

Growing and Seed Saving Tips – Wet Seeds

Isolation distance: the *minimum* distance for seed saving between *varieties* of vegetable types. If two varieties of the same species of plant did cross-pollinate, a hybrid plant would result from the seeds you save and grow next year. Examples of species: tomatoes, cucumber, muskmelon, sweet pepper, acorn squash, etc. Longer distances are even better than the minimum distance.

Mature fruit: for most varieties, the fruit are coloured (not green), usually slightly soft, and the flesh is juicy. Many types come off of the plant easily when they are mature. Some varieties of ripe fruit are fragrant.

Tomatoes: start indoors in early April and plant outdoors in mid-May. The isolation distance is 15 m from any other variety of tomato. If flower clusters are bagged and seeds saved from bagged fruit, different varieties can be grown 1 m apart. Self- and insect-pollinated. Save seeds from 2 or 3 bagged or isolated **mature** fruit. They can be harvested when not fully mature, but must be placed in a warm spot to continue to ripen before removing pulp and seeds. Ferment the pulp to save seeds. Harvest and eat the rest.

Peppers: start indoors in March and plant outdoors in mid-May. The isolation distance between sweet pepper varieties is 45 m; the distance between hot pepper varieties is 200 m. Most hot peppers will cross-pollinate with sweet peppers, so they must be isolated by 200 m. If the flowers are bagged and seeds saved from bagged fruit, different varieties can be grown within 1 m of each other. Self- and insect pollinated. Save seeds from 2 or 3 very ripe (coloured, not green) fruit. Harvest and eat the rest.

Cucumbers: start indoors late April and plant outdoors in mid- to late May. The isolation distance between varieties is 400 m. Insect pollinated, so flowers cannot be bagged. Cucumbers will only cross-pollinate with other cucumbers. We eat immature fruit, so for seed-saving they must be left on the vine until they turn yellow and the skin softens. The seeds and pulp can be fermented like tomatoes, or the gel coat rubbed off the seeds with a towel.

Muskmelons: start indoors in late April and plant outdoors mid- to late May. The isolation distance between varieties is 400 m. Insect pollinated, so flowers cannot be bagged. Several different plants belong to the muskmelon species, including casaba melon and Armenian cucumber. All members of this species will cross-pollinate, but not

with watermelon. Allow fruit to remain on the vine until it is ripe for eating, then harvest and remove the seeds for saving.

Squash: start indoors in late April and plant outdoors mid- to late May. The 3 main species of squash won't cross-pollinate each other. The isolation distance for varieties within a species is 400 m. Insect pollinated, but flowers can be bagged and hand-pollinated for seed saving. Allow fruit to remain on the vine as long as possible before frost, then harvest and store for a few weeks before extracting seeds.

Watermelon: start indoors in late April and plant outdoors mid- to late May. The isolation distance between varieties is 400 m. Insect pollinated, so the flowers can't be bagged. Watermelon will only cross-pollinate with other watermelons, not with muskmelon. Allow fruit to remain on the vine until it is ready to eat. Then harvest and remove seeds.