

Saving Seeds for the Seed Library

Now that this year's growing season is underway, here are some tips on how to save seeds so you can help stock the Seed Library for next year. For more information, go to www.seedsave.org/issi/904/beginner.html.

Once your seed processing is complete, return a few seeds from each of the plants to the Seed Library by dropping them off at the 2nd floor reference desk at the Walpole Library or by mailing them to the Seed Library, c/o the Walpole Public Library, 143 School Street, Walpole, MA 02032.

There are three ways to save seeds:

Dry Seed Processing:

For plants with seeds that grow on the outside of the plant.

- Allow the seeds to dry on the plant, and collect the seedpods before they break open.
- For plants with seeds that develop in the center of the flower, allow the plant to dry.
- When the stem holding the seed head turns brown, harvest the seeds.
- Collect dry seeds under dry, warm conditions to prevent mold and reduce additional drying time.

Wet Seed Processing:

For seeds that grow inside the fleshy fruit of the plant.

- Rinse off the seeds and dry them thoroughly.
- If seeds have a gel-like coating, use the fermentation process.

Fermentation Seed Processing:

For seeds with a gel-like coating (tomatoes, cucumbers, some squash, and some melons).

- Mix the seeds and the seed juice with a little water in a small plastic or glass container with a lid.
- Allow the seeds to ferment for 4-6 days.
- When a layer of mold has formed on top of the water and the seeds sink, the fermentation is complete. Add more water, swish it around and remove the mold and pulp. The good seeds will sink to the bottom, while the bad seeds will float to the top. Remove the bad seeds.
- Drain the water from the seeds and set them out on a plate, screen, or paper towel to dry thoroughly. Once the seeds are completely dry, place them in a moisture-proof container. Label and store the seeds.