

SEED SAVING FUNDAMENTALS



Some seeds can remain viable in storage for several years, if stored properly at a low temperature and low humidity.

Seeds are usually ripe when fruits are fully ripe or are starting to dry. When you harvest them, treat them like fresh produce.

When removing seeds from storage, allow the container to reach room temperature before opening it, to prevent condensation from forming on the seeds and inside the container.

Changing temperature during storage will not harm the seeds, but they will age much faster when they are warm.

Cross pollination may result in unpredictable seeds, so be careful where you plant them and what they are planted next to, when planning on harvesting the plants seeds.

SEED STORING

1. LABEL AND RECORD PREVIOUS HARVESTS

- At **minimum**, record the variety name, its origin, date of harvest, and date of storage.
- It's helpful to also record germination rates, days to maturity, seeding dates, and yield.

2. CLEANING YOUR SEEDS

- Seeds come in all shapes and sizes; from large, like peas, to dust-size, like carrots.
- Cleaning debris from seeds **protects** them from mold and other pathogens that may kill them during storage.
- Seeds that come from pulpy fruits, like tomatoes, need extra work, but it is important not to damage them.

3. DRYING YOUR SEEDS

- Spread seeds into a shallow, airtight container in a thin layer (**1 seed deep is ideal**) with a **drying agent**.

Drying agents can be silica gel (sometimes available locally at craft stores, to be used for drying flowers), charcoal, powdered milk, and rice. Bake or microwave drying agents to remove moisture before reusing.

- Place the airtight container somewhere cool. If you have a **self-defrosting refrigerator**, you may use this to dry your seeds.

If ice doesn't build up in your fridge, you probably have a self-defrosting fridge with a dehumidifier.

- Leave the seeds to dry out for a **month** or so, depending on seed type and initial moisture level.
- When you're ready to store the seeds, remove from the fridge and immediately place a cover on them so moisture doesn't condense on the seeds.
- Let seeds come to room temperature, then open the container and pack the seeds for storage.

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4. STORING YOUR SEEDS

- Most seed production facilities **freeze** their seeds for storage. Check if your variety can survive this, as some seeds will die when frozen.

The seeds must be completely dry before freezing, otherwise the moisture will expand and crack the seeds.

*You may store your seeds in a **refrigerator**.*

*You can also store your seeds at **room temperature**, in an airtight container. This method needs proper drying first.*

SEED STORING

If your seeds have been stored for any length of time, you may wish to test a sample of seeds to see if they will germinate well. To test your seeds, follow these steps:

- Place some seeds between two damp pieces of paper towel.
- Enclose in a container or bag, and place in a temperature controlled environment suitable for that seeds germination requirements.
- After several days to weeks, check to see how many seeds germinate.

We acknowledge that the lands on which we gather, plant, harvest, and share knowledge and resources are the homelands of the Innu and Inuit, and we recognize their ancestral and continued ties to these lands and waters.

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