

Welcome to the World of Saving and Sharing Seeds!

Borrowing Seeds

The seeds you borrow from Richmond Grows are lent to you at no financial cost, and **they are priceless.**

A commitment to growing plants from seeds is a gift to yourself. We hope you learn much, experience the joy of gardening, and enjoy the fruits of your labor.

At harvest time, please take some extra steps to save seeds for others. We ask that a portion of the seeds you save be returned to the seed lending library to keep the library self-sustaining. The more seeds in the library, the more members of our community can experience the pleasures of growing their own food.



Why Save Seeds?

Humans have been saving seeds for over 12,000 years. However, in our culture much of that knowledge has been lost over the last hundred years, along with significant biodiversity. When you grow and save your own seeds, you

- develop seed stock that is well suited to our climate
- save money
- mitigate our dependence on agrobusiness

When you participate in the seed library, you create a culture of sharing and abundance.



The seed is hope; the flower is joy.
- Author Unknown

Support **Richmond Grows**

Richmond Grows is supported by volunteers and donations. Please contact us at RichmondGrows@gmail.com.

Welcome to The Seed Library!



Richmond Grows

OUR MISSION:
Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library is a free urban seed project committed to increasing the capacity of our community to feed itself wholesome food by means of education that fosters community resilience, self-reliance and a culture of sharing.

Located in the Richmond Public Library
325 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond, CA 94804
www.richmondlibrary.org

Monday - Tuesday 12-8, Wednesday 10-8
Thursday & Saturday 10-5
Friday 12-5, Sunday closed

Learn more about seed saving at
RichmondGrowsSeeds.org

New to Seed Saving?

Start with seeds that are labeled “easy.” These seeds are great for beginners and produce plants like the ones you planted.

We recommend you start with these:

- basil
- beans
- beets
- carrots
- chard
- eggplant
- leeks
- lettuce
- onions
- parsley
- peas
- peppers
- spinach
- sunflowers
- tomatoes

The seeds that are labeled “advanced” require special planning to preserve varietal purity. If certain precautions are not taken with them, then the next grower will not get the same plant. We want to ensure that the seeds that you return to the library are indeed what they claim to be. So please borrow “advanced” seeds only after you have learned about isolating plants to prevent cross-pollination.

Library Organization

The library is organized by plant families. The system is color-coded and corresponds to the families [listed on the Planting Times chart](#), which is posted in the Seed Library and on our website.

Each drawer is labeled “easy” or “advanced” with family names and some common members of the family. For example, *Lily Family: chives, garlic, leek, onion*. There are dividers for each plant in the drawer. Seeds are alphabetical behind the dividers.

How to Borrow Seeds

1. Fill out membership form on the computer in the seed library.
2. Using the Seed Stamp, stamp and fill out a separate envelope for each type of seed you plan to take.
3. Put seeds in envelopes.

Example Seed Stamp

Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library	
Common name:	<u>Tomato</u>
Scientific name:	<u><i>Solanum lycopersicum</i></u>
Variety:	<u>Brandywine</u>
Seed Source:	<u>Rebecca Newburn</u>
Location of harvest:	<u>Richmond</u>
Year:	<u>2009</u>
Notes:	<u>Original seed from Baker Creek. Dry farmed. Great-tasting.</u>
Difficulty of saving seed:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Easy <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced	
Thank you for saving seeds!	
Please return some seeds at the end of the season.	
Visit RichmondGrowsSeeds.org	

If you are looking for seeds for a particular plant and can't find them, then look up their family name in the **Plant Index**, which is available at the Seed Library and online.



How to Donate and Return Seeds

First, read the [Richmond Grows](#) brochure, **How to Save Seeds**.

Once you have collected seed from your easy-to-save crops, set aside some for yourself and some for the library in clearly labeled containers.

Seeds for the library should be in envelopes labeled with the Seed Stamp. You can stamp your envelopes when you're at the library, or you can print out a label at home from the website.

If you haven't done so yet, fill out the membership form on the computer at the library.

Bring your labeled seeds to the Library. Find the appropriate drawer and section for your seeds. Put your envelope behind the label for the plant. Within each divider, place seeds alphabetically. Refer to the Plant Index for scientific names.

Learn More

- visit www.RichmondGrowsSeeds.org
- take seed saving classes
- join the seedsavers.org forum
- read about seed saving at your local library
- talk to experienced seed-saving gardeners
- keep good garden records

What are Seeds?

A plant produces seeds in order to reproduce itself. Just like an egg has to be fertilized to become a new animal, a seed must be pollinated to produce a new plant. Understanding pollination is key to getting seeds to produce the plants you want. Some plants are **self-pollinating**—the male and female parts are contained within a single flower that fertilizes itself. Other plants, called **cross-pollinators**, have separate male and female flowers and their pollen has to get from one flower to another in order for the flowers to be fertilized.

The seeds from families of plants that are self-pollinating are labeled “**easy**” to save. The most widely crossing of the cross-pollinators are labeled “**advanced**” because it takes effort to keep them from crossing with each other.

Types of Seeds

Open-pollinated or **heirloom** varieties have been grown for so many generations that their physical and genetic qualities are relatively stable. This seed will be “true to type” if saved. In simple terms, you will reap what you sow.

