How to Identify Each Type of Vegetable Seed

The Basic Types of Vegetables



Annual: They grow from seed to seed in ONE year. New seed must be planted each year.

Biennial: They grow from seed to seed in TWO years. New seed must be planted each year to produce a crop to eat, but it takes two years for the plant to yield seeds for future plantings.

Perennial: The roots remain in the ground year after year and continue to produce vegetables to eat each year. Usually after two years, seeds may be produced for future plantings, if you need seed at that time.

Vegetables are Listed in Alphabetical Order



Asparagus: Perennial, pollinated by insects. Female plants have a fewer number of thick stalks. Male plants have a higher number of thinner stalks. The female plants will yield the red seed berries. The berries are ready to harvest when they turn red and their fern-like top leaves flop over. Cut the tall berry stalk off the plant and hang it inside for ten days to dry. Remove the berries from the stalk and let them soak in a bowl of water for at least an hour to make them easier to open and remove the seed. Dry the seed on a paper towel for ten days and store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. Asparagus grown from seed takes THREE years to produce asparagus for the table. It will then produce asparagus each year after that.



Beans: Annual, self-pollinating with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Plant different bean varieties at least 150 feet apart. Harvest the beans you wish to eat but leave the bean pods on the best looking, most productive, earliest bearing plants. Later, when the bean pods begin to turn brown and the beans rattle inside its pod, the beans are ready to be harvested for seed. Pull up the entire plant with its roots. Hang the plant indoors upside down for 10 days. Then remove the beans from their pods. If you can't dent a bean seed when you bite down on it, it is dry enough for storage. Remove the seeds and store in a paper, cloth, or plastic bag in a dry, cool area. Do NOT store beans in an airtight container. Plant the beans the following spring AFTER the last frost and always harvest in the fall BEFORE the first frost.

Beets: Biennial, cross-pollinated by insects. Each flower has both male and female parts. Plant some beets to eat each year, and plant some beets to save through the winter to produce seed the second year. Plant the beet seeds you intend to keep through the winter in the early summer (not spring) so the beets don't grow too large the first year. Examine them as they grow and dig up and discard any that have poor above ground leaf quality. The beet will produce a rosette of flowers the first year but no seeds. If a beet produces a seed bolt the first year dig it up and discard it. If you have short mild winters, you may leave

the beets in the ground all winter. However, if you have long bitter winter weather, then dig up the beets before the first fall frost and save the eight (or more) beets that have the best quality roots. Cut all but one-inch off the top of the beet greens and bury the beets in damp sand or sawdust in a cool humid area for the winter, but not below freezing. Inspect the beets the following spring and discard any beets that withered during the winter. Replant the good beets about two-feet apart with their crowns just below the level of the earth. Then wait for them to grow and produce a tall seed stalk. Each stalk will have tiny blossoms. Later multiple corky seed balls will appear which contain five or six seeds each. When the seed balls begin to turn brown they are ready for harvest. Cut off the seed stalk at the ground and hang it upside down indoors in a well ventilated area to dry. Then remove the seeds from the stalk by hand and store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.



Broccoli: Annual with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. You will need at least three plants of the same type for good cross-pollination. Do NOT plant within 100 feet of Brussels spouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, or kohlrabi. When the head of the mature broccoli turns yellow, the seeds will appear within each flower bud inside a mature seed pod. When most of the seed pods have turned brown, harvest the seed pods and store indoors for 10 days. Place the seed pods inside a paper or plastic bag and carefully crush the pods using your hands. Pour the contents of the bag onto a screen and shake the screen to separate the chaff from the seed. Store the seed in a paper or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Brussels Sprouts: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. The seed collection procedure is the same as cabbage (next vegetable below) except Brussels sprouts are very hardy and they may be left in the ground over the winter in all but severe winter climates. They need to be removed from the ground in the northern United States and they have a tendency to dry out during winter storage. There is also no need to slash the top of the Brussels sprouts for the seed stalk to appear.



