

SAVING YOUR OWN SEEDS

If you'd like to collect seeds from your flower gardens here is a basic method I use to save my seeds.

Step 1 Getting started:

Throughout the growing season I allow flowers to go to seed; producing seed heads or seed pods. Then I let the seed heads dry out as much as possible while still on the plant. Weather permitting of course.

Step 2 Collecting seeds:

Before the pods break open, are eaten by birds, or risk of frost and winter weather starts I will collect the dried seed pods from the plants on a dry sunny day. I carefully cut or break off the seed heads from the plants with a container in the other hand to catch any seeds or seed pods that may fall. If collecting seeds from many different plants at once; it is a good idea to collect them in separate envelopes or containers with a quick label for each to remind yourself what seed is from what plant!

Step 3 Drying seeds:

After collecting the seeds I usually place them in a ventilated box or container to dry out completely. I keep the box outside in a warm and dry spot. So if drying outside try to keep them protected from wind, wet weather, and rodents. Some seeds will dry out faster than others. I always make sure that any seeds that I'm ready to store are completely dry. This prevents rotting and minimizes the possibility of mold.

Step 4 Preparing seeds for storage:

When seeds are good and dry I shake the seeds and pods through a mini screen, or sieve. I give them a gentle "crush" onto the screen and gently shake this over a white piece of paper. The screen usually holds most of the seed pods, and chaffs allowing the seed to fall through onto the paper.

Step 5 Storing seeds:

I simply use [paper envelopes](#) to store my seeds. Labeling is important. Label envelopes with the date and year collected as well as the name of the plant. It is a good idea to store envelopes in a cool dry area. I store my seed collection in the laundry room. I also store some seeds outside in the garden shed over winter. If storing seeds outside remember to place envelopes in a rodent proof container such as a metal can with lid. An old washed out paint can with lid works great.

The seed's success depends on how old it is, and it's storing conditions. That is not to say that my seeds have not been stored for more than one year. I have done so. I do try to plant seeds I have collected right from the previous year for best results in the garden. Although, I have had successful plantings with older seeds. If I become overloaded with seeds, I just give them away to friends.

To keep my seed supply fresh and plentiful, I always collect, dry and store new seeds every year

From the Flower Garden News Website: http://www.flowergardennews.com/Saving_Seeds-Collecting_Drying_and_Storing_Seeds_from_the_Flower_Garden.html