

Saving Seeds From Your Homegrown Vegetables

<https://www.growveg.com/guides/saving-seeds-from-your-homegrown-vegetables/>



Saving seed from one year to plant the next is an age-old tradition. It may sound like extra work but the results can be extremely rewarding and save you money in the process. Saving vegetable seeds can help preserve the particular variety you are growing (for example if you are growing an heirloom variety). It can also help vegetables adapt to the local conditions in which they are grown and this can increase yields.

Selecting Which Seeds to Save

It's easy to save seeds from the following vegetables: tomatoes, peppers, beans, peas and most squash varieties (such as zucchini and pumpkin). These plants have self-pollinating flowers and produce seeds that require little attention before storage.

Seeds from biennial crops that take two seasons to produce seed (such as carrots or beets) are harder to save because you need to keep the plants in optimum conditions for two years. Radishes are difficult as well and it is just easier to purchase new seeds.



Harvesting Seeds

Tomato: Allow the fruits to fully ripen on the plant and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Place in a jar of water and leave for a few days, swirling them in the water daily. After a few days, the seeds should

have come free from the pulp and sunk to the bottom. Pour the liquid away and rinse the seeds. Leave them to dry on a paper towel and, when fully dry, store in an envelope in a cool, dry place.

Peppers: Harvest seeds from peppers after the fruit has fully ripened on the plant and started to wrinkle. Remove the seeds from the peppers and spread them out on paper towels to dry. When fully dry, store in an envelope in a cool, dry place.

Peas and Beans: Allow the pods to ripen on the plant until they are dry and start to turn brown. Remove the pods from the plant and spread them out on a tray indoors, to dry. Leave them for at least two weeks before shelling the pods.

Pumpkin and squash: Scoop seeds out of a mature fruit and rinse well. Select only the fatter seeds because thin ones usually do not germinate. Place on a paper towel and let dry.



Broccoli and cauliflower: If you allow any of these plants to “bolt” or go to flower, then the next step is the formation of seed pods. This may take weeks, before the tiny green pods thicken and turn brown. Pull the entire plant from the soil and allow the pods to dry on the stalk. The kicker is how to get them out of the pod without destroying them. The seeds are quite tiny. Twist the pods gently over white paper and the seeds should pop out easier white paper and the seeds should pop out easier.



Lettuce and Kale: These too, will bolt and form seed pods. But the pods are fluffy white with tiny seeds inside. Cut them and crunch between your fingertips so the seeds can fall into your other hand.

Can you save seeds from store-bought veggies? Many times, the answer is yes! There is no firm answer because fruits and veggies are handled differently depending on the geographic area. Give it a try!