Cabbage: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. Easily cross-pollinates with many different vegetables. At the end of the first growing season, dig up the SIX best cabbages being careful to NOT damage their root system. Trim off the outer leaves of each cabbage head and store the entire cabbage plant in a well ventilated cool humid area, but not below freezing. The cabbage must be kept cool during the winter so it will bolt the following year. Inspect periodically during the winter and immediately discard any heads that begin to rot. The next spring plant the cabbages by themselves at least 200 feet from all other vegetables and all other varieties of cabbage. Plant the cabbages about 30 inches apart and slightly deeper than they were planted the previous year. Immediately after replanting, you will need to cut a one-inch deep “X” into the top center of each cabbage head to provide space for the seed stalk to rise. The leaves grown during the second year will be smaller than the first year. If one of the cabbages shows signs of producing a poor quality seed stalk, dig it up and discard the entire cabbage so it doesn't pass its inferior pollen on to the other good cabbages. The cabbage seed stalk will grow about five-feet tall and it will need to be supported between two stakes. Each seed stalk

will contain branches of bright yellow flowers which will produce brown seed pods containing as many as 20 seeds each. When the seed pods turn yellow, cut off the entire seed stalk and place it on a large newspaper or cloth sheet. Many of the seeds will fall off onto the sheet. Put the remaining seed pods into a bag and carefully crush them using your hands to separate the seeds from the pods. Shake the seeds on a screen to separate the seeds from the chaff. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.



Carrots: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Easily cross-pollinated by insects. Therefore, only plant one carrot variety per year, or plant different varieties at least 1,000 feet apart. If you have short mild winters, you may leave the carrots in the ground all winter. However, if you have long bitter winter weather, then dig up the carrots before the first fall frost and save the eight (or more) carrots that have the best quality roots. Cut all but one-inch off the top of the carrot greens and place the carrots sideways in a container and bury the carrots beneath damp sand or sawdust in a cool humid area for the winter, but not below freezing. The next spring replant the carrots 18 inches apart with the crown just below the surface of the earth. Push a shovel into the ground and then lean forward on the shovel handle. Insert the carrot into the ground behind the shovel and remove the shovel. Pack the dirt tightly around the carrot. The seed stalk will grow and produce flowers on a branched stalk. The seeds ripen from the top to the bottom of the stalk. Tie small nylon bags made from old nylon hose around the seed heads so the seeds can breathe and continue to ripen. As the seeds mature they will fall into the nylon bag and not be lost. When the lower seeds begin to fall off, cut off the seed stalk at the top of the carrot and lay it indoors to dry until the rest of the seeds mature and fall into the nylon bag. Shake the seeds on a screen to remove the chaff. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Cauliflower: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Easily cross-pollinated by insects with many other vegetables. Plant at least 200 feet from all other vegetables and other cauliflower varieties. Plant seeds in very late spring or early summer so the cauliflower plants mature in the fall just before the first frost. Dig up your SIX best cauliflower plants at the end of the first growing season and be careful that you do not damage their root system. Store them upside down in a cool area during the winter with their roots facing up. The next spring plant them 30 inches apart. They will yield a tall seed stalk containing yellow flowers and yellow seed pods. When the seed pods turn brown, cut the seed stalk from the top of the cauliflower and lay it on a newspaper or cloth sheet so the seed pods can continue to dry and fall onto the sheet. Put any remaining seed pods in a bag and carefully crush by hand to remove the seeds. Shake the seeds on a screen to separate them from the chaff. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. (Note: In the extreme northern United States it is difficult to save cauliflower over the winter. In the north, start the seeds in individual portable planting pots in early September and then move them into a cool greenhouse for the winter. Move them outdoors in the late spring.)



Celery: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Cross-pollinated by insects. Celery requires 120 to 135 days to mature. In the fall, dig up the best

plants being careful to not damage the roots. Replant the roots in some soil indoors and completely mulch the celery tops with straw or hay. Store in a humid, very cold area above freezing for the winter. After the last spring frost, retrieve the celery plants and cut off the leaves and stalks that have rotted, and replant the celery roots outdoors 24 inches apart. The plant will produce a bushy growth about 30 inches tall with white flowers The seeds will turn brown from the top to the bottom of the bush and they need to be harvested in that sequence. Tie a nylon bag made from nylon hose around the seed heads so you can capture the seeds when the seed head shatters. Then follow the directions for saving carrot seeds (above).

Chives: Perennial, pollinated by bees but they will not cross-pollinate with other vegetables. Chives have shallow roots and weeds will kill them if the weeks are allowed to grow and multiply. If you intend to harvest the chive seeds, only harvest the outer leaves of the plant for the table. The chives will produce round pink/purple flowers. When the tiny black seeds appear they are ready to be harvested. Cut off the seed head and dry it indoors for six weeks. Carefully separate the seeds with your hands and store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.



