

## What Are the Benefits of Saving Seeds?

- By saving seed year after year in the same location, your plants will eventually become adapted to your local environment.
- Saving seed from the strongest plants each year will ensure the best possible plants for your location. This won't happen if you buy seed produced in another climate each year.
- Sharing your saved seed with other gardeners safeguards the seed against crop failure and loss.
- If you are new to gardening or to seed saving, plan to start small with something easy. **Ask Library staff for help finding gardening materials at the Library.**

## How to Use the Seed Library

- Borrowing seeds is free! Saving and returning seeds is priceless. Seeds should be clean, dry, and labeled. At this time only **commercially produced seed** will be accepted for the Seed Library.
- Use the clear plastic envelopes to package the seed that you select. For small seeds, please just take a little pinch. For larger seeds, half a dozen or so should be enough.
- Seeds are filed first by kind (vegetable, flower, herb), and then by the general name (corn, marigold, tomato).



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[www.cityofpaloalto.org/library](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/library)

# Palo Alto Seed Library



In Partnership with:  
Palo Alto Community Gardens  
Silicon Valley Grows: One Seed, One  
Community

## Easy Seeds for Beginners:

- Tomato
- Beans
- Peas
- Cucumber
- Melon
- Pumpkin
- Squash
- Watermelon
- Cilantro
- Basil
- Dill
- Celery
- Fennel
- Eggplant
- Peppers
- Annual Flowers



## Basic Seed Saving Methods

The first step to seed saving is allowing the seed to become fully mature. At maturity, some seed is dry and some is enclosed in a ripe fruit and still quite wet. In any case, the seed will need to be processed in a certain way so that you end up with clean, dry, living seed. There are three basic methods of processing seed: dry, wet, and fermentation.

### Processing Dry Seed

Most garden plants fall into this category. This simple method is nothing more than allowing the seed to partially dry in its capsules or seed heads while still on the parent plant. The seed is collected before the capsules open or the seed heads shatter. A big bucket or paper sack works just fine. After the seed is fully dry, it is separated from the pods and stalks, and packaged in an airtight container. Examples are: lettuce, cabbage, onion, and carrot.



## Processing Wet Seed

With this method, the seed is scooped out of the fully ripe fruit, rinsed to separate the seed from the pulp, then spread out on a tray or screen to dry for several weeks before packaging. Examples are: melons, peppers, pumpkins, eggplant, and squash.

### Fermentation of Seed

This method is used with plants that have a gel-sack around each seed like tomato and cucumber. The seed is squeezed into a jar and a little water is added. The jar is left out at room temperature for a week or so. During that time, yeast breaks down the gel-sacks, a layer of mold forms on top of the water, and the good seed sinks to the bottom. The seed is then rinsed and dried as above.

