



Seed Saving Instructions

Reference: www.almanac.com/how-save-vegetable-seeds

When is a Seed Dry?

Proper drying is a key to saving seeds. Here's how to test if seeds are fully dried:

- Squeeze one seed with pliers or hit it with a hammer.
- If it's dry, it will shatter.
- If it just crushes or feels soft or spongy, then your seeds still need more air-drying before being stored away.

Steps on How to Save Seeds

Below is a rundown of gathering, treating, and storing the most commonly-saved garden vegetable seeds. No matter which type of open-pollinated seed you are saving, the general guideline is to select only the most vigorous plants with the best-tasting fruit as parents for the next year's crop. Do not save seed from weak or off-type plants.

Saving Tomato and Cucumber Seeds

Because tomatoes and cucumbers have seeds that are coated with a gel, the first step is to remove it by fermentation. The process smells bad, however, so don't do it in an enclosed room in the house. Follow these steps:

1. Squeeze or spoon the seed mass into a waterproof container (glass, jar, plastic cup, or deli container).
2. Add enough water to equal the volume of the seed mass, and put the container in a warm spot out of direct sunlight.
3. Stir the contents at least once a day.
4. In a couple of days, the viable seeds will sink to the bottom and bad seeds and debris and white mold will float to the surface.
5. Wait five days for all the good seeds to drop, then rinse away the gunk at the top.
6. Wash the seeds in several changes of water, and lay them out in a single layer on a glass or plastic plate or screen.
7. Put the plate in a warm place until the seeds are fully dry, which can take several weeks.

Saving Pepper Seeds

1. Cut peppers open to find the seeds in a mass on the central stem.
2. Brush them off the stem onto a plate or screen.
3. Put seeds aside to dry.



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Saving Pea and Bean Seeds

1. Pick the brown pods from the vines and remove the seeds, which will require about six weeks of air-drying. One way is to put them in loosely woven baskets and stir them once a day.
2. If frost or other inclement weather threatens legumes that are ripe but not dry, pull up the vines by the roots, and hang the plants upside down in a warm area, such as your basement or barn. The pods will draw energy from the plants for another few days, which will increase the seed viability.

Saving Melon Seeds

1. For watermelons, simply rinse the seeds under running water to remove any traces of flesh or membrane. For cantaloupe and musk melon, seeds will have more fibers and membrane attached to them. Wash this off, rubbing the seeds between your fingers to remove as much as the debris as you can.
2. Then put the seeds in a container of water, and the good seeds will sink to the bottom.
3. Remove what comes to the top, give the good seeds another rinse, and dry them on a plate or screen.

Saving Lettuce Seeds

Radishes, lettuce, and Asian greens also produce seeds in pods after the plant has flowered. With these vegetables, too, it is best to let the pods dry on the plant.

These plants, however, tend to dry from the bottom up, a few pods at a time.

The dry ones are prone to shattering and spreading their seed all over the ground, so either bag the seed heads—literally putting a paper bag tied at the base over the plants to capture the seeds—or pick the dry pods on a daily basis. Old nylons or row-cover materials work well for bagging because you can still see what's going on with the plant.

Saving Squash and Pumpkin Seeds

1. When squashes are ready, break them open and remove the seeds.
2. Hold the seeds under running water, rubbing them between your fingers to remove any stringy material and membrane.
3. Then lay them out on a plate or screen to dry.

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