

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to: Store Garden Seeds

One of the benefits of home gardening is the ability to harvest your crop's seeds to use for the next year, but it is important to store the seeds correctly to ensure germination upon planting. Harvesting your own seeds saves money for next year, and it makes the garden self sufficient.

Step 1: Dry the seeds

When harvesting seeds, select the best fruit, vegetable or plants to harvest from. Once you've gathered the seeds from your plant, spread them on a newspaper to let them air dry, as seeds last longer if they are dried. Another method of drying seeds is to dry them on a cookie sheet in the oven as long as the temperature is set to less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Then, once dry, place the seeds in an envelope labeled with the seed name and other information you wish to include. It is important to save seeds that aren't from hybrids, and instead save the seeds from open-pollinated plants.

Step 2: Store the seeds

The envelope or packet the seeds are now in doesn't produce adequate storage by itself, so place the envelope in a sealable glass or plastic container, such as a Mason jar with the lid screwed on tight. Store the container in an area with dry, cool air, as humidity or warmth can shorten a seed's lifespan. Also, be sure to store seeds in a place with little or no light. The refrigerator can be used as a storage option for seeds once they have been placed in an airtight container but be sure to keep the seeds far from the freezer section.



[Vegetable, herb and fruit seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

Step 3: Plant the seeds

Once planting season rolls around, remove the container from where you've stored it. If stored in the refrigerator, keep the container closed until it has warmed to room temperature. Once they've warmed, you can remove the seeds from the container and envelope and plant in the garden.

Tips and tricks:

It's important to add a date to the packet you store your seeds in, as most seeds last approximately three years. Dating the seed packets allows you to know which seeds are nearing the end of their lifespan and should be planted soon.

Another tip for self-storing seeds is to keep the seeds dry. Being sure to dry the seeds after harvesting them and then storing them in the correct environment play big roles in this, but another way to keep the seeds dry is to wrap two tablespoons of powdered milk in a tissue and place it inside the container with the stored seeds. Adding a packet of



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silica gel with the seeds works as well. Replace the powdered milk or silica every six months.

Seed packets purchased from the store also can be stored if you don't use the entire packet, and gardeners storing store-bought seeds can leave the leftovers in their packet and then place in the container to be stored.

Best and worst seeds to store:

Even if you follow all the instructions, some seeds still might not germinate once planted in the garden. Seeds with a lower germination rate include those of sweet corn, parsnips, peppers and others. Some of the longest-lasting seeds include cucumbers, radishes, lettuce, cabbage and others.

Urban Farmer carries a wide variety of vegetable, herb and fruit seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



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