

Chorlton Plant Swap

Seed Saving: Collecting seeds from your plants to sow again

Why collect seeds?

- * It's free: You don't have to buy the seeds next season
- * Give & Receive: You can share your seeds with other people—and get others in exchange!
- * The future: You could help keep heritage seeds alive
- * The past: It's what people always did before we thought everything had to be bought in packets from shops...
- * It's fun: It's satisfying growing your own plants, saving their seeds for growing next year is even better.

Some easy seeds to collect & save

Flowers

Flower seeds are left on the plant to dry out.

Many annual flowers make their seeds easy to collect—they may also be good at self-sowing themselves. Some flowers can be simply be turned up-side down and shaken into a paper bag. For example poppies, aquilegia, verbena bonariensis, love-lies-bleeding and nigella let their seeds loose quite neatly. Others, such as lavatera, may require more work separating the seed from the chaff.

Some seed heads need to be broken off by hand, such as cosmos or calendula. Wait until the seed head is dry and falls apart easily in your hand. For sweet peas, wait until the pod has dried out and the seeds are no longer green before removing them.

Vegetables

Some seeds are extracted from the plant that you would also pick to eat:

Tomatoes: Cut open, remove pulp and seeds, wash in strainer,

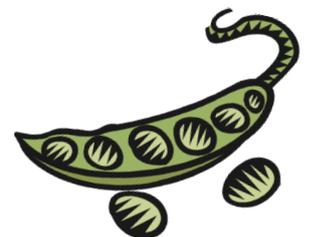
Beans and peas: leave a few pods to dry out on the plant, remove from pods.

Peppers' and chillies' seeds are some of the easiest to extract.

Some plants need to be left to flower and 'go to seed'. For instance, leave some rocket to flower, let the seeds ripen and dry, then pull the plant up and hang somewhere dry before extracting the seeds. Some vegetables may not flower and produce seed until the season after they were grown, for instance alliums, scorzonera and kale.

Leave some radish to flower and go to seed and eat some of the tasty ripe pods in salads as well as leaving some to dry out and save.

Seeds from the squash family are trickier to extract and save.



Saving seeds: Some general tips

Seeds can be extracted for saving with varying levels of ease or difficulty.

Seeds should be chosen from healthy plants.

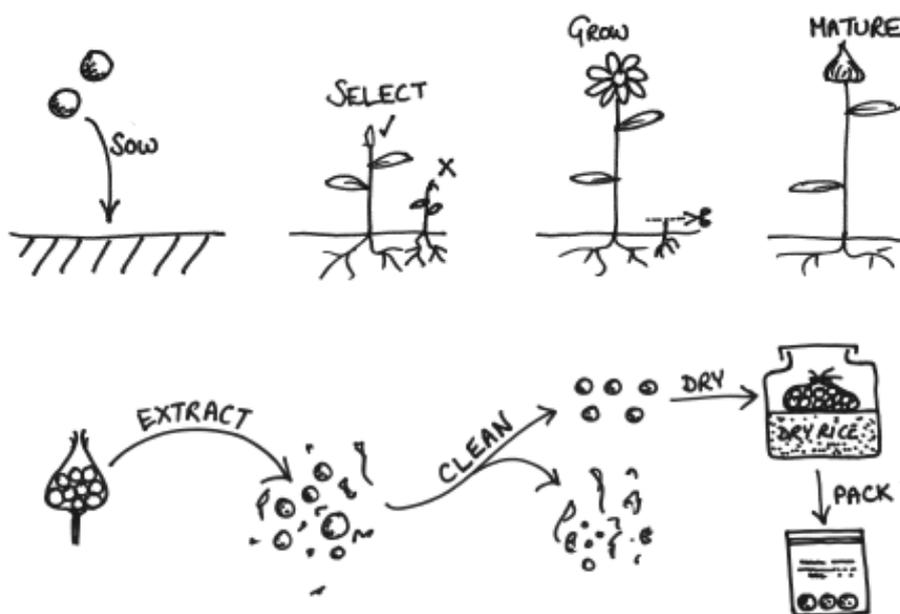
All seeds should be ripe before picking. Leave them on the living plant until they are ready.

Pick on a dry day or dry out well before storing. Keep seeds dry at all times otherwise they may go mouldy. Don't put seeds in the oven to dry as that level of heat will kill them.

Store seeds in paper bags, envelopes or jars. Label them with the plant name and date. It's easy to forget!

"When they are dry, bake some rice in the oven till it is bone dry, then put it into a jam jar, put the lid on and let it cool. Put the seeds in a mesh bag (eg the toe of an old pair of tights), pop it in the jar, and leave for a week. The dry rice will suck the water out of the seeds (if you leave them longer, they may become *too* dry). Transfer seeds to a clean, dry jar for long-term storage." Advice from *Seedy Sunday*.

Heritage Seed Library. If you are interested in growing plants specifically to save seeds in order to keep a plant variety alive, you could become a Seed Guardian with the Heritage Seed Library. It is part of national organisation, Garden Organic, and a leaflet is usually available from Chorlton Plant Swap or visit them at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/hsl>



www.realseeds.co.uk

Please excuse any errors in the information provided—it's all shared in good spirit. There's lots of information and guides on the internet too of course.

www.chorltonplantswap.org.uk