

# *Seed Saving: Ten Tips for Schools and Community Gardens!*



Quarterly Workshop Jan 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Presented by the UCCE San Bernardino County Master Gardeners

# 1. Start Small!!

- Start with easy plants:
  - Self pollinating,
  - Not easily cross bred (breed true)
  - Seeds contained in “fruit”
  - Seeds are easy to start
  - Not hybrids, use open pollinated
- Examples:
  - Tomatoes
  - Lettuce
  - Peas, Beans
  - Radishes
  - Herbs





## 2. Make sure your seeds are mature on the plant!

- “Dry” seeds should dry on plants for most varieties
- “Wet” seeds need to be fully mature when harvested they will not mature after harvest
- Think about the process, harvest when seeds would be ready to fall to the earth to sprout



### 3. Let your seed dry fully

- “Wet” seeds need to be fully dry before storing (think “snappable”)
- Do not harvest/store seeds after rain or on damp days
- If seeds are damp from dew let air dry before storing

## 4. Store in a cool dry place!

- Seeds will last longest when kept cool and dry
- Be cautious with airtight containers, can hold moisture in
- Be cautious with using freezer or fridge to store seeds
- Keep pest free!!



# 5. Don't store your seeds forever!

- How long a seed last depends on:
  - Seed health
  - Seed storage conditions
  - Variety of plant
- **“Saving” important seeds forever decreases the chances that they will sprout (germinate)**
- **Grow your seeds out every year or every other year**
- **Have important seeds? Don't grow them all out at one season**
  - You may have pest problems with the crop and not be able to save seeds
  - You may have weather problems that impact seed saving success, like rain or wind
- **Don't be afraid to grow your own seeds, if it doesn't work, try again!!**
- **Journal, make notes about:**
  - What you learned
  - Your garden observations about plant health
  - Weather during the growing season
  - Other plants you grew in the garden

## 6. Check the chart!

- Consult a chart for details about the plant you want to seed save from:
  - What family is the plant in (to know what it will cross breed with)
  - How is it pollinated
  - How often does it flower (annual, perennial, biennial)
- Seed Savers exchange link to chart: [Seed Saving Guide\\_2017.pdf \(seedsavers.org\)](#)



# 7. Can provide “space” through distance...and time

- To prevent cross breeding your may need to give your plants space
  - See chart for recommended distances
  - If you can't provide that distance, can try any way if you are willing to experiment!
- Succession Planting can create “space” through “time”
  - If plants are not flowering at the same time they can not cross pollinate
- See “Seed Savers Exchange” links at end of talk for more info



## 8. Learn and Practice Vocabulary!

- Learning your seed saving terms will help you remember and understand what needs to happen for successful seed saving
- It's ok if you don't remember everything right away! You will remember more as you begin to understand the process more!
- Check out the resources provided!
- <https://www.seedsavers.org/seed-saving-gardening-terms>



## 9. We are here to help!

- Contact the Master Gardener Helpline!
- Join our “Ask a Master Gardener” Times online 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun of each month and in person on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat of each month



# 10. Join our Monthly Classes!

- Every month we have free seed saving classes
- Covering topics like:
  - Basics of Seed Saving
  - Saving Cool or Warm Season Veggies
  - Pollination Traffic Control
  - Basics of Plant Breeding
  - Seed Saving Trouble Shooting
  - Cleaning seeds many fruits & veggies: Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Squash, Pumpkins and more!
  - Native plant seed saving
  - And more!!
- All Classes are free! Check our Website each month to see what's coming up!

# Supplies needed to start a library at your school or community garden:

- Shoe box-ish sized storage container that is insect/rodent proof
- Envelopes for seeds
- Cool dry place to store box
- Pens: Don't forget to label!! Include info like:
  - Date harvested
  - Location harvested (if getting from community)
  - Plant Variety
  - Any notes on characteristics: hardy In wind, great flavor, cool color!
- Donated seeds, or seed saved from the community or garden
- Let us help you start your seed library today, or ask us questions if you are having and challenges!!

## Resources:

- ▶ Seed savers exchange *general resources*:  
<https://www.seedsavers.org/learn>
- ▶ Seed savers exchange *isolation methods*:  
<https://www.seedsavers.org/isolation-methods>
- ▶ Seed savers exchange *Seed saving terms*:  
<https://www.seedsavers.org/seed-saving-gardening-terms>
- ▶ Vegetable Plant Families and their characteristics:  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/placernevadasmallfarms/files/170644.pdf>

## Resources cont.

- ▶ Seed saver exchange *Isolation distance guide information*: <https://www.seedsavers.org/isolation-distances>
- ▶ Seed saver exchange *Isolation distance guide*: [https://www.seedsavers.org/site/pdf/crop\\_chart.pdf](https://www.seedsavers.org/site/pdf/crop_chart.pdf)
- ▶ Seed saver exchange *Seed Saving Guide information*: <https://www.seedsavers.org/seed-saving-chart>
- ▶ Seed saver exchange *Seed Saving Guide*: [https://www.seedsavers.org/site/pdf/Seed%20Saving%20Guide\\_2017.pdf](https://www.seedsavers.org/site/pdf/Seed%20Saving%20Guide_2017.pdf)



*Thank you for joining us today!*

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