

Saving and Sharing Seeds

The seeds you borrow from the FPL Seed Library are free; all we ask is that you return more seeds than you received to help our seed library grow. Saving your seeds saves you money, and helps preserve our seed heritage.

Choosing Seeds

The seeds that you'll find in our library are all open-pollinated or heirloom varieties, meaning seeds saved from these plants will produce fruit the next season which will be the same as the parent plant. They have been grown by NBCHG members and came from a Canadian source. Each seed is listed as to how easy it is to save: Easy, medium, hard

Easy Seeds

Easy seeds are great for beginners and grow plants that are less likely to cross-pollinate with other plants in that family.

Tip: Stick with one variety of a plant, or separate different varieties with a taller buffer crop or distance.

Medium Seeds

Medium seeds grow plants that are insect pollinated or biennial. These seeds are likely to cross-pollinate with other varieties of the same plant to grow a "mystery" plant. They may also take more than one season to produce seeds.

Tip: Choose only one variety from each plant or separate similar plants by placing them a good distance apart, like in the front and back yard.

Advanced Seeds

Advanced seeds grow plants that are wind or insect pollinated and very likely to cross-pollinate with other plant varieties.

Tips: Stick to a single plant variety, stagger growing times, and other advanced techniques to preserve the purity of the seed. It's also very important to check the botanical name to ensure which plants are related and susceptible to cross-pollination.

Three Ways to Save Seeds

At harvest time, please take some extra steps to save seeds. Save from your strongest, tastiest, and most vigorous plants.



Dry Seed Processing

For plants with seeds that grow on the outside of the plant.

- Allow the seed to dry on the plant, and collect the seedpods before they break open. Some seeds will need to be further dried until hard.
- For plants with seeds that develop in the center of the flower, allow the plant to dry.

When the stem holding the seed head turns brown, harvest the seeds.

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

Wet Seed Processing

For seeds that grow inside the fleshy fruit of the plant.

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

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



Fermentation Seed Processing

For seeds with a gel-like coating.

- 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 - 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 to dry thoroughly. Once the seeds are completely dry store label with date and name your seeds and store in an air tight container in the bottom of your fridge.
 - Return some dated and labeled seeds to the FPL Seed Library
- Tip: Use the fermentation process for seeds from tomatoes, cucumbers, some squash, and some melons.*



A commitment to growing plants from seeds is a gift to you. And the seeds you save and return are a gift to your community