Corn: Annual with male tassels and female flowers (ears) on each plant. Cross-pollinated by the wind. The wind can easily carry the pollen 1,000 feet so only plant ONE variety of corn to avoid mixing varieties. Leave the largest most perfect earliest bearing ears of corn on the stalk and harvest the rest for eating. Save the ears from as many DIFFERENT stalks as possible to prevent future inbreeding problems. Wait about 4 weeks and then harvest the remaining ears of corn on their stalks, but do NOT wait until after the first frost. Peel back the husks and hang the corn on their stalks upside down in a well-ventilated room for another 4 weeks to allow the corn kernels more time to ripen. Wait until the corn kernels are hard and completely dry. If they are not dry they will not store well. Shelling is the term used for removing the corn from the ears. Twist off the full kernels of corn and discard the kernels near the end of the ear that are small and only partially developed. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. The following spring, soak the seeds in some warm water for three hours before planting to improve their germination ability.

Cucumber: Annual with male and female flowers on the same plant. The male flowers appear in groups but the female flowers do not, and a small fruit will be at the base of the female flowers. Cross-pollinated by bees so only plant one variety of cucumber per year. When you stop harvesting cucumbers the cucumber vines will stop producing more fruit. Leave the best looking cucumbers on the vine about five weeks after you have harvested the others for eating. They will become fat and yellow. Harvest them before they start to rot. Cut the cucumber in half and scrape the seedy interior pulp into a bowl of water. Stir the water occasionally to prevent the formation of mold. After about five days the seeds will sink to the bottom of the bowl. Remove them, rinse them off, and place them on a screen to dry for another 10 days. When the seed breaks instead of bends it is dry enough. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool place. The seeds will continue to ripen while in storage.

Eggplant: Annual with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Usually self-pollinated but occasionally cross-pollinated by insects. Therefore only plant one variety per year. Wait for the

mature fruit to drop from the plant. However, if there is danger of a frost then cut the eggplant from the plant and bring it inside for another two weeks. Save the fruits from several different plants. Cut the eggplant in half and scrape the seedy interior pulp into a bowl of water. Stir the water until the seeds separate from the pulp and fall to the bottom of the bowl. Remove the seeds from the bottom of the water, rinse, and dry on screens or paper towels. When you can't nick the seed with your fingernail, the seed is dry enough. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Kohlrabi: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. Plant the seed in the fall. Mulch the plants during the winter. Inspect the kohlrabi the following spring and dig up and discard any plants that do not have uniform stems of the correct color. Kohlrabi will produce a large spreading seed stalk and the plants should therefore be spaced about 30 inches apart. Harvest the seed using the same procedure as cabbage seed.

Leeks: Biennial. Cross-pollinated by bees so keep different leek varieties separated by at least 200 feet. Remove the smaller plants and leave the larger, higher quality leeks in the ground during the winter. If the winters are long and bitter, then cover with a layer of mulch. (NOTE: When left in the ground, leeks will form small bulblets around the base of the plant the following spring. These bulblets can be removed and planted to yield a fresh crop of leeks.) During the second growing season a tall stalk will appear with a ball of tiny flowers at its tip. When the seeds form inside the small paper thin capsules they are ready to be harvested. Cut off the entire seed stalk and place it indoors inside a bag to dry. When completely dry, rub the capsules with your hands to remove the seeds. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.



Lettuce: Annual with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Self-pollinating. Separate different varieties by at least one row of some other type of vegetable. Lettuce prefers cool weather and it will go to seed when the days are long and hot. This is called bolting. Lettuce that is allowed to bolt should be separated by 12 inches from one another. The lettuce begins to bolt when its leaves start to taste bitter and a stalk begins to rise from the center of the plant. Leaf lettuce bolts easily but you will need to cut a one-inch deep “X” into the top center of head lettuce to provide space for the seed stalk to rise. As the stalk continues to grow, a flower head will form with small yellow flowers which eventually turn into feathery white tufts. Inside the tufts are the tiny black or white seeds. One lettuce plant can produce as many as 30,000 seeds. The seeds do NOT all ripen at the same time. Instead they ripen over a period of 4 to 8 weeks. Watch the stalk and each time you see that some of the seeds have turned dark, shake those dark seeds into a paper bag. Allow to dry indoors for another seven days. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. Lettuce seeds need light to germinate so do NOT plant the tiny seeds too deep in the soil the following spring.

