

Understanding Your Seed Packet

Every seed company is different and information will vary from packet to packet.

Front of packet: name of crop and variety, potentially short description

Back of packet: where most of the information will be found, including planting depth, when to plant, etc.. see the glossary in this brochure to help navigate the packet.

Repackaged Seeds: When patrons donate seeds saved from crops in their garden, they are asked to provide key information necessary for successful growth. Library staff repackage and label donated seeds and provide as much information as is reported. You can find more information by searching online “how to grow [name of crop]”.

Saving Seeds

Methods of saving seeds vary from crop to crop. Here are some very general guidelines:

- Only save seed from heirloom plants. Do not seed from hybrid plants, or those labeled as F1, F, or PVP
- Avoid cross-pollination by isolating plants of the same species
- The internet is your friend! Search “how to save [enter your crop here] seeds” and find directions from a trusted source.

Basic Seed Saving Guide from Southern Exposure Seed Exchange:



Why Save Seeds?

There are many reasons to save seeds, from preserving biodiversity and history to having fun and saving money. Once you have one heirloom seed, you can continue to grow that seed for years to come without ever having to purchase that seed again—provided you save the seeds of course! This is not only fun for you and your family and nice for your wallet, but it also bolsters the sustainability of your local food and flower system.

As the climate changes and your local micro-climate changes, the plants you grow will adapt and so will their seeds that you save. Though this will take place over many years, saved seeds will become more resistant to local diseases and more adapt to changing climates, thus increasing overall resistance to rapidly changing environments.

Simply put, seed saving is a great way to help ensure your local food and flower supply through increasing variety, disease resistance, climate adaptation and self-sufficiency. For more information on seed saving, check out some of the resources listed in this brochure and in the library!



Using the Felton Seed Lending Library

How it works:

“Borrow” Seeds

Browse our seed library and take as many seeds as you plan to plant. Seeds from the Felton Seed Library are completely free and do not need to be checked out. A library card is not required to take seeds.

Plant Seeds

Plant seeds from our library in your garden!

Save Seeds

Keep our seed library going by saving seeds from successful heirloom crops in your garden. Do not save seeds from hybrid plants or those labeled as F1, F, or PVP as these seeds tend to yield unpredictable and less viable crops.

Donate Seeds

Drop off cleaned and separated seeds in an envelope or bag with our Felton Seed Library information labels attached. Staff will sort into labeled envelopes to be added to our collection. The Felton Seed Library also accepts commercially packaged seeds.

Garden Glossary

- **Annuals:** plants that complete their life cycle (produce seed and die) in one growing season.
- **Biennials:** plants that require two seasons to complete their life cycle
- **Days to Germinate:** how many days this seed GENERALLY takes to sprout. This is an estimation, seeds can sprout before and after the listed time frame.
- **Direct Seeding:** planting seeds directly into the ground/container they will grow in as opposed to “starting” them indoors in small cells to be transplanted outside later.
- **First Frost and Last Frost:** the date of the first time and last time the ground will freeze in your area. Use The Farmer's Almanac to estimate the last frost date for your area.
- **Germination:** the act of a seed sprouting (when you first see green).
- **Heirloom Seeds:** are a variety that has been passed down for multiple generations. These seeds are open-pollinated. Heirloom seeds can be grown organically or non-organically.
- **Hybrid Seeds:** Hybrid seeds come from controlled cross-breeding of two plants to create a new variety. While hybrid seeds are not genetically modified, you are unable to save the seeds because they're not considered stable.
- **Non-GMO Seeds:** It's possible for seeds to be non-GMO, but not organic. Non-GMO seeds are not genetically modified but are not necessarily grown organically.

Garden Glossary continued

- **Open-Pollinated Seeds:** means the flowers are pollinated by bees, moths, or even wind. Some open-pollinated seeds are also self-pollinating. Open-pollinated seeds are not hybrids.
- **Organic Seeds:** seed grown in a way that is compliant with USDA standards, such as being non-GMO and grown without the use of harmful chemicals.
- **Perennials:** plants that live for a minimum of three years, though some can live for decades. They usually can produce seed and not die.
- **Start Indoors:** planting, or “starting” them indoors in small cells to be transplanted outside later.

Resources & More

Informational Resources used for this brochure:

Kleeger, S. & Still, A. (2010). *A Guide to Seed Saving, Seed Stewardship & Seed Sovereignty*. [zine]. Sweet Home, OR.

My Little Green Garden. (2022, May 28). *How to Read a Seed Packet for Beginners*.

<https://mylittlegreengarden.com/how-to-read-a-seed-packet-for-beginners/>

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange. *Wet & Dry Seed Saving for Home Use*.

<https://www.southernexposure.com/growing-guides/saving-seeds-home-use.pdf>

Contact staff at the Felton Library with questions about our seed library and resources for gardening and seed saving at (831) 427-7708.



Felton Seed Lending Library