Hybrid seeds. If a packet has *hybrid*, *F1*, or *VF* written on it, seeds from those plants will not produce plants like the parent plant. They may produce something somewhat or very different, or they may produce nothing at all.

Plant Families

If you learn the family, genus and species of vegetables, you will also learn their basic seed saving needs and risks.

Families define the basic form of the flower parts of plants. All plants with the same flower (and reproductive) structure are in the same family.

Genera (singular: Genus) define more closely related plants. Crosses between genera are rare but can occur.

Species define specific botanically recognized plants with similar fruit, flowers, and leaves. Plants within one species will readily cross with each other.

Cultivars are cultivated varieties that can cross with each other but will not cross with varieties of other species. When we save seeds we usually want to maintain a cultivar or breed a new one.

Example:

Family: Cucurbitaceae **Genus:** *Cucurbita*
Species: *Cucurbita pepo* **Cultivars:** Acorn squash, Warty gourd

Squash and gourd are the same species and can easily cross-pollinate, which might result in an inedible variety. That is why they are labeled “advanced.”



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How to Save Seeds



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Easiest-to-Save Seeds

The plants in these families are mostly self-pollinating. The flowers have male and female parts, so pollination occurs within the individual plant, not as a cross between plants. Seeds are reliably the same as the parent plant.

Asteraceae or Compositae *Aster, Daisy, or Sunflower Family:* *artichoke, cardoon, endive, Jerusalem artichoke, lettuce, salsify, shungiku, sunflower.*

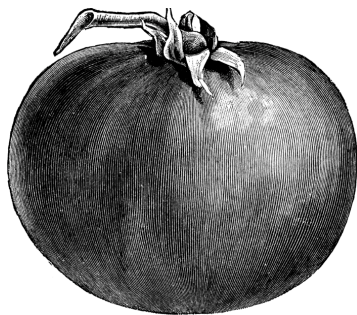
For Jerusalem artichokes, the tuber is planted. For others in this family, allow the plants to flower, collect dry seeds.

Fabaceae or Leguminosae *Pea, Bean, Legume or Pulse Family:* *bean, lentil, pea, peanut, soybean.*

Allow beans and peas to dry in their pods on plants before collecting and storing. Peanuts are generally not grown in coastal California.

Solanaceae *Nightshade Family:* *cape gooseberry, eggplant, ground cherry, pepper, potato, tomatillo, tomato.*

Allow fruits to fully ripen. Seed must be separated from pulp. Letting tomato pulp ferment in water for a few days is helpful. Seed should be rinsed and dried thoroughly before being stored. Potatoes are grown from tubers not seeds.



Easy-to-Save Seeds

These plants are self-sterile, cross-pollinating, or **outbreeding**. They will cross with other plants of their species. To save seeds from these plants you must

- allow only one variety in each species to flower at a time
- let multiple plants of one variety flower to ensure pollination

In our dense urban environments, some crossing can occur with our neighbors' plants, but these plants will not cross over great distances. Many are rarely allowed to flower anyway.

Amaryllidaceae or Alliaceae *Lily or Onion Family:* *chives, garlic, leeks, onions.*

They are biennial, which means they won't flower until the second year, after winter. Let the seeds dry on the plant. Collect. With bulbing varieties, replant bulb when it sprouts.

Chenopodiaceae or Amaranthaceae

Goosefoot or Amaranth Family: *amaranth, beet, chard, lamb's quarters, orach, quinoa, spinach.*

Beet and Chard are the same species, so only let one variety flower at the same time.

Spinach is **dioecious** meaning each plant is either male or female, so let many plants flower at once for pollination. Let the seeds dry on the plant. Collect.

Umbelliferae or Apiaceae *Parsley Family:* *carrot, celery, caraway, chervil, cilantro (coriander), dill, fennel, parsley, parsnip.*

Carrot unfortunately will cross with Queen Anne's Lace, so don't save carrot seeds if Queen Anne's Lace grows nearby. Many of this family are biennials, so flowering may not occur until the second year. Let the seeds dry on the plant. Collect.

Advanced Seeds

Most of these vegetables are outbreeding and pollinated by wind or insects. They are commonly found flowering in local neighborhoods, making isolation very difficult. Seeds that require hand pollination, tenting, and other methods to ensure varietal purity are labeled "advanced." **These families will readily cross with unseen nearby plants and may create odd and possibly inedible varieties in one generation.**

Brassicaceae *Mustard Family:* *Asian greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, turnip.*

Exceptions that are easy: Arugula, rutabaga



Cucurbitaceae *Gourd Family:* *cucumbers, gourds, luffa, melons, pumpkin, summer squash (ex. zucchini), winter squash (ex. acorn)*

Exceptions that are easy: Plant uncommon cucurbits like gourds, mixta squash, luffa. Hand pollinate to ensure purity with this family.

Poaceae *Grass Family:* *barley, corn, kamut, millet, oats, sorghum, wheat.*

Corn readily crosses with different, unseen varieties. It is unlikely that saved seeds will be like their parents.

Exceptions that are easy: Sorghum is easy to save because it does not cross. All other crops in this family are so uncommon in backyards that they are easy to save.