Melons: Annual with male and female flowers on the same plant. Melons are cross-pollinated by bees so do NOT plant within 200 feet of any other variety of melon. When the melon is ripe enough to eat, the seeds are also ready for harvesting. Cut the melon and scrape out the seedy interior pulp into a bowl of water. Stir gently and the heavy seeds will settle to the bottom of the bowl. Remove the seeds, rinse, and

dry thoroughly on a screen or paper towel. When the seed breaks instead of bending it is dry enough. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool place. In the spring place the seeds between two moist paper towels and then place inside a plastic bag in a warm place. When the seeds germinate, plant the tiny seedlings. (Note: Watermelons are ripe when the side that was touching the ground turns from white to yellow.)

Okra: Annual, self-pollinating, but only plant one variety per year. Okra have yellow flowers with a red center which is followed by a pod. Before the pod is fully developed it is harvested for eating. However, to yield seed, the pods must be left on the plant until they turn woody in the fall and then they are harvested. Crack open the pods and harvest the seeds.



Onions: Biennial. Onions have the best eating quality and flavor when grown from seed. Cross-pollinated by bees so different varieties should be planted at least 1,000 feet apart during their second year. If an onion bolts to seed the first year, do NOT save the seeds but discard them. Onions with thick necks do not store well over the winter so they should be eaten. Dig up the onions in the fall and save the best quality onions in a well ventilated dry, cool area above freezing for the winter. The next spring cut a shallow "X" in the top of each onion to provide an area for the seed stalk to emerge. Then replant the onions 4 inches apart and cover with 1/2 inch of soil. During the summer a tall seed stalk will appear with a round flower head which will yield black seeds. When the seeds begin to appear cut off the seed stem and dry it indoors for six weeks to allow time for the seeds to mature. Remove the seeds by rubbing with your hand. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Parsley: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Cross-pollinated by insects so do NOT plant different parsley varieties the same year. Don't save the seeds from parsley that bolts to seed the first year. For a continuous supply of parsley, plant every two weeks through mid-summer. After the first few frosts in the fall, cover the parsley with leaves, hay, or straw for the winter. Uncover them in the early spring. During the second growing season, parsley will produce tall branching flower stalks that yield lots of seeds. The seed heads ripen slowly so tie a nylon bag made from nylon hose around the seed stalks to catch the seeds when the flower heads burst in the fall. Harvest the seed stalks before the first frost and shake inside a paper bag to remove any additional seeds. Shake on a screen to remove the chaff. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. During winter storage the parsley seeds will form a germination-inhibiting coating which should be removed prior to planting. To remove the coating, soak the seeds in some warm water for two days the following spring. Change the water every 12 hours and rinse the seeds once more just before planting.

Peanut: Annual, self-pollinating, but only plant one variety per year. Peanuts grow in clusters underground. When the above ground leaves turn yellow, dig up the entire plant and store indoors for an additional four weeks in a cool, dry area. Leave the peanuts inside their shells until you are ready to eat them or use them for seed. If you shell them for seed, be very careful to not break or tear the pink paper thin seed coat around the peanut. Plant the peanut inside its thin seed coat for the best germination results.

Peas: Annual. Self-pollinating but occasionally cross-pollinated by bees so plant different varieties at least 100 feet apart. Peas do NOT do well when transplanted so indoor sowing is not effective. Plant peas during the last week of winter or first week of spring as they are hardy plants and can survive spring frosts. When they begin to grow in the spring, put a thin layer of mulch close around your plants to help shade the roots and keep the soil cool. Inspect your mature plants and select the strongest, earliest bearing plants with the heaviest set of peas for seed. Allow the peas on those plants to remain inside their seed pods until they are really dry and you can hear them rattle inside their seed pods, which usually occurs about 4 weeks after you have harvested the other peas for eating. If a heavy rain if forecasted, pull up the pea plants, roots and all, and stack the plants indoors in a well ventilated area until the seeds are dry inside their pods. Remove the seeds from their pods by hand. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool place. The following spring BEFORE the last frost, soak the peas in some warm water for three hours before planting outdoors. Poke your finger into the soft earth about 1.5" and drop the pea into the hole. Do NOT cover the hole with dirt. Late snows or early spring rains will fill the hole and provide the additional moisture the peas need to germinate.



