



A GUIDE TO PLANTING & SAVING SEEDS

We encourage any patron who borrows seeds to use this guide to educate themselves on the practice of saving seeds. There is no penalty or fine for not returning seeds. We acknowledge that not all seeds will germinate, and not all plants will survive. If you are unable to save your own seeds, please considering donating a packet or two of fresh, commercially grown, open-pollinated (non-hybrid, non-GMO) seeds to keep our library stocked for future gardeners. Thank you!

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HERBS

BASIL *Ocimum basilicum*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Large Leaf

HEIGHT: 18"-24" | HARVEST IN: 60-90 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Plant outdoors in full sun after danger of frost. Sow about 6" apart and cover with 1/4" of soil. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Thin to about 12" apart. Harvest when buds begin to form. Container friendly.

Saving seeds: MODERATE

Basil must flower before it will go to seed. The seeds are contained in the spent flower heads. Cut off the brown and spent flower heads and allow them dry for a few days in a warm, dry location. Crush the heads over a paper towel or white piece of paper and pick out the flower head debris. Basil produces very tiny black seeds.

CHIVES *Allium tuberosum / allium schoenoprasum*

LIGHT: Full sun

Varieties: Onion and Garlic

HEIGHT: 18"-24" | HARVEST IN: 80-90 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow outside after danger of frost in full sun. Sow seeds thinly and cover with 1/4" of fine soil. Keep evenly moist. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Thin to stand about 3" apart. Container friendly. Chives are a perennial and will return to your garden year after year.

Saving seeds: EASY

Allow the flower heads to dry out on the plant. You can tell when the seeds are ready to harvest when you see black spots inside the flower heads. If you shake the plant and seeds start to fly out, it's time to collect the seeds. To collect chive seeds, gently shake the flower over a paper plate or paper towel. You could also clip the flower heads off the plant and drop them into mason jar with a lid, shake the jar vigorously to release the chive seeds from the flower. Remove the seed heads from the jar and you should be left with the seeds.

CILANTRO/CORIANDER *Coriandrum sativum*

LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 18"-24" | HARVEST IN: 60-90 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Plant outside after danger of frost. Sow seeds thinly and cover with 1/4" of fine soil in full sun. Keep evenly moist. Seedlings emerge in 14-21 days. Thin to stand about 12" apart. Container friendly.

Saving seeds: EASY

Cilantro must flower before it will go to seed. The flowers are small and easy to miss. The flowers will then form small green balls, which will become the seeds. Once the cilantro seeds turn brown, they are ready to be collected. Allow cilantro seeds to dry on the plant before collecting them. Cilantro seeds are very easy to collect – simply pinch the seeds off the plant, and store in a cool, dry place. Cilantro seeds are also known as coriander.



DILL *Anethum graveolens*

LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 24"-48" | HARVEST IN: 40-60 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Direct sow in spring as soon as the soil can be worked. Plant seeds 1/8-1/4" deep, 2 seeds per inch. Seedlings emerge in 10-21 days. Thinning is not necessary, but a 4" final spacing produces healthy, full plants. Sow every three weeks for continuous harvest.

Saving seeds: EASY

In order for the dill plant to set seed, you must allow a few of your plants to flower. Once the flowers fade, the dill seeds will start to form at the end of the star shaped flower stems. Clip the entire flower head from the plant, collect dill seeds by gently pinching them off, seeds will come off easily.

VEGETABLES

ACORN SQUASH *Cucurbita pepo*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Table Queen

MATURES IN: 85 days

Planting seeds: MODERATE

Acorn squash needs plenty of space to grow. Mound your soil into a small hill and sow seed to 1" depth in full sun after danger of frost has passed. Seeds need warmth to germinate and are very frost tender. Seedling emerge in 10-14 days. Plants need a rich soil and should be fertilized monthly with a good all-purpose fertilizer. Harvest in fall before the first frost, when the skin is tough enough to resist being pierced by a fingernail. Leave about a 1" piece of stem attached. Acorn squash can be stored for up to a month in a cool dry place or two weeks in the refrigerator.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Remove seeds from flesh and wash any remaining flesh or strings from the seeds. Lay seeds out in a single layer on a paper towel to dry. The seeds dry fully in approximately 5-7 days. They will harden up and shrink a little in size.

