



THE 2021 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. Pinch off buds to encourage new growth. Harvest any time after plant is established. 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. Store seeds in a cool, dry place.

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 heads over a container. You could also clip the flower heads off the plant and drop them into a paper bag. Then fold over the top of the bag and shake it to release the chive seeds from the flower heads. Store in a cool, dry place.

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 form small green balls, which will become the seeds. Once the cilantro seeds turn brown, they are ready to be collected. These dried seeds are also known as coriander. 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 them in a cool, dry place.



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. Allow the flowers to dry on the stem and clip the entire flower head from the plant. Collect seeds by gently pinching them off or shaking the dried heads over a paper towel or paper plate. Allow seeds to dry completely before storing in a cool, dry place.

THYME *Thymus vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 12" | HARVEST IN: 180-200 days

Planting seeds: EASY

START INDOORS 8 weeks before approximate last frost date. Sow seeds 1/4" deep in a seed starting mix and keep soil evenly moist. Once seedlings have two pairs of true leaves, slow down on watering and transplant to individual containers. When plants reach about 2"-3" high, thyme may be planted outside after last frost. Direct sowing is possible, but not recommended as germination is slow. Plant in containers or spaced about 9" apart. Thyme prefers a well-drained, dry soil. Harvest just before the plant flowers.

Saving seeds: EASY

Allow a couple of stems to remain on the plant to flower. Snip stems with flowers before flowers are fully dry to avoid losing seed. Hang stems upside down and allow to fully dry for another 2-3 weeks. Once dry, shake or gently rub flowers over a paper towel or paper plate to release the seed. Separate the seed from the flower debris, also known as chaff, and store in a cool, dry place.



VEGETABLES

BEAN *Phaseolus vulgaris*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Dragon Tongue and Tendergreen

MATURES IN: 55-60 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Soak seeds overnight and then sow seeds outside, 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. Store in a cool, dry place.

CARROTS *Daucus carota*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Nantes

MATURES IN: 70 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. 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.

FENNEL *Foeniculum vulgare*

LIGHT: Full sun | MATURES IN: 90 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Sow outdoors 2-3 weeks before last frost date. Soak seeds overnight to speed up germination. Plant in full sun, lay seeds on soil and cover lightly. Keep evenly moist, but not over wet. Thin to 8-12 inches apart after first true leaves emerge. Fennel leaves can be harvested any time once the plant is well established. Take only a few leaves at a time so not to damage the remaining plant. The bulb is ready for harvest once it reaches about the size of a tennis ball. To harvest the bulb, cut leaves and stalks down to about 1-2" from bulb. *(Continued on next page...)*



FENNEL *Foeniculum vulgare*

Remove the soil from around the bulb and gently pull up or use a trowel to ease out of the ground. Smaller bulbs will be sweeter.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

In order for the fennel plant to set seed you must allow a few of your plants to flower. Once the flowers fade, the fennel seeds will start to form at the end of the star shaped flower stems. Allow the flowers to dry on the stem and clip the entire flower head from the plant. Collect seeds by gently pinching them off or shaking the dried heads over a paper towel or paper plate. Allow seeds to dry completely before storing in a cool, dry place.

LETTUCE *Lactuca sativa*

LIGHT: Full sun/partial shade

Variety: Parris Island Cos

MATURES IN: 68 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. Carefully break apart flower heads over a paper towel or paper plate and the lettuce seeds will fall out. Separate seeds from flower debris, also known as chaff. Lettuce seeds are small, flat and oval shaped. Store in a cool, dry place.

PEA *Pisum sativum*

LIGHT: Full sun to part shade

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 paper towel to dry. Store in a cool, dry place.