Pepper: Annual with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Self-pollinating. However, bees will transport the pollen among plants so different varieties should be planted at least 50 feet apart. Too much nitrogen fertilizer will produce strong healthy bushes but yield minimum fruits. Do not plant where tobacco has grown in the past, or near tobacco that is currently growing. Harvest most of the peppers when they are ready to eat but leave the healthiest best looking peppers on the vine and wait for them to change color and begin to shrivel. Save the peppers from several different plants. If frost is forecast and the peppers have not yet changed color, then bring them indoors and wait for the seed to ripen. If pepper seeds are not allowed to fully ripen they will NOT germinate well the following spring. Cut the fully ripe shriveled peppers and remove the inner cluster of seeds. Place the seeds on a paper towel and allow them to dry for 14 days. When the seed breaks when you apply pressure (instead of bending) it is dry enough. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. Due to their long growing season pepper seeds need to be started indoors about 8 weeks before the last frost the next spring. Keep the soil very warm and water the soil sparingly during this 8 week period. Pepper seeds germinate best in warm dry soil.

Potato: Annual, self-pollinated. Although potatoes can be grown from seed they are typically grown from the eyes (dormant bud) of the potato, or the small, white sprouts that appear on a mature potato as it ages. Potatoes should be stored in a cool area over the winter at a temperature above 45°F. Short white sprouts on a potato are okay but break off any really long weak sprouts if there are at least three other eyes or sprouts on the potato. Small potatoes the size of an egg or a little larger should be planted whole. Potatoes smaller than an egg should be discarded. Large potatoes with eight or more eyes should be cut into pieces with one to three eyes per piece. Leave as much potato as possible on each piece. Allow the cuts to heal and dry for two days before planting. (Note: Too many eyes on a potato will yield a large above ground plant but very few potatoes below ground.) Plant the cut side facing down about 3 inches deep and about 10 inches apart. When the green tops are about 8 inches high, cover them with some more soil. Harvest the potatoes as you need them. (NOTE: If you wish to experiment with potato seed, then very carefully observe your patch of potatoes to see if any of them produce a seed ball along with the above ground

leaves. The seed ball will look like a tiny green tomato. Harvest it and save the seeds. Most gardeners who experiment with potato seeds have not experienced good results. You may be the exception.)

Pumpkins: Annual with male and female flowers on the same plant. The female flower has a tiny fruit at its base whereas the male flower does not. Cross-pollinated by bees so plant different varieties at least 500 feet apart. Pumpkins seeds will be ripe at the same time that the pumpkin is ready to be harvested and eaten. Cut the pumpkin open, scrape the seedy pulp into a bowl of water, and separate the seeds from the pulp. Examine the seeds and discard the flat ones. Spread the plump seeds onto a paper towel and allow to dry for 10 days. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Radish: Annual with tiny perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Easily cross-pollinated by bees but the tiny flowers are frequently ignored by bees if other larger flowers are nearby. Only plant one variety of radish per year to avoid cross-pollination. The flowers are tiny and will not produce seed during very hot or very dry weather. Harvest ALL the radishes when they are ready to eat. Inspect them and select the most desirable ones to use to produce seed. Cut all but one-inch off the top of the radish green leaves but be careful and do NOT cut the small leaves that are just beginning to develop. Replant the radishes about 8 inches apart with their crowns level with the surrounding dirt. Watch carefully and pull up and discard the first radishes to bolt to seed because they will NOT produce good seed. The radishes that bolt to seed later will produce the best seed. The seed stalk will be two or three feet tall. The green seed pod will first turn yellow and then it will turn brown. Pull up the entire radish plant at that time and hang them in a well ventilated area to dry. Crush the seed pods by hand to remove the seeds. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. Radishes do not keep well so the following spring you should plant one or two rows of radishes every two weeks. This will provide fresh edible radishes for the table throughout the summer and early fall.

Rhubarb: Perennial, cross-pollinated by insects. Needs a cold climate to do well and is therefore normally only grown in the northern United States. The seeds produced do NOT always result in the parent plant so it is better to propagate by dividing the crown of the rhubarb and replanting them instead. Rhubarb seeds will appear on a tall seed stalk that appears in the summer. When the top of the seed stalk becomes dry and flaky, cut it off and then remove and dry the seeds.

Rutabaga: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. Typically grown in northern climates whereas turnips are typically grown in southern climates. Rutabagas should be planted earlier than turnips because they grow slower, such as early August. Follow the planting and seed collection directions for turnips.

Spinach: Annual. Wind pollinated and cross-fertilization is possible with any other variety planted within one mile. Therefore plant only one variety of spinach each spring. Some varieties have either a male or a female flower on each plant, and other varieties have both male and female flowers on the same plant. Spinach prefers cool weather and it should be planted in the very early spring or during the late summer. To prevent the spinach from bolting too soon, pick off the largest leaves. The best plants to use for seeds are the ones that are the last to bolt to seed, because the plant itself will be a heavier producer of spinach

leaves for the table over a longer period of time. When the spinach leaves begin to turn yellow, pull up the plant and remove the seeds by hand. Dry the seeds for 14 days and then store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. The following spring plant spinach every two weeks to produce a continuous supply for fresh eating. The seeds may be soaked in a solution of 3 parts bleach to one part water for 10 minutes to help prevent loss to fungus. Then soak the seeds overnight in some clear water before planting them in the soil. Or, instead of soaking in a bleach/water solution, the seeds can be sprouted by placing the seeds between two damp paper towels inside a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 7 to 10 days.

Squash: Annual with male and female flowers on the same plant. The female flower has a tiny fruit at its base whereas the male flower does not. Cross-pollinated by bees so plant different varieties at least 500 feet apart. If two varieties are cross-pollinated the resulting squash will be edible but it will not have the same pleasant taste as the original squash. Winter squash seeds will be ripe at the same time that the winter squash is ready to be harvested and eaten. However, summer squash must remain on the vine for eight weeks after the majority of it has been harvested and eaten. For both winter and summer squash, harvest the squash at the proper time and then hang it up indoors for an additional six weeks to dry. Cut the squash open, scrape the seedy pulp into a bowl of water, and separate the seeds from the pulp. Examine the seeds and discard the flat ones. Spread the plump seeds onto a paper towel and allow to dry for 10 days. The seed is dry enough when it breaks instead of bends. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.

Swish Chard: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Cross-pollinated by the wind. The plant is very hardy and may be left in the ground during the first winter, with a layer of compost on top. The tall seed stalks will appear the second year and they need to be staked so they can continue to grow to maturity. When the seed stalk becomes dry, remove its seeds and dry them indoors. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.



Tomato: Annual with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Self-pollinated but insects can cross-pollinate different varieties so plant different varieties at least 10 feet apart. Select the best looking, earliest bearing, most productive plants for seed collection. Save seeds from a minimum of three different plants to provide for a reasonable gene pool. Harvest tomatoes when they are completely ripe and ready to be eaten. Cut the tomato into quarters and scrape the seedy pulp into a bowl of shallow water at room temperature. Stir the seeds once or twice a day and remove and discard any pulp and seed that floats to the top of the water. After two to four days, remove the good seeds which have sunk to the bottom of the bowl. Rinse the seeds in clean water and place on paper towels or newspapers for 10 days to dry thoroughly. The seeds will stick to the paper and you can save the paper with the seeds attached. Store in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area. In the spring you can peel off a seed with a little paper attached to it and plant them together. The paper will deteriorate quickly after planting and the seed will germinate.

Turnip: Biennial with perfect flowers that have both the male and female parts. Pollinated by bees. Typically grown in southern climates whereas rutabagas are typically grown in northern climates. Plant in

the midsummer in the north and in the early fall in the south. Thin the turnips to four inches apart. Leave in the ground during the winter with a covering of mulch to protect them. The second year thin the plants to 18 inches apart. They will produce a seed stalk the second year. When the seed pods turn yellow, cut off the entire seed stalk and place it on a large newspaper or cloth sheet. Many of the seeds will fall off onto the sheet. Put the remaining seed pods into a bag and carefully crush them using your hands to separate the seeds from the pods. Shake the seeds on a screen to separate the seeds from the chaff. Store the seeds in a paper envelope or cloth bag in a dry, cool area.