BEAN *Phaseolus vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Blue Lake Pole

MATURES IN: 60 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow seeds 1" deep and 6" apart in full sun after danger of last frost. Thinning is not usually necessary. Continue to sow in between rows after seedlings emerge. Plant near fence, trellis, or provide 6' to 7' pole to climb. Big yields of 6-inch, straight, meaty beans. Seedlings emerge in 7-10 days.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some beans pods to ripen on the plants until they are dry, turning brown and seeds start to rattle inside. This could take up to a month after your harvest. Once the pods have dried, remove from the plant and allow them to dry fully for at least two weeks. After two weeks, shell the beans from the pods.



BEAN *Phaseolus vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Tendergreen Bush

MATURES IN: 55 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow seeds 1" deep and 4" apart in full sun after danger of last frost. Thinning is usually not necessary. Continue to sow every three weeks in between rows through midsummer for continuous harvest. Beans ready to harvest will be about 6" long, narrow, and meaty. Seedlings emerge in 7-10 days. The first harvest will be the largest, but plants will continue to bear fruit throughout the season.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some beans pods to ripen on the plants until they are dry, turning brown and seeds start to rattle inside. This could take up to a month after your harvest. Once the pods have dried, remove from the plant and allow them to dry fully for at least two weeks. After two weeks, shell the beans from the pods.

BEAN *Phaseolus vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Pencil Pod Black Wax Bush

MATURES IN: 54 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow seeds 1" deep and 4" apart in full sun after danger of last frost. Thinning is usually not necessary. Continue to sow every three weeks in between rows through midsummer for continuous harvest. Beans ready to harvest will be about 6" and bright yellow in color. Seedlings emerge in 7-10 days. The first harvest will be the largest, but plants will continue to bear fruit throughout the season.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some beans pods to ripen on the plants until they are dry, turning brown and seeds start to rattle inside. This could take up to a month after your harvest. Once the pods have dried, remove from the plant and allow them to dry fully for at least two weeks. After two weeks, shell the beans from the pods.

BEET *Beta vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full or partial sun

Variety: Detroit Dark Red

MATURES IN: 60 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Start beets outdoors in early spring or 6-8 weeks before first frost in the fall. Sow seeds ½" deep in loose well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. Beets prefer a cool climate and can tolerate a mild frost. Seedlings emerge in 6-12 days. Keep soil moist for best growth, easy harvest, sweetest flavor. After harvest, save those leaves. Leaves can be cooked or enjoyed raw in a salad.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Allow some beets to grow up and wait until the beet tops have turned brown before attempting beet seed harvesting. Remove about 4 inches off the top of the beet plant and store in a cool, dry place for two to three weeks. This will allow the seeds time to ripen. The seed can then be hand raked from the dried foliage inside a paper bag or over a white piece of paper.



BROCCOLI *Brassica oleracea*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: De Cicco

MATURES IN: 50-65 days

Planting seeds: MODERATE

Sow broccoli seeds ¼” deep in fine, well-drained soil. Plant broccoli in a location that gets plenty of sun. Sow in spring or midsummer for a fall crop. Seedlings emerge in 10-21 days, thin to 16” apart. Plants need a rich soil and should be fertilized monthly with a good all-purpose fertilizer. Broccoli is grown for its immature flower heads. Harvest broccoli before they mature (“bolt”) and lose flavor.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Broccoli seeds are hidden in the pods that form after the yellow flowers bloom from the broccoli heads. You should allow some of your broccoli heads to go to flower, after which the seed pods form. For easier harvest, pull the entire plant from the soil and allow the pods to dry on the stalk for about 2 weeks. Remove the dried pods and crush them in your hands over a paper towel. Broccoli seeds are round, very small, and black/brown in color.

CARROTS *Daucus carota*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Nantes

MATURES IN: 60-75 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Carrots do not like to be transplanted, direct sow into the garden is best. Sow carrots ¼” deep, into well-worked soil in full sun. Carrots can be sown early, after danger of heavy frost is over. Cover with a thin layer of fine soil. Keep soil evenly moist, with shallow watering. Seedlings emerge every 14-21 days. Sow every two-three weeks for continuous harvest, or sow a second crop in midsummer for fall harvest.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Carrots are biennial. They will grow their greenery and long tender root this year, but will not flower until next year. In order to save seed you will have to leave 2-3 healthy plants in the ground to overwinter. In the spring, those carrots will reemerge; allow those plants to flower in mid-summer. The flowers contain the seeds, which need to fully ripen on the plant. When those flowers begin to dry out and become brown you can cut the heads off and place in a paper bag. Allow the seeds to dry further in the bag for about a week. Do not harvest too soon, too much moisture can lead to moldy seed. Once the seed heads have dried thoroughly and the seeds have become darker, you can seal your bag and shake vigorously to release the seed. Or, pull apart the seed from the seed head. Store in a cool dry place.

KALE *Brassica oleracea*

LIGHT: Full sun, can tolerate partial sun

Variety: Italian Nero Toscana

MATURES IN: 60 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Plant outdoors in early spring; sow ¼” down in full sun. Kale is not fussy; it will germinate in temperatures as low as 42 degrees and high as 95 degrees. Kale can be sown all summer for a continuous harvest. Seedlings emerge in 5-17 days, thin to 12-18” apart. Harvest the young leaves at the top of the plant to encourage the plant to produce more young tender leaves. *(Continued on next page...)*



KALE *Brassica oleracea***Harvesting seeds: EASY**

Each plant will send up stalks that can get tall. The stalks are brittle and in high winds will detach from the plant. This can happen before the seed has time to mature. If you are experiencing this, tie up the stalks around a stake for support. Once the green seed pods have started to dry out, it is time to harvest seed. Cut the stalks at the bottom of the plant, invert them into a large paper bag and wait for them to dry out completely. When the stalks have dried, hand-rake the seeds away from the stalks over a white piece of paper. Kale seeds are small, dark and round. Kale likes to reseed itself, so you may find yourself with new kale plants next spring.

LETTUCE *Lactuca sativa*

LIGHT: Full sun, can tolerate partial sun

Varieties: Marvel of Four Seasons and Romaine Tri-Colored Blend

MATURES IN: 55-65 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Lettuce prefers cooler weather, sow in full sun about 1/8" down in spring for an early summer harvest or late summer for a fall harvest. Keep soil evenly moist and thin regularly. Does not like to be overcrowded and grows best with plenty of space for air circulation. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Thin to about 12" apart. Lettuce will wilt or become bitter in hot temperatures.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Lettuces are ideal plants to save seeds from as they do not cross-pollinate, which means the seeds will produce identical plants to the parent plant. Allow some of the lettuce to grow flower stalks. Stalks can grow 2-5 feet tall. Seeds begin to ripen 10-24 days after flowers shed their pollen. Harvest seed heads as they begin to dry, carefully pinch the flower heads off the plant, and drop them into a bowl or bag. Once you get them inside, break apart the flower heads and the lettuce seeds will fall out. Lettuce seeds are small, flat, and oval shaped.

ONION *Allium cepa*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Walla Walla Sweet

MATURES IN: 105 days

Planting seeds: MODERATE

Onions like a fertile soil with consistent watering. Sow in full sun 1/2" deep in early spring; plant enough to allow overwintering of a few plants for seed collection the following year. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Harvest when bulbs start to fatten up and stalks turn yellow and flop over. Onions will store in a cool dry place for about a month.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Onions are biennials. Biennials only bloom and produce seed during their second year. After planting your onions, do not harvest all the onions; instead leave a few to overwinter in the garden for the following year. In late fall, cover onions with dried leaves. In spring, you'll find that the plants haven't grown much over the winter, but with luck most have survived. Midsummer, the onions will send up flowers stalks. Once the flower balls dry out, you will notice small black seeds start to appear. Separate seeds from the pod.



