

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Save seeds

Gardeners who grow perennials know the joy that comes when their beloved plants poke through the ground to produce yet another ear of beautiful harvest and blooms. However, gardening with annuals can elicit a similar response. Although many vegetables don't return as perennials, gardeners can practice the art of seed saving to keep the same type of plants year after year.

Steps to take:

There are many steps to take if you want to begin seed saving, but the process becomes easier the more you do it. The first step is to gather the seeds. If you're collecting seeds from vegetables like peppers, the gathering process is much easier than that of tomatoes or cucumbers. For peppers, just cut open the pepper, brush the seeds off the stem onto a paper plate and set the plate aside to allow the seeds to dry. Since tomato and cucumber seeds are encased in a gel, you have to use a fermentation process to remove the seeds. Squeeze the seed mass into a waterproof container such as a jar, add an equal amount of water and place the container in a warm area out of direct sunlight. Since the fermentation process will cause a bad smell, do not do this in an enclosed room in your home. Stir the seed-water mixture at least once a day. In a few days, the seeds you want to save sink to the bottom and the bad seeds and other debris will float to the top. Wait a total of five days, then discard the bad seeds and debris. Wash the good seeds several times, lay them on a piece of glass or plastic to dry and then place the plate in a warm area to



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allow the seed time to fully dry. This can take a few weeks.

Since there are numerous different kinds of seeds when it comes to different vegetables, be sure to research your specific kind so you can be sure you're gathering, drying and storing the seeds correctly.

After you have gathered and dried the seeds, the next step is to store the seeds. Be sure you store your seeds in a dry, airtight container. Keep the container in a cool, dry area. Containers can vary from washed-out pill bottles to cardboard food canisters.

Final steps:

Once the seeds are safely stored, you are ready to save them until the next time you wish to plant them! Seeds do have a shelf life though, so be sure to research which kinds of seeds last the longest, or be sure you know the plant-by date so you can plant



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your saved seeds and see another year of harvest. Tomato seeds can last up to five years.

To extend the life of a seed before you plant it, consider freezing them. If done properly, dried and then frozen seeds can last more than a decade.

At Urban Farmer, we offer a wide variety of vegetable and fruit seeds at ufseeds.com!



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