



Southern Exposure Seed Exchange

[www.southernexposure.com](http://www.southernexposure.com)

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Check out these seed saving resources online:

Free manuals at [www.savingourseeds.org/](http://www.savingourseeds.org/)

The Organic Seed Alliance [www.seedalliance.org/](http://www.seedalliance.org/)

The Seed Savers Exchange [www.exchange.seedsavers.org/](http://www.exchange.seedsavers.org/)

The Grassroots Seed Network [www.grassrootsseednetwork.org/](http://www.grassrootsseednetwork.org/)

## Wet Seed Saving for Home Use See reverse for dry seed saving

*General principles of saving seeds that mature in a wet fruit:* Avoid or minimize cross-pollination by isolating from other varieties of the same species. Fermentation helps reduce risk of disease, separate seeds from pulp, and may increase germination. Excessive fermentation may cause sprouting or rot. Use a lid to keep bugs out. Mature seeds (other than watermelon), when separated from pulp, will generally sink, making seeds easy to rinse. After rinsing, dry seeds thoroughly. Protect from rodents in storage.

| Crop                                   | Isolation Distance | Self / Cross | Min. Population |                       | Seed lifespan, room temp | When and How to Harvest   |
|--|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
|  |                    |              | Viable Seed     | Long-Term Maintenance |                          |   |
| Eggplant                               | 50 ft.             | Self         | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 3 years                  | Harvest after fruits turn dull yellow. Cut into 1-2" cubes and cover with water for 24 hours at room temperature (stirring once midway). Squish seeds out of the fruit. Let sit 12 hours more if seed is still difficult to remove. Rinse and spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.  |
| Tomatoes, heirloom                     | 20 ft.             | Self         | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 4 years                  | Harvest fruits when fully ripe. Mash or blend into a container with a loose fitting lid. Let sit at room temperature until bubbles stop forming (usually 36 hours), stirring every 12 hours. Pull off large chunks. Rinse seeds. Spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.   |
| Tomatoes, modern                       | 5 ft.              |              |                 |                       |                          |   |
| Cucumber                               | 300 ft.            | Cross        | 1 plant         | 20 plants             | 3 years                  | Harvest fruits that have turned yellow or brown. Cure at room temperature for 2 weeks or until there are signs of mold. Open fruits and scoop seeds out into a container. Let sit at room temperature for 2 days, stirring every 12 hours. Rinse seeds. Spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.  |
| Squash, Zucchini, Pumpkins, Cantaloupe | 300 ft.            | Cross        | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 3 years                  | Allow the fruits to grow big and hard. Let sit at room temperature for one month to cure. Cut the fruit. Scoop out the seeds. Rinse them, removing all the fleshy matter. Spread them into a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks. To more easily clean the seeds, we cover them with water for 24 hours (stir once after the first 12 hours) before rinsing and drying. |
| Watermelon                             | 300 ft.            | Cross        | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 3 years                  | When fruits are fully ripe, scoop the guts out and leave at room temperature for 2-3 days, stirring every 12 hours. Rinse seeds through a strainer, as they won't sink. Spread in a thin layer to dry for 3 weeks.  |

# Dry Seed Saving for Home Use

*See reverse for wet seed saving*

*General principles of saving seeds that mature in a dry pod, or in the open air:* Avoid or minimize cross-pollination by isolating from other varieties of the same species that might flower at the same time. Harvest before rain to keep mature seeds or pods from getting wet. Mature seeds will often fall from seedheads. When harvesting whole seedheads or pods, allow them to dry further, away from direct sunlight, before detaching seeds. This helps ensure seed maturation. To remove chaff, winnow by carefully pouring in front of a fan. Use one wide container to catch seed, & another to catch chaff. Check that not too many seeds land in chaff container. If necessary, use screens to further remove chaff. Protect from insects in storage.

| Crop  | Isolation Distance  | Self / Cross | Min. Population |                       | Seed lifespan, room temp | When and How to Harvest   |
|---|---|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
|   |   |              | Viable Seed     | Long-Term Maintenance |                          |   |
| Beans, string (similar methods for other beans)                     | 10 ft.  | Self         | 1 plant         | 6 plants              | 4 years                  | Harvest pods when they have turned leathery & begun to turn brown. Allow them to dry in a single layer out of direct sunlight until 1 week after seeds rattle in the pods. Thresh pods either individually, or by putting in a pillowcase and stomping on it. Winnow on high fan speed. |
| Lettuce   | 5 ft.   | Self         | 1 plant         | 6 plants              | 2 years                  | EITHER 1.) When plants are in half feather, dig up root balls and let tops sit on a tarp for 2 weeks. OR 2.) After plants have begun to "feather", knock seeds off into a bucket by vibrating plants. Winnow on low fan speed.  |
| Peas, Garden  | 10 ft.  | Self         | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 3 years                  | Harvest after pods have turned leathery and begun to turn brown. Allow pods to dry in a single layer until 1 week after seeds rattle in pods.   |
| Peas, Southern  | 10 ft.  | Self         | 1 plant         | 20 plants             | 4 years                  | Harvest pods when crinkly dry or leathery. Allow them to dry in a thin layer for 2 weeks. Thresh & winnow as with beans.  |
| Peppers (can also be processed wet)                                 | 40 ft.  | Self         | 1 plant         | 10 plants             | 2 years                  | After the fruits are completely ripe (in their last color phase), cut them open, scrape the seeds on to a paper plate in a single layer, and allow them to dry for 2 weeks.   |
| Okra  | 300 ft  | Cross        | 1 plant         | 6 plants              | 4 years                  | Allow pods to mature on plants until brown or splitting open. Clip pods and allow to dry until 1 week after fully brown. Remove seeds.  |
| Brassicas (radish, collards, mustard kale, broccoli, cabbage, etc.) | 300 ft.   | Cross        | 5 plants        | 75 plants             | 3 years                  | Allow overwintered plants to bolt. Harvest seed pods when they and the seeds inside them are brown. Allow them to dry in a layer no more than 1/4 inch thick for 2 weeks. Thresh by vigorously rubbing handfuls of pods, or by putting pods in a pillowcase and stomping on it. Winnow. |
| Spinach   | 300 ft.   | Cross        | 10 plants       | 75 plants             | 2 years                  | Allow plants to bolt. They will segregate into male and female plants. Harvest the seed from the female plants when they are brown. Allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.  |
| Leeks, Parsley  | 300 ft.   | Cross        | 5 plants        | 50 plants             | 1 year                   | Overwinter and allow to flower. Harvest seeds when they are brown and allow them to dry in a single layer for 2 weeks.  |
| Corn  | 300 ft.   | Cross        | 10 plants       | 250 plants            | 4 years                  | Harvest ears after they are brown and allow them to dry further in the shucks in a single layer for two weeks. Shell.   |
| Annual Flowers & Herbs  | Let flowers dry on the plant. When seeds look like the ones that were initially planted, or when stalks are brown at least an inch down from the seedheads, cut seedheads and allow to dry for 2 weeks in a single layer. Or, use lettuce method #2, above. |              |                 |                       |                          |   |