

The Scoop Saving Seeds

So why would anyone want to go to the trouble of saving seeds? Seeds saved from this year's plants can yield even better results next season. A plant raises a seed and it instinctually raises this seed to be adapted to our conditions. So saved seeds are already conditioned to our weather and soil types.

Save self-pollinating plant seeds which contain both the male and female reproductive parts, and pollination happens inside the plant. This prevents cross-pollination. A good choice for this are heirloom vegetables. Do not save seeds from hybrid plants.

Pick your plants with patients. Seeds are attached to the parent fruit and receive nourishment until harvest. To allow extra growing time for beans, peas, marigolds, zinnia, poppies and other flowers let the bean and pea pod or flower bloom completely dry and give the seeds time to develop while still on the plant. Harvest in dry weather. And be sure to do it before the wind carries them away or the rain washes them to the ground.

Tomato seeds must be gathered when you pick them to eat. Take tomato seeds from your best open pollinated specimens, scoop out tomato seeds and pulp and put in a small container and add a few drops of water. Leave the container at room temperature for 3 to 4 days while the pulp around the seeds ferments. Use a fine sieve to drain and rinse the seeds, then smear the pulpy mix onto brown paper bags, and let the bags dry in the hot sun. When all the moisture has evaporated, the seeds may be removed and stored in a cool, dry place for planting next spring.

Dry your seeds completely before storing them. Larger seeds require a longer drying time than smaller ones. Stir the seeds occasionally. Seeds are dry when they are hard to the touch.

Store your labeled seeds in an airtight glass jars in a cold, dark place. Do Not Freeze them.

This is a fun way to enjoy planting seeds. You can then spend your seed funds on new and different plants and still have your old favorites.

Experiment with you seed saving.

The Gateway Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Club. For more information contact Becky Oliver at 270-522-3150