PEA *Pisum sativum*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Sugar Snap

MATURES IN: 72 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Peas like cooler weather and regular watering. Sow seeds 1" deep and 6" apart. Peas can adapt to either full sun or part shade. Thinning is not necessary, but allow vines to climb up a fence or trellis. Plant in rich soil in early spring or late summer for a fall harvest. Peas can tolerate a light frost. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Pods can be picked at any stage. Pick pods regularly to encourage more fruit.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some pea pods to stay on the plants until they become fully ripe. Pea seeds dry from the outside in; harvest seeds when the pods are dry, brown and starting to wrinkle. Remove seeds from pods and spread out on a paper towel to dry.

RADISH *Raphanus sativus*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Cherry Belle

MATURES IN: 20-25 days

Planting seeds: EASY

In mid to late spring, plant seeds a few at a time over the course of a month or two before it becomes too hot. Plant seeds 1/2" deep in full sun. Seedlings emerge in 4-6 days. By doing a little at a time, you won't end up with too many at one time. Radishes left unharvested for too long, can become woody and bitter.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

In order to harvest seeds you must allow 1 or 2 radish plants to go to flower. These radishes will not be edible. Once the flowers fade, you should see seed pods that look similar to a small bean start to form on the plant. Allow the seed pods to fully dry on the plant, as they dry the pod will turn brown. Radish seeds are ready to harvest when you can hear the seeds rattle in the pod when you shake it. Cut the seeds off the stem and split open to separate seed from pod. Store in a paper bag.

SPINACH *Spinacia oleracea*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Bloomsdale Long Standing

MATURES IN: 40-45 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Spinach does best in cool weather and short days. Sow spinach in early to mid-spring and again in late summer for a fall crop. Sow in well-worked soil in a sunny location. Cover with a 1/2" of fine soil. Water gently. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Thin plants to stand about 6 inches apart. Harvest when outer leaves are approximately 3" long. As the weather heats up, spinach will become bitter and or bolt. Rather than harvesting all of your spinach, let a few of them grow to save seed.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

In order to save seeds, you must allow some plants to flower. Spinach will send up a tall stalk with short leaves growing the length of the stalk. Allow the plant to grow until you start to see seed forming. Eventually the spinach will die and start to dry out and fall over. This when you gather those stalks. Place the stalks in a large paper bag or hang upside down and allow to dry for another week or two. Once the stalks have dried thoroughly, you can either pull the seeds from the stalks or break the stalks into smaller sections and store in a cool dry place.



ZUCCHINI SQUASH *Cucurbita pepo*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Black Beauty and Cocozelle

MATURES IN: 50 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Plant in full sun and rich soil two weeks after last frost. Prefers a warmer soil in order to germinate. Sow 1" deep, water consistently. Seedlings emerge in 7-10 days. Thin to about 24" apart. Harvest regularly to encourage more fruit.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Remove seeds from the flesh of the zucchini. Rinse the pulp from seeds with water. Lay seeds to dry on a paper towel or cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Allow seeds to dry for about 2 weeks. Stir seeds occasionally to be sure all seeds have dried evenly.

FLOWERS

BLACK-EYED SUSAN *Rudbeckia hirta*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 12"-36"

Planting seeds: EASY

For earlier blooms, sow indoors 5-7 weeks before last frost. Cover seed lightly, as light is required for germination. Bottom water or mist to avoid covering seed with displaced soil. Harden off before transplanting outside. Direct sow Black-Eyed Susan seeds 1/8" deep outside in a sunny location when daytime temperatures reach 70° for best germination. Plant in well-drained soil and loosely cover with soil. Seedlings emerge in 15-20 days.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow the seed heads to dry completely. Look for seed heads that are dried, dark brown to almost black in color. Seed heads with green in the middle are not ready to harvest. Once the seed heads are ready, clip the heads and place on a paper plate or paper towel. Hold the seed head over a paper towel or paper plate and tap the dried stem just below the head with a pencil. This will loosen and help remove the seeds from the seed head. You can also remove the seeds by hand over a paper towel. Black-Eyed Susan seeds a very small black seeds. Store in a cool, dry place.

