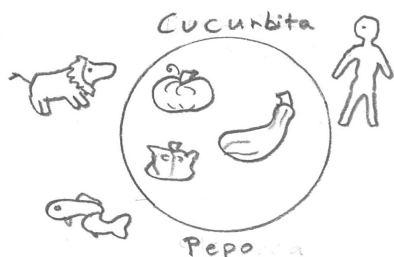


Let's Get Started!

Heirloom Seeds are easiest to save. They will create plants that are similar most of the time. They have already been chosen by people to create harvests that are consistent, useful and plentiful.

Hybrid seeds can produce big harvests, pretty flowers, or plants that are resistant to disease, but it can be hard or impossible to save seeds from their plants. I'll explain why soon...



Species

All living things belong to their species. A plant, animal, fungus, or germ can create fertile offspring with another member of its own species.

A variety is a group within a species that shows a difference in its appearance or way of life.

Heirloom (or heritage) seeds are of one variety. A hybrid's parents can be different varieties or even different species. A hybrid will make offspring that are inconsistent, or even none at all. To start saving seeds, be sure to plant Heirloom seeds

Sources and Resources

NGOs

Seedsodiversity.ca
Members-only nation-wide seed network
Halifax Heritage Seed Library, a free lending seed library in Halifax at the Ecology Action Centre
<http://homeheirlooms.wordpress.com> works to make safer space for queer women of colour in rural NS and also run a seed library.

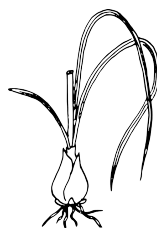
Heirloom Seed purveyors

pumpkinmoonherbals.com
annapolisseeds.com
Hopeseed.com
Saltspringseeds.com
richters.com
jlhudsonseeds.net

Your local nursery likely also sells heirloom seeds. Look for known heritage names and avoid adjectives like "hybrid" and "Improved", and anything patented or copywrit.

Books

From Seed to Seed
Suzanne Ashworth and Kent Whealy
It All Starts With a Seed
Ecology Action Centre
Saving Seeds As If Our Lives Depended On It Dan Jason



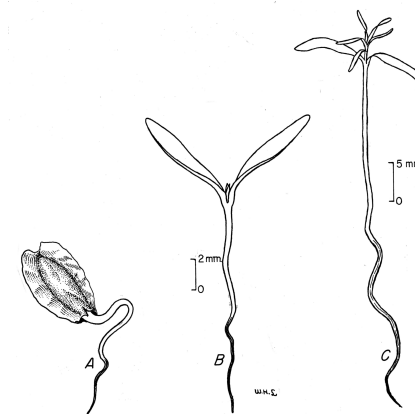
Why Should We Save Our Own Seeds?

They're free. Saving seeds saves money

Saving seeds gives us control over our own food supply. We have the means to feed ourselves in case of an emergency

Saving seeds helps preserve rare and important varieties of plants.

Saving seeds makes strong plants that are good at growing in Nova Scotia. They can get used to changing conditions and diseases, and stay strong and productive.



Saving seeds is a fun, rewarding practice, and teaches us about the ways of plants.

Easy seeds

These seeds don't cross-pollinate so they can't mix with other varieties.

Lettuce
Tomatoes
Beans, peas and soy



Harder seeds

These seeds can cross with other varieties that are growing close by. The seeds of these plants can be hybrids.

Carrots
Cabbage-family foods
(broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, brussels sprouts, rapini, kohlrabi, collards,)
Squash
Beets and chard
Turnips and Mizuna



Sprout Test

Use this test to see if your seeds are still good for planting.



Fold 10 seeds into wet tissue paper and place in a clear bag. Wait 7 days (or 14 if your house is cold) How many sprouted? Multiply that number by 10. This is your germination rate.



6 out of 10 seeds sprouted, so this germination rate is 60% . 70-100% is a good rate.

Processing seeds

Always store seeds dry. Put them in a jar or sealed bag on a dry day. If the day is not dry, put the seeds in a paper or cloth bag until it is a dry day. Radiators are good to dry seeds, but never use an oven.

1. Processing dry seeds

eg. Peas, beans, kale, herbs
Leave the seeds on the plant until they look dry, or for as long as you can. Then break the husk of the pod and keep the seeds. You can remove the husk with a colander or the wind, if you're careful.



2. Processing wet seeds

eg. Tomatoes, cucumbers
Some seeds need to ferment before they can sprout. Scoop out the seeds and pulp with a spoon into a jar, add some water, and wait for three or so days, until you can see some mold. Rinse the rotten material from the seeds and dry and keep as usual.

Dry seeds are best before 5 years but can keep for much longer. You can tell if your seeds are still good with a Germination Test 3

