

A call to Seed Saving: - Collection of Vegetable Seeds from Fruiting Vegetables part 2

Dear kindred gardener,

For growing your own seed it is essential that you will make sure that you select with following criteria in mind.

Make sure that the vegetative and fruiting parts of the plants have a well-developed, balanced growth, full green leaves which are well formed, a sturdy stem, and are disease free. In short, choose the most balanced plants for your purpose.



To make life really easy I suggest you practice collecting seeds from tomato plants first. These are the least likely to cross pollinate if they are separated a few meters from each other.

They are generally speaking self pollinating. All others are cross pollinating and need to be grown 300-400 meters from each other or covered up if other varieties are in the vicinity.

It is essential that you make sure that your seeds obtained were not from F1 hybrid plants, as they split into different expressions and varieties once sown again.

In other words, they don't come true to seed and type.

So chose Open Pollinated Seeds, preferably from your area, which would make them true heirloom varieties.

Make sure that the tomatoes are fully ripened on the plant and when they are almost falling off the plant, take the fruits and separate the seeds with its pulp and put them into a glass jar, adding some filtered or rainwater.

Then you can put them on a windowsill and let them ferment for three days or so stirring the liquid on and off, until you see most of the seeds having sunk to the bottom of the glass jar.

The ones which float are not viable.

Therefore, we discard the floating seed and pass the rest of the fermented liquid with the seeds through a sieve.

If we see that the seeds are having still pulp attached, you need to put them back into water for another day or two.

Once clean and with no pulp attached anymore, we pass the seeds and liquid through a fine sieve and then put them on a kitchen towel for drying and package them in a few hours after having fully dried.

I put my tomato seeds into manila envelopes and label them with the name of type of plant, variety, origin and date. I keep all my seeds in a box, padded with coir or sphagnum peat and put the box in a dry and cool place with an even temperature to protect them best from changing environmental conditions.



Once you have observed good results with the tomatoes you grew from your own seeds you can step it up and do the same process with the cucumber family and collect your cucumber, courgette (from large marrow fruit), squash and pumpkin seeds (remember to isolate each variety).

These seeds you collect generally when your fruits have fully ripened and have turned yellowish and the flesh is almost dissolving. Then you follow the same procedure as with the tomato seeds.

If you also want to collect seeds from peppers and aubergines, you don't need to put them into to water, but instead dry them immediately before packaging them.

Your nightshade seeds and cucumber family seeds will last anywhere from 3-5 years, provided they are kept in a cool and protected environment.

Next time we'll look at saving seeds from other biennial vegetables.

For all other open pollinated seed varieties go to Esk Seed who are providing biodynamically and organically certified seeds.

They can be reached by contacting: www.eskseeds.org.

Feel the empowerment and liberation by saving your own seeds

Hans-Günther

Hans-Günther - Wholistic Living University

For online and in person courses and workshops on biodynamic gardening and more visit <https://whlu.org/>