



SOUTH COAST ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY

Riverton Organic Growers Fact Sheet | www.sces.org.nz

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SEED SAVING

Saving your own seeds can be super easy or super complicated, depending on what you're growing. These tips will help you start your seed saving journey with success!

For the purposes of keeping it simple, it's easiest to start with four types of plants: **peas, climbing and dwarf beans, tomatoes and garlic**, as these are all easy to save seeds from without worrying too much about cross-pollination or minimum numbers of plants.

Basic steps for seed saving success:

- *Plant seeds at the right time* - follow instructions to make sure you are sowing or planting at the right time of year;
- *Grow plants well* - make sure they get sufficient water and don't have too much competition (e.g. from weeds or other plants);
- *'Rogue' them* - pull out any that don't look like what you want, or that start flowering too early;
- *Provide support* - once things start flowering they can produce huge flower stalks that are prone to blowing over in the wind;
- *Provide protection* - many other creatures will enjoy eating your seeds before you get a chance to collect them, particularly birds (but also rats and mice);
- *Prepare a drying and storage area* - somewhere cool and dry and free of rats and mice.

Peas and beans

These are pretty easy to grow and you can save the seeds from only one plant if that's all you have (more is always better though). Just let the vines dry off in the garden until you can hear the seeds rattling in the pods then hang them up somewhere cool and dry (and rat-proof!). When they are fully dry, shell them out and store them in an airtight container (putting them in a freezer for a couple of nights will kill any tiny bugs eggs that might be on them).

Note: *'runner' beans and broad beans are different types of bean and need different strategies for seed saving.*



Left & Right:
These peas are fully dry and ready to be processed.



Right: The empty shells make a great addition to your compost!



Tomatoes

You can save seeds from just one tomato plant, and they don't cross-pollinate, so you can grow several different varieties side-by-side. The easiest way to collect the seeds is to scoop them out of the ripe fruit and smear them on a paper towel. