

Seed saving basics

Any seed can be saved and planted, but a little knowledge will improve results.

It is illegal to attempt to save hybrid seeds as they are patented. However, it is really difficult to do anyway since it would involve hand pollination.

In my 30 yrs of comparison gardening heirloom plants taste best. I've done side by side growing and taste testing a wide variety of plants including tomatoes, both summer and winter squashes, beans, and a variety of greens.

Heirloom and open pollinated (generally called O.P.) designation mean any seed you save from grown fruit should produce identical fruit when that seed is grown out in later years. But we all know mother nature can be tricky and sometimes we get surprises anyway.

If you know how to save tomato seed, you can save any seed using the same basic steps. Only tomatoes require the fermentation first step, so with other seeds just move on to the cleaning and sterilization information. Often speedy drying is critical to prevent early germination. Seeds saved from 2026 grown fruit should be labeled for 2027 usage.

It is difficult to save seed from any squash or pepper because those plants tend to cross pollinate like crazy and it **usually** makes the resulting fruit not as tasty as the parents.

I have made available a couple helpful articles on squash seed saving.

It is ALWAYS critical to sterilize the seed prior to usage to prevent carryover of common plant diseases from one year's garden into the next. I learned this the hard way.

Seeds often remain fertile for more than one year. I've found that the larger the seed or the harder/shinier the shell the longer it will last. Proper storage in cool dry condition extends seed life. Keeping seed in non-refrigerated area cuts life short. Small or dull seeds that look like crushed charcoal (Onions and Chives) generally only last one year.