



Planting and harvesting tips for your heirloom seeds

For harvesting and saving instructions, see the list by variety below and visit [The Vegetable Seed Saving Handbook](#) and [Basic Seed Saving By Bill McDorman](#)

For planting instructions, see the list by variety [here](#).

Plant Family	Variety Name	Harvest Instructions	Source	Video
Bean	Bean- Any Variety	After pods have turned leathery & begun to turn brown, pick off pods and allow them to dry in a single layer out of direct sunlight until 1 week after the seeds rattle in the pods.	https://www.southernexposure.com/growing-guides/saving-seeds-home-use.pdf	
Broccoli	Waltham Broccoli	Harvest seed pods before the pods split open naturally, but after they have fully matured and dried on the stalks—the seeds will not continue ripening after the plants or stems are cut. Finish drying upside-down in paper bags or hanging in bundles over a tarp. When the plants are completely dry, any seeds that haven't naturally fallen out of their seed pods are easily removed by crumbling the pods.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seedsavingdetails.php#broccoli	

Cabbage	Charleston Wakefield Cabbage	<p>If small amounts of seeds are wanted, allow individual pods to dry to a light brown color before picking and opening by hand. Lower pods dry first followed by those progressively higher on the plant. For larger amounts of seeds pull entire plant after a majority of pods have dried. Green pods rarely produce viable seeds even if allowed to dry after the plant is pulled .Smash unopened pods in cloth bag with mallet or by walking on them. Chaff can be winnowed.</p>	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seed-saving-details.php#cabbage	
Carrot	Carrot- Any Variety	<p>In the second year, carrots form a flowering umbel. allow the umbel to dry on the plant. When the umbel turns brown the seed is ripe and ready to harvest. Rub the umbel in your hands to release the seeds. Separate the seed from the chaff and store.</p>	http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/resources/hsl/14_Carrots.pdf	
Cauliflower	Snowball	<p>Since cauliflower heads don't resprout after harvesting, try one of two ways to get seeds. By cutting carefully, you can leave a branch or two of cauliflower head on the plant to heal and flower in the spring. Probably more reliable would be planting a separate planting just for the seed—these plants would need half or less of the usual amount of room, water and nutrients, as small heads from 10+ plants would still produce plenty of seeds.</p> <p>Pick seed pods promptly after—not before—they fully mature and dry on the plants. They won't ripen further after the plants are picked.</p>	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seed-saving-details.php#cauliflower	

Corn	Corn- Any Variety	Corn seed is usually ready to be harvested 4-6 weeks after eating stage. If growing season is not long enough, pick ears after husks turn brown. Pull back husks and complete drying in cool, dry location. Process all but very large amounts of seed by gripping dried ears by hand and twisting allowing kernels to fall into container.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seed-saving-details.php#corn	
Cucumber	Cucumber- Any Variety	Cucumbers raised for seed cannot be eaten. They should be left to ripen at least 5 weeks after eating stage until they have turned a golden color. First light frost of the season will blacken vines and make cucumbers easier to find. Undamaged fruits can be stored in cool, dry place for several weeks to finish ripening. Slice fruit lengthwise and scrape seeds out with spoon. Allow seeds and jelly-like liquid to sit in jar at room temperature for 3 or 4 days. Fungus will start to form on top. Stir daily. Jelly will dissolve and good seeds will sink to bottom while remaining debris and immature seeds can be rinsed away. Spread seeds on a paper towel or screen until dry. (See instructions for tomato.)	https://www.seedsavers.org/growing-cucumber	
Eggplant	Black Beauty	Eggplants should be left on the plants until well past the eating stage before harvesting for seed. The eggplants will have gone past their normal, ripe color and become translucent and dry (usually a dull, unattractive whitish, yellowish, or brownish color). Keep eggplants off the ground during ripening, since they may begin to rot when they rest on the ground. Clean seeds according to the wet-cleaning process. (see additional instructions)	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seed-saving-details.php#eggplant	