COSMOS *Cosmos sulphureus*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 24"-36"

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow seeds in well-drained soil after danger of frost has passed. Plant seeds about 12 inches apart in sunny location. Seedlings emerge after 5-10 days. Mature plants may require staking in windy locations. For earlier blooms, seeds can be started indoors 5-7 weeks before last frost. Harden off before transplanting.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

When Cosmos are in bloom, take notice of the blooms you find particularly attractive. Allow the flowers to die back and the petals to fall off; you will be left with a green seed head. Leave that seed head to dry until it turns brown and easily snaps off the stem. Remove the dried flower heads and over a paper plate or paper towel, crack open the seed pods to remove the seeds. Allow the seeds to fully dry for a week before storing in a cool, dry place.



GAILLARDIA *Gaillardia X Grandiflora*

PERENNIAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Sunset Goblin

HEIGHT: 12"

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow ¼" deep in well-drained soil. Plant in early spring in a location with full sun. Seedlings emerge in 8-15 days. Mature plants are drought tolerant. Cut back flowers as they fade to encourage continuous blooming. They perform well in borders and containers.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some flower stalks to stay on the plant after flowering. Cut off the flower stalk once the petals drop and the seed heads begins to look brown and dry. Place the seed heads in an opened paper bag and allow the seeds to dry for 10-14 days. Once dry, gently rub the seed head to dislodge the seeds over a paper towel or white piece of paper. Remove any stems or non-seed material. Store in a cool, dry place.

MARIGOLD *Tagetes*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Mixed

HEIGHT: 6"-10"

Planting seeds: EASY

Select a sunny location to sow seed ¼" deep in spring after danger of frost has passed. Keep evenly moist during germination. Seedlings emerge in 5-7 days. Remove faded flowers to encourage more blossoms. Perfect in borders and containers.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

As your marigold plants begin to dry out, wait until the petals are brown and dried out and the base, which is the seedpod, is starting to turning brown. Remove the dried flower head from the stem. Lay out a sheet of paper towel. Hold the base of the stem, pull off and discard the dried petals and leaves. You will see the slender, pointy, two-colored seeds inside attached to the base. Separate them and spread them on a paper towel. Allow the seeds to dry for about a week.

PURPLE CONEFLOWER *Echinacea purpurea*

PERENNIAL | LIGHT: Full or partial sun | HEIGHT: 24"-48"

Planting seeds: EASY

Starting indoors 8-10 weeks before last frost is recommended. Sow each seed 1/8" Keep seeds evenly moist. Seedlings emerge in 10-15 days. Harden off before transplanting outside. Seeds can be directly sown outdoors after last frost date in groups of 3-4 seeds. Sow 1/8" deep in fine soil and keep evenly watered. Thin to one plant after seedlings emerge. Purple Coneflowers can tolerate a variety of growing conditions. Perennial in zones 3-10.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

As the plants approach maturity, discontinue watering the plants. Too much moisture can harm the seed head. As the plants die back you be left with a green seed head. Allow the seed heads to dry completely. Look for heads that are dried, dark brown to almost black in color. Seed heads with green in the middle are not ready to harvest. Once the seed heads are ready, clip the heads and place on a paper plate or paper towel. Remove the seeds from the seed head by hand, or drop 2-3 heads in a large mason jar and cover with a lid and give a vigorous shake. Open the jar and remove the heads and you are left with the seeds. Store seeds in a cool, dry place.



SUNFLOWER *Helianthus species*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Ornamental mixed colors

HEIGHT: 48"-72"

Planting seeds: EASY

Select a location in full sun with average soil. Sow seeds ½" deep after danger of frost has passed. Seedlings emerge in 5-10 days. Keep plants well-watered when young. Mature plants can withstand heat and drought. Cut flowers regularly to extend bloom. Perfect for cut flowers or back of the border.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Once your sunflowers have died back completely and the backs of the blooms are brown, it is time to harvest. The seeds should be plump and somewhat loose. Cut the stalks with pruners about one foot down and place in a container that can catch any loose seeds. Rub the seed head firmly over a large bowl to catch the seeds. Pick out seeds from the rest of the sunflower debris and rinse. Allow the sunflower seeds to dry on a paper towel for 3-5 days.

