that have turned yellow or brown and allow them to cure at room temperature for 2 weeks or until any sign of mold sets in. Slice fruits and scoop out the seeds into a container. Add water till the mix is sloshy and let sit at room temperature for 2 days, stirring every 12 hours. Rinse seeds and spread into a thin layer and allow to dry for 3 weeks.
Summer and Winter Squash, Pumpkins, Gourds, Cantaloupe	600 ft.	Cross	Last frost through late May	10 plants	45 plants	Allow the fruits to grow big and hard. Let sit at room temperature for one month to cure. Cut the fruit, scoop out the seeds, and rinse them, removing all the fleshy matter. Spread them into a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks. To more easily clean the seeds, we cover them with water for 24 hours (stir once after the first 12 hours) before rinsing and drying.
Watermelon	600 ft.	Cross	Last frost through late May	10 plants	45 plants	When fruits are fully ripe, scoop the guts out into a bucket and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days, stirring every 12 hours. Rinse seeds through a strainer and spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.