Flower	Marigold- Any Variety	After the flower has dried and turned brown tug on the dried petals. The seeds are long, slender, and black. Dry out for 1-2 days before storing.	http://mrbrownthumb.blogspot.com/2009/10/how-to-collect-marigold-flower-seeds.html	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC6lebvGkVY
Flower	Dwarf Jewel Nasturtium	Collect the chickpea-sized seeds from a dried seed pod. It doesn't matter whether the seed is green or brown. The larger the seed, the better the germination results. Dry out for 1-2 days before storing.	http://mrbrownthumb.blogspot.com/2007/08/when-i-collect-nasturtium-seeds.html	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rwh7zgk_AKc
Flower	Sunflower- Any Variety	Cut the sunflower seed heads off the plant after all the petals have fallen off, the seeds are noticeable, and the backside is brown and dry. Allow the seed heads to dry for several more weeks in a warm, dry place. To remove the seeds simply brush the seed head and the seeds should fall out. Collect the seeds and store them.	http://garden.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Growing_and_Harvesting_Sunflowers	
Flower	Zinnia- Any Variety	Allow the flower head to dry completely on the plant. It will be dark brown and dry when it is ready to harvest. Cut or pull the seedhead off of the plant. Then, simply pull it apart or rub it between your two hands to release the seeds. It is best to do this over a container of some kind to catch the seeds.	http://organicgardening.about.com/od/flowers/qt/How-To-Save-Zinnia-Seeds.htm	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbx_VCud2xQ
Gourd	Gourd- Any Variety	Allow gourds to thoroughly dry on the vines before cutting open and harvesting the seeds.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/savedetails.php#gourds	
Greens	Bloomsdale Spinach	Some outside leaves can be harvested for eating without harming seed production. If possible, wait until all plants have dried brown. Pull entire plant and hang in cool, dry place if necessary at the end of the growing season. Strip seeds in upward motion and let them fall into container. Chaff can	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-spinach	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_TXz6Q2tml

		be winnowed. Use gloves for prickly-seeded types.		
Greens	Dwarf Siberian Kale	Let seed pods mature and dry on the plants before harvesting, or the seeds will not be fully mature. Harvest quickly after drying, though, as the pods often shatter and drop their seeds soon after they dry.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seedsavingdetails.php#kale	
Herb	Genovese Basil	Harvest seed heads as they dry and allow to finish drying in a warm, dry spot. Seeds are easily removed by crumbling the dried flower heads and then blowing away the chaff. Plants cut back after harvest will grow another set of leaves for harvest—and even produce seeds again—if your season is long and hot. A branch or two of each plant can easily be left to go to seed while collecting leaves for cooking with from the rest of the plant.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seedsavingdetails.php#basil	
Herb	Cilantro	After the flower has bloomed a seed pod will form at the base of where the flower was. Wait until the seed pod is brown to harvest. The whole pod is the seed. Allow to dry for 1-2 days and store.	http://aptgarden.blogspot.com/2008/06/harvesting-cilantro-seeds.html	
Herb	Parsley- Any Variety	After the second year, the parsley will produce a seed head. Allow the seed head to dry and mature and shake into a paper bag allowing the seeds to fall. Remove the chaff and store the seeds.	http://www.ourherbgarden.com/parsley.html	
Lettuce	Lettuce- Any Variety	Some outside leaves can be harvested for eating without harming seed production. Allow seed heads to dry 2-3 weeks after flowering. Individual heads will ripen at different times making the harvest of large amounts of seed at one time nearly impossible. Wait until half the flowers on each plant has gone to seed. Cut entire top of	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-lettuce	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzGMP4NGAJg

