HARVESTING, PROCESSING, AND STORING SEEDS

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HARVESTING WET SEEDS

- Seed Mature Crops: Cucumber and Eggplant

Julia at growcookeat.com

Sue at tomatoville.com
HARVESTING WET SEEDS

- Melons, pumpkins, squash, watermelon and summer squash when fully grown
- Easily slips the vine

Panache, rareseeds.org
HARVESTING WET SEEDS

• Tomatoes, peppers with final color change
HARVESTING DRY SEEDS

- Pods – beans, peas, brassicas, radish, etc when fully dried
HARVESTING DRY SEEDS

- Lettuce when fluffy
HARVESTING DRY SEEDS

- Corn when fully dried, past dough/milk stage
THRESHING

- Make sure plant material is fully dry
- Hand threshing for less than 50-100lbs
- Rub by hand or jump and dance apart
- Monitor pressure applied
WINNOWING

• Remove dirt, extra seed debris from seeds
• Easily done with breeze or fan
• Less stress if you’re not afraid to lose a few seeds
WINNOWING - SCREENS

Territorial Seed Company:

3/64" Round - Sieve screen for brassicas, carrots, endive, lettuce, and radicchio.

5/64" Round - Scalper screen for carrots, endive, lettuce, and radicchio.

6/64" Round - Scalper screen for broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kales, and mustards. Sieve screen for tomatoes and peppers.

7/64" Round - Scalper screen for onions, radishes, and tomatillos.

8/64" Round - Scalper screen for radishes and peppers.

10/64" Round - Scalper screen for tomatoes and peppers.

20/64" Round - Scalper screen for peas, beans, corn, and soybeans.
WET SEED: TOMATOES

- Squeeze tomato innards into jar
- Let ferment 2-3 days
- Rinse seeds in sieve
- Dry on screen or paper plate
WET SEED: EVERYTHING ELSE

- Squash, melons require removal and cleaning
- Peppers hand remove (use gloves!)
- Eggplant with water in a blender
- ‘Gooey’ seeds can be fermented
POST HARVEST CURE

• Allow sufficient time to dry before storage
• No more than 95°F
SEEDS TO SAVE

• Avoid moldy seeds
• Treat fungal diseased seeds with bleach
• Avoid saving bacterial, viral diseased seeds
  • Tomato Mosaic Virus
• Bacterial sterilization with wet heat (122°F for 20-25 minutes)
  • Black Rot
HOW TO STORE

• Moisture stable containers
WHERE TO STORE

- Consistent temperature
- Dry, low humidity
- Avoid insects
LONG TERM STORAGE HINTS

• Below 14% moisture content (achievable with silica gel processes)
• Store as cold as possible
GENERAL STORAGE LENGTHS

- Beans 3-4 years
- Peppers 2-3 years
- Squash 4-5 years
- Tomatoes 3-4 years

- See Vegetable Garden Seed Storage and Germination
GERMINATION TESTING

- Set determined number on moist towel
- Roll up, store in warm and humid place
- Count quantity germinated, calculate percent
- Leave light sensitive varieties on top of towel
TRICKS FOR SUCCESSFUL SEEDS NEXT YEAR

- Scarification (okra, beans)
- Moisture (beans)
RESOURCES

• Seed Processing and Storage by Jeffrey H. McCormack