PEPPER *Capsicum annuum*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: California Wonder and Jalapeño Early

MATURES IN: 75 days

Planting seeds: MODERATE

START INDOORS in a warm, well-lit area about 8-10 weeks prior to average last frost date. Most pepper seeds will sprout in about a week if kept in temperatures of 70-80 degrees. Sow in individual containers filled with seed starting mix ¼" deep. Cover with plastic wrap to hold in the moisture and humidity. Remove plastic wrap when seedlings emerge. Do not let pepper seedlings dry out, but rather keep evenly moist. Harden off for at least a week outside before transplanting. Do not plant your pepper seedlings outside too soon. Night temperatures must average 55-60 degrees in order for peppers to thrive.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow one or two peppers to remain on the plant until fully ripe. Harvest fruits up to two weeks past edible stage. Cut the pepper across the top and use the stem to twist out the core. Scrap the seeds onto a paper plate or coffee filter and spread seeds out to dry. Allow the seeds to dry for 1-2 weeks. Seeds are ready for storage when dry, brittle and can easily be snapped in half. Store seeds in a cool, dry place. Wear gloves to protect your skin from the oils of capsaicin, especially when handling hot peppers.

PUMPKIN *Cucurbita moschata*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Jarrahdale and Musquee de Provence

MATURES IN: 110 days

Planting seeds: EASY

Pumpkins do best when started with direct sow; they are however, sensitive to the cold, so wait until the soil temperature is about 70 degrees to sow outside. Plant 3-4 seeds in mounds, 1" deep in well-drained soil about 12 inches apart. Make sure to fertilize pumpkins as they are heavy feeders. Allow plenty of room for the vines to spread out.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Remove the pulp and seeds from inside the pumpkin. Rinse seeds thoroughly under running water in a colander to remove the pulp. As the water runs, pick seeds to save from the pulp. The biggest seeds tend to have the best chance at germination. Place seeds on a paper plate or coffee filter and allow rinsed seeds to dry for 1-2 weeks. Make sure seeds are thoroughly dried out before storing in a cool, dry place.

SPINACH *Spinacia oleracea*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Bloomsdale Long Standing

MATURES IN: 40-48 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 outside in well-worked soil in a sunny location. Cover with a ½" of fine soil. Water gently. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days, to avoid overcrowding 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. *(Continued on next page...)*



SPINACH *Spinacia oleracea***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 continue 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.

SQUASH *Cucurbita pepo*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Black Beauty Zucchini and Lemon Summer Squash

MATURES IN: 55-60 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.

TOMATO *Solanum lycopersicum*

LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Black Krim, Valencia Orange, Yellow Pear

MATURES IN: 75-80 days

Planting seeds: MODERATE

START INDOORS in a warm well-lit area about 6-8 weeks prior to average last frost date. Sow in individual containers filled with seed starting mix ¼" deep. Cover with plastic wrap to hold in the heat and humidity. Remove plastic wrap after seeds have sprouted. Keep soil moist and warm. Plants require a dark period of about 8 hours each day to grow. Harden off in a sheltered area outside for at least a week prior to transplanting. Support with cage or trellis.

Harvesting seeds: MODERATE

Tomatoes seeds are enclosed in a gel-like sack that contains growth inhibitors to prevent the seeds from sprouting inside the tomato. The best way to remove this gel covering is to allow the fruits to ferment. Choose tomatoes that are the best-looking ripe tomatoes to save seeds from. Slice the tomato in half to expose the seed cavities. Scoop out the seeds which will be surrounded by the pulp. Place in a small mason jar or container and add about a cup of water to the jar or container. Cover with a paper towel or cheesecloth. Every day, check on the process of the fermentation. You should eventually see a layer of mold on top of the seeds and pulp. The process is done when bubbles start rising from the mixture or when the entire layer of tomato pulp is covered with mold. Generally, you will see that the seeds will settle to the bottom and the thicker pulp/mold will sit on the top. Don't leave the seeds fermenting past this stage or they may begin to germinate. Scoop out the foam and any floating seeds and discard. The seeds remaining at the bottom are the viable seeds. Rinse those seeds thoroughly and allow to dry on a paper plate or coffee filter for several days to a couple weeks. Make sure seeds are thoroughly dried before storing in a cool, dry place.



FLOWERS

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 a 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 date. Harden off before transplanting.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

When cosmos are in bloom, take notice of the blooms that 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 head 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.

MARIGOLD *Tagetes*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Lemon Drop

HEIGHT: 6"-10"

Planting seeds: EASY

Select a sunny location to sow seed $\frac{1}{4}$ " 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. May be started indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost date for earlier blooms.

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 turn 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. Store seeds in a cool, dry place.

