

# SEED LIBRARY

borrow | grow | share

## Saving Seed



Hopefully you have had some success in growing over the course of this season- and if it wasn't with physical plants, I'm sure you learned a thing or two which counts as growing for sure!

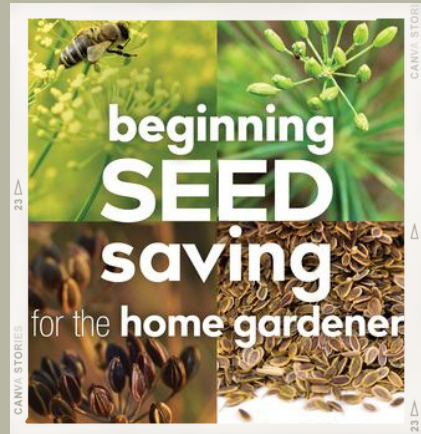
*a garden is not a place  
it's a journey* -Monty Don

We hope you are able to bring seeds back to the library at the end of the season. But things don't always work out as planned. The weather doesn't cooperate, insects or other predators take out the plants, we take on more than we can handle and the list goes on...

This edition of our newsletter is focused on what we came here to do- save seeds! So that we can keep this seed library going (and growing) season after season, year after year!

### RESOURCES

for learning how to save seed



*Book: Beginning Seed Saving for the Home Gardener  
Available in the library!  
([Reserve the book here](#))*

#### Seeds of Diversity Canada

**Downloadable files:**  
[Saving Tomato Seeds](#)  
[Saving Lettuce Seeds](#)  
[Saving Pea & Bean Seeds](#)

**Links:**  
[Cleaning Your Seeds](#)  
[Drying Your Seeds](#)  
[Storing Your Seeds](#)

# Annual, Biennial, Perennial?

Not all plants **flower, set seed, and die in a single growing season**. Those that do, like lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers, **are called annuals**. **Biennials**, such as carrots and onions, **don't flower until their second growing season**, after they have gone through a cold period. Some long lived plants, like apple trees and asparagus, are **perennial, surviving and flowering for many years**.

## Know How To Harvest Seeds

Garden crops can be classified as either dry fruited or wet fruited. Collecting seeds from dry fruited crops, can be as simple as going out to the garden, handpicking a few mature seedpods, and bringing them into the house for further drying and cleaning. Fruits from wet fruited crops must be picked when their seeds are mature. The harvested fruits are either crushed or cut open, and the seeds are extracted from the flesh and pulp before the seeds are dried.

## Know When Your Seeds Are Mature

Dry fruited crops, like grains, lettuce, and beans, can be removed from the plant once seeds are dry and hard. You'll know when they're ready if they rattle in the seed pod when shaken. For crops that produce wet fruits, the seeds are not always mature when the fruits are ready to eat. Eggplant, cucumber, and summer squash fruit are eaten when the fruits are immature and still edible, but before the seeds are actually mature. This means that seed savers need to leave a few fruits to fully mature in the garden when they want to save seeds.

## Storing Seeds

Seeds are happiest when they are stored in a cool, dark, and dry place. A dark closet in a cooler part of the house or a dry, cool basement are both good spaces to store seeds for a year or two. Once properly dried, seeds can also be sealed in airtight containers and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for several years. The seeds of some crops are naturally longer lived. Tomato seeds and beans can be left for many years in adequate storage conditions, while onion and carrot seeds are generally short lived. Don't forget to label your seeds with the crop type, variety name, and any useful notes about your seed source, when you harvested the seeds, and how many plants you harvested from.





**borrow | grow | share**

*Need seeds?*

**TAKE A PACKET,**  
*Have seeds to spare?*  
**LEAVE A PACKET**

**The basic idea is this:**

Borrow a packet of seeds, plant them, and let some of them go to maturity. You then harvest that next generation of seeds, and return them to the Muskoka Lakes Public Library so other people can check them out. Then repeat the cycle!

## **SAVING SEEDS HELPS YOUR AND YOUR COMMUNITY...**

save money | increase access to food | preserve genetic diversity | promote self-sufficiency  
help pollinators | connect with ancestors | adapt to changing environment | learn about nature

## **SEED-SAVING TIPS**

### **DRY SEEDS**

(in a capsule, pod, husk or case such as peas, beans, lettuce, sweet corn, radish, carrot, beets and most garden flowers)

- Leave on plant until maturity.
- Wait until they are dry on the stalk (beans) or have flowered (lettuce).
- Remove seeds and spread them out in a dry and well-ventilated spot.
- Remove any remaining plant matter.

### **WET SEEDS**

(in fleshy, wet fruit like tomatoes, cucumbers and other large soft fruits such as pumpkins)

- Wait until plant is very ripe or overripe.
- Scoop out seeds and put in a bucket with warm water.
- Let the mixture sit and ferment for a few days, mixing daily. \*Fermentation is required to reduce disease and pest problems.
- Good seeds will settle to the bottom
- Bad seeds will float at the top.
- If mold forms, pour off mold along with floating seeds, and pulp.
- Rinse and lay out to dry in a well-ventilated area.

- Put dried seeds in a container in the freezer for a few days to kill any remaining pests.
- Store labeled seeds in a jar or envelope, in a cool, dry place for up to 3-5 years.

We will have envelopes available here in the library that you can pick up for returning your saved seeds in. Or use this template to print off your own.

**SEEDS**

plant name

date

save some seeds and donate them to the Muskoka Lakes Public Library seed library for others to check out!

notes...

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# Challenge #3

**THIS IS THE ONE WE'VE ALL BEEN WORKING TOWARDS!**

In joining our Seed Library, you committed to our mission statement:

**"borrow | grow | share"**

*You promised to...*

- Plant the seeds you borrowed and care for them to the best of your ability,
- Commit to learn and grow personally through this process (and hopefully grow some food too!),
- Share seeds that you have saved and bring them back to the library so that we can do it all again and again and again!

*If all went well, we would love it if you could save and return some of your seeds back to the library!*

No pressure if it doesn't work out this year.  
We hope you'll give it another shot next year!