

SAVING GARDEN SEEDS FOR FUTURE PLANTING

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Home gardeners can save some seeds to use in future years with proper storage.

Left-over commercially packaged vegetable and annual flower seeds can sometimes be saved from one year to the next.

With hybrids, some desirable traits may get lost in the shuffle of genetic material from cross-pollination. Hybrid varieties then do not always produce plants that resemble each other, which sometimes leave growers frustrated.

Open-pollinated crops will breed true from seeds unless crops cross-pollinate. However, commercial seeds of these crops are very inexpensive.

If the home gardener just wants to produce and use his own seeds, there are several to choose from.

Watermelon, muskmelon, tomato, string beans, pepper and eggplant are good vegetables to save. Ornamental flowers such as petunias, marigolds, cosmos, impatiens, sunflowers and zinnias are usually successful also.

Proper collection and storage is important for successful seeding next year.

Let seeds mature on the plant before harvesting. Once flowers have dried down, remove seeds and dry them to prevent molding during storage.

Seeds should be stored in an envelope placed in an airtight container. Two tablespoons of non-fat dry milk wrapped in facial tissue will help absorb moisture.