



Growing and Seed Saving Tips – Dry Seeds

Isolation distance: the *minimum* distance for seed saving between *varieties* of vegetable types when they are in flower. If two varieties of the same type of plant did cross-pollinate, a hybrid plant would result from the seeds you save and grow next year. Types (species) are beans, peas, lettuce, brassicas, etc. Longer distances are even better than the minimum distance, especially for beans.

Dry and Brown: the seeds or pods on all of the following must be left on the plant until they are mature, i.e. dry and brown. The pods of some varieties will shatter (open quickly while still on the plant), so harvest pods and seeds carefully.

Beans: isolation distance 5 m from any other beans. Wait until the soil temperature is 16°C before you plant – mid- to late May. Mostly self-pollinating. Save a few pods on each of 20 plants if possible. Harvest and eat the rest.

Bok choy: isolation distance 200 m from any other Chinese cabbage or Asian greens. Tolerates cool weather. Insect pollinated. Pull out any plants that bolt early. Save seeds from 6 plants; harvest and eat the rest.

Beets, Swiss chard: isolation distance between varieties of beets and Swiss chard the second year after planting (biennials) 500 m. They are the same species, so will cross-pollinate with each other. Wind pollinated. Beets and sometimes chard must be dug up and overwintered at just above freezing. Save seeds from at least 6 plants.

Broccoli: isolation distance 200 m from any other brassica of the same species (kale, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi) *in flower*. Can be started indoors in April for an earlier crop. Insect pollinated. Save seeds from at least 6 plants. Cut the first heads to eat. Let side shoots flower and produce seed pods.

Cabbage, kale: isolation distance 200 m from any other brassica of the same species. Can be started indoors for an earlier crop. Insect pollinated. These are biennials, which flower and set seeds the second year after planting. Some varieties need to be dug up and stored just above freezing over winter. Save seeds from at least 6 plants.

Carrot: isolation distance 400 m from any other variety of carrot *in flower* and Queen Anne's Lace. Insect pollinated. Keep plants moist. These are biennial, flowering and setting seeds the second year after planting. Dig up and store at least 20 plants over the winter.

Lettuce: isolation distance 3 m from any other lettuce *in flower*. A cool season crop, so plant early. Self-pollinating. Allow 6 or more of the best plants to bolt, flower, and set seeds. Harvest and eat the rest.

Onions, Leeks: isolation distance 200 m from any other onion *in flower*. Leeks and onions won't cross-pollinate with each other. These are biennials, which flower and set seeds the second year after planting. Insect pollinated. Save seeds from at least 20 plants.

Peas, chickpeas: isolation distance 3 m from any other peas. Garden peas and chickpeas won't cross-pollinate with each other. Plant seeds when the soil temperature reaches 10°C. Self-pollinating. Save a few pods on each of 20 plants. Harvest and eat the rest.

Radishes: isolation distance 200 m from any other radish *in flower* (check your neighbour's garden). Insect pollinated. Save seeds from at least 12 plants; harvest and eat the rest. Radishes do best in cool weather, so plant early.

Rutabaga, Siberian Kale: isolation distance 250 m from any other variety of rutabaga or Siberian (Red Russian) kale *in flower*. They will not cross with cabbage, European kale, turnip, or their relatives. These plants are biennial, so will need to be overwintered for them to flower and set seeds. They are cold hardy to -12°C and can be left in the ground if they are heavily mulched. At least 8 plants should be overwintered.