MEXICAN SUNFLOWER *Tithonia rotundifolia*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun | HEIGHT: 4'-6'

Variety: Red Torch

Planting seeds: EASY

Select a location in full sun with average soil. Sow seeds 6"-12" apart and $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep after danger of frost has passed. Seedlings emerge in 7-14 days. Keep plants well-watered when young. Mature plants can withstand heat and drought. Provide support as needed for tall plants. Cut flowers regularly to extend bloom. Perfect for cut flowers or back of the border.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Allow some flower stalks to stay on the plant after flowering. Once your sunflowers have died back completely and the backs of the blooms are brown, it is time to harvest. *(Continued on next page...)*



MEXICAN SUNFLOWER *Tithonia rotundifolia*

Cut off the flower stalk 1-2 inches from the flower head. Place the seed heads in a paper bag and allow the seeds to dry for 10-15 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, also known as chaff. Store in a cool, dry place.

MORNING GLORY *Ipomoea purpurea*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Grandpa Ott

HEIGHT: 8'-10'

Planting seeds: EASY

Plant seeds outdoors in moist, well-drained soil. Before planting, nick the hard seed coat with a file or soak in warm water for 24 hours before planting for better germination. Morning glory requires a support in which to climb on or can be grown as a groundcover. Morning glories self-seed effusively, making it very likely that they will return the following year.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

As the flowers die off, allow some to turn brown and harden on the vine. Once brown and dry, crack open one of the pods. If you find a number of small black seeds, your morning glory seeds are ready for harvest. Snap off the stems below the seed pods and collect all the pods in a paper bag. Allow them to continue to dry in the bag for 2-3 weeks. Once dry, crack them open over a paper towel or paper plate. The seeds are small and black, but large enough to spot easily. Try to pierce a seed with a thumbnail. If the seed is too hard to puncture, they have dried enough. Store in a cool, dry place.

PURPLE CONEFLOWER *Echinacea purpurea*

PERENNIAL | LIGHT: Full sun to part shade | HEIGHT: 24"-48"

Planting seeds: EASY

START INDOORS 8-10 weeks before last frost is recommended. Sow each seed 1/8" deep. 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 be hard on the 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, you are then left with the seeds. Store in a cool dry place.

SHASTA DAISY *Leucanthemum x superbum*

PERENNIAL | LIGHT: Full sun to part shade | HEIGHT: 24"-36"

Planting seeds: EASY

START INDOORS about 8 weeks before last frost date. Plant seeds about 1/8" deep in a good seed starting soil. As seedlings emerge, provide plenty of light. *(Continued on next page...)*



SHASTA DAISY *Leucanthemum x superbum*

Fertilize with a half strength fertilizer when seedlings are about 4 weeks old. Harden off before transplanting outside. Plant in full sun or part shade in well-drained soil. Can be started outdoors after last frost, but may not have flowers the first year. Deadhead spent flowers to encourage more growth.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Toward the end of the growing season, allow some blooms to remain on the plant to naturally dry and wilt. Seed heads will form after the petals are completely dry. When the petals have fallen off and the seed head is dry, snip off the flower heads and drop them into a paper bag. Allow the heads to dry even further for about 1-2 weeks. Once the seed heads are brittle, take each seed head and rub between two fingers over a paper plate or paper towel to release the seeds. The seeds will be small and brown. Place in a paper bag or envelope and store in a cool, dry place.

ZINNIA *Zinnia augustifolia*

ANNUAL | LIGHT: Full sun

Variety: Classic Mixed

HEIGHT: 12"-18"

Planting seeds: EASY

Zinnia grow best in full sun after danger of frost has passed. Direct sow seeds 1/8" deep in rich well-drained soil. Seedlings emerge in 5-10 days. Deadhead zinnia flowers to prolong flowering. Zinnia are best suited for borders and containers.

Harvesting seeds: EASY

Stop deadheading zinnias towards the end of summer to allow the flowers to develop seeds. Leave the brown flowers on the plants so the seeds can ripen. Seeds are ripe when the flower heads become dry and somewhat brittle. Once you have dried blooms, remove them from the stem with scissors. Place the pods on a paper towel or paper plate and allow to dry completely. Once dry, crush the outer shells of the pods by rolling them between your hands to release the seeds. Separate the debris from the seeds. Store in a cool, dry place.