		plant and allow to dry upside down in an open paper bag.		
Melon	Honey Dew Orange Flesh Melon	Allow melons to ripen on vines until skins are hard, then store for an additional 3 weeks before removing and cleaning their seeds.	http://howtosaveseeds.com/seedsavingdetails.php#melons	
Native Wildflower	Foxglove Beardtongue	Penstemon seeds are usually harvested by hand-stripping or clipping the flowering stalks into containers. Capsules generally begin to split open from 6 to 8 weeks after the plants are in full flower, with those at the base of each stalk ripening first. The harvested material should be dried carefully to avoid molding, especially if it is collected when somewhat green. The capsules will open after harvest, and for small lots, the seeds can be shaken free and collected by screening.	https://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_others/wo_AgricHandbook727/wo_AgricHandbook727_774_777.pdf http://mowildflowers.net/Foxglove-Beardtongue-Penstemon-digitalis_p_188.html	
Native Wildflower	Lanceleaf Coreopsis	Nutlets are mature and ready for collection about four weeks after the flowers wither. Watch the inner series of bracts; when they begin to darken, it is time to collect. Remove chaff and store in sealed, refrigerated containers. Storage life is at least three years.	https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=cola5 http://mowildflowers.net/Lanceleaf-Coreopsis-Coreopsis-lanceolata_p_97.html	
Native Wildflower	Rattlesnake Master	Collect seed in fall when the seed heads have turned brown. Tap the seed out of the heads and air-dry, storing with the chaff in sealed, refrigerated containers.	https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ERYU http://mowildflowers.net/Rattlesnake-Master-Eryngium-yuccifolium_p_462.html	
Onion	Onion- Any Variety	The second year in late summer the onion will bloom. Allow the seed head to dry on the plant and then remove the onion seed by winnowing the chaff away.	http://www.wikihow.com/Save-Onion-Seeds	

Pea	Pea- Any Variety	Allow pods to dry brown before harvesting, about four weeks after eating stage. If frost threatens, pull entire plant, root first, and hang in cool, dry location until pods are brown. Pods can be opened by hand.	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-pea	
Pepper	Pepper- Any Variety	Harvest mature, fully-ripe peppers for seed. (Most bell peppers turn red when fully mature.) If frost threatens before peppers mature, pull entire plant and hang in cool, dry location until peppers mature. Cut the bottom off the fruit and carefully reach in to strip the seeds surrounding central cone. In many cases, seeds need no further cleaning.	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-pepper	
Radish	Radish- Any Variety	Harvest 3' tall stalks containing seeds pods when pods have dried brown. Pull entire plant and hang in cool, dry place if all pods are not dried at the end of the growing season. Open pods by hand for small amounts of seed. Pods that do not open when rubbed between hands can be pounded with hammer or mallet.	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-radish	
Squash	Squash- Any Variety	Squash must be fully mature before harvested for seed production. This means that summer squashes must be left on the vine until outer shell hardens. Allow to cure 3-4 additional weeks after harvest to encourage further seed ripening. Chop open hard-shelled fruits and scoop out seeds. Rinse clean in wire strainer with warm, running water. Dry with towel and spread on board or cookie sheet to complete drying.	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-squash	
Tomato	Tomato- Any Variety	Allow tomatoes to completely ripen (turn red) before harvesting for seed production. Cut the tomato into halves at its equator, opening the	https://www.seedsavers.org/grow-tomato	

		<p>vertical cavities that contain the seeds. Gently squeeze out from the cavities the jelly-like substance that contains the seeds. If done carefully, the tomato itself can still be eaten or saved for canning, sun-drying or dehydrating.</p> <p>Place the jelly and seeds into a small jar or glass. (Add a little water if you are processing only one or two small tomatoes.) Loosely cover the container and place in a warm location, 60-75° F. for about three days. Stir once a day.</p> <p>A layer of fungus will begin to appear on the top of the mixture after a couple of days. This fungus not only eats the gelatinous coat that surrounds each seed and prevents germination, it also produces antibiotics that help to control seed-borne diseases like bacterial spot, canker and speck.</p> <p>After three days fill the seed container with warm water. Let the contents settle and begin pouring out the water along with pieces of tomato pulp and immature seeds floating on top. Note: Viable seeds are heavier and settle to the bottom of the jar. Repeat this process until water being poured out is almost clear and clean seeds line the bottom of the container. Pour these clean seeds into a strainer that has holes smaller than the seeds. Let the excess water drip out and invert the strainer onto paper towel or piece of newspaper. Allow the seeds to dry completely (usually a day or two). Break up the clumps into individual seeds, label and store in a packet or plastic bag.</p>		
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Turnip	Turnip- Any varieties	<p>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.</p>	<p>https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/turnip/harvesting-turnips.htm</p>	
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