

Waikato

ENVIROSCHOOLS



SEED SAVING

Saving seeds is a great way you can take your garden “full circle” by growing and saving the source of the next generation of fruit, vegetables and flowers within your own garden. Seed Saving used to be one of the most important jobs there was – our ancestors survived because they saved the seeds that could be depended on to nourish people.

Plants with large seeds are easiest to collect seeds from. Remember to wait until the fruit and seeds are fully mature (immature seeds won't germinate), and collect from healthy, disease-free plants. Harvest in the afternoon on a warm day, after the dew has dried. Even seedheads that feel crackly and crispy will still need a few more days in an airy warm, room (or garden shed) to fully dry.

What seeds do you have in your garden that you can collect and save?
How do you know when the seeds are mature and ready to collect?

Saving Tomato Seeds

Tomato seeds are coated with a gel which serves several functions including to suppress premature germination - in nature the seeds won't germinate until the gel has broken down over time. In order to achieve the best germination rate of these seeds in the next growing season, it's good practise to first ferment the gel coat off before drying the seeds. Here's how to do that

You Will Need

- Tomatoes
- Clean jar with lid
- Sieve
- Tea towel
- Plate
- Paper envelope

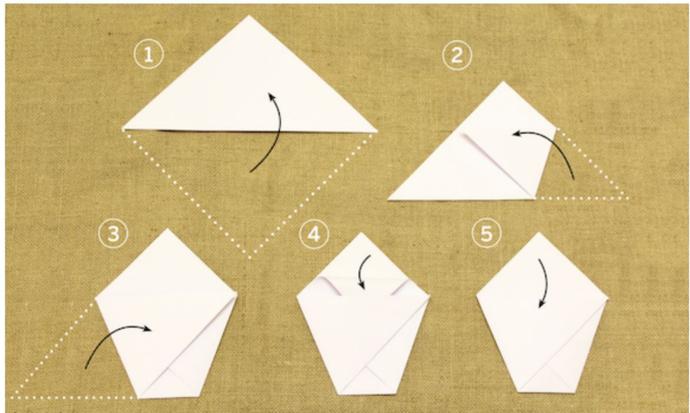
Instructions

- Pick a big, healthy tomato from your chosen plant.
- Cut it in half and squeeze the seeds (especially the big fat ones in the middle) and pulp into a labelled jar.
- Add water until the pulp and seeds are just covered. Give it a good stir. Rest the lid on (don't do it up) so gas can escape.
- Sit the jar in a warm place and give it a daily shake up.
- In 2 – 5 days time (depending on how warm it is) your seedy brew will go bubbly/ foamy and smell tangy. It's ready to clean.
- Tip it all into a sieve, rinsing with water and rubbing with your fingers until all the goo has gone.
- Tip onto a teatowel and rub dry.
- Lay on a plate (still with the label if you are saving more than one variety) and whenever you walk past shuffle the seed about to stop it sticking together.
- When it's bone dry (in a week or two) store in a paper envelope.



Make a seed envelope

Step-by-step-guide to making your own seed envelope



1. Begin with a square piece of paper. Fold it diagonally into a triangle and position so the longest side is facing you.
2. Fold the bottom right corner up to meet the centre of the opposite side so there is a straight edge along the top.
3. Repeat with the bottom left corner, again meeting the opposite side. Both corners should line up across the top edge.
4. Tuck the first of the two triangles at the top into the triangular pocket created by making the previous fold in step 3.

You will see that you now have an envelope that you can fill with seeds. Once filled, close by tucking the remaining top triangle into the same fold as in step 4. Remember to label your packets!

Share your seeds

Once you've start saving seeds, you will find you've got plenty to share! Make your own seed packets. Research and write some instructions on the envelope for people (don't forget to add the date when your seeds were collected because they don't last forever).

You can give them away or even start a business and sell them! It's a great way to share the gardening bug with your friends and family



Additional research & resources

- Describe / draw some of the seeds that you find in your garden. How do you think they are dispersed?
- Do some research on your plants - where did the plant come from originally? (Did you know that Rhubarb is native to Mongolia) What are some of its special uses? Many plants have special cultural and medicinal uses.
- What does it mean for a plant to 'self-seed'? When would it be a good idea to let a plant self-seed? When might it not? Can you find a plant in your garden that you can let self-seed and see what happens? [Tania's Messy Garden - Youtube](#)
- Some basic info on how to save seed from different families of plants: <https://tuigarden.co.nz/ideas-and-inspiration/seed-saving-guide/>
- More detailed information: <https://www.koanga.org.nz/knowledgebase/seed-knowledge/seed-saving/seed-saving-instructions/>