

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Tell the Difference between Non-GMO, Heirloom, Hybrid and Organic Seeds

There are countless seed options available for gardeners, with seeds not only differing in breeds and varieties, but also containing specifications such as non-GMO, heirloom, hybrid and organic, which mean different things.

Hybrid seeds:

Hybrid seeds are created as a cross-pollination between two different plants with the end goal to create a hybrid result that contains the best qualities of each plant. The cross-pollination occurs within the same plant species. This process can take years and some of the traits of a hybrid can include a bigger sized produce or an increased resistance to disease.

Heirloom seeds:

Heirloom plants are often described as having a better flavor than hybrid varieties, and heirloom seeds typically come from plants that are at least a half-century old. The heirloom varieties are open-pollinated, which means pollination occurs naturally through insects or wind. When a hybrid plant produces a vegetable, like a tomato, all the produce grown by the same plant typically looks the same. Heirloom plants can grow a variety of sizes and colors of produce from the same plant.

Non-GMO seeds:

Non-GMO seeds mean seeds that have not been genetically modified. Rather than cross-pollinating the seeds, GMO seeds are injected with genes from another plant to make it grow better or to make it a more favorable plant. It has not been decided



[Non-GMO heirloom and hybrid seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

yet if GMO seeds are actually healthy for consumption or not. GMO seeds are most often sold to commercial farmers for the growth of soybeans and corn and not stores where gardeners purchase their seeds from. For the most part, if you buy a seed packet from the store or online it is naturally going to be a non-GMO seed.

Organic seeds:

Although "organic" anything seems to be highly sought after by the current population, many seeds with the organic classification are the same as seeds without it, as farmers who grow vegetables for their seeds don't often use chemicals as the aesthetics of the actual produce don't matter when harvesting the vegetable for its seed only.

Organic is merely a USDA classification, which costs money to obtain, and seeds may be organically grown whether it says so on the package or not. However, organic seeds



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Non-GMO Seed



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will fend off disease and pests better than those treated, as the genetic makeup of the organic seeds is better fit for resiliency.

Which seeds to use?

For the best harvest, when it comes to choosing between hybrid or heirloom plants, it is best to plant a mix of the two in your garden, though keep the different species separated so pollination between a hybrid and an heirloom plant doesn't occur. Planting both ensures a bountiful and diverse harvest. When it comes to using non-GMO or organic seeds, it is highly probable that any type of seed your purchase for home growth is already classified as non-GMO. For organic, since the organic title is merely a USDA classification, it is up to personal preference if you wish to purchase organic seeds or those not classified as organic.

Check out Urban Farmer's wide selection of heirloom and hybrid non-GMO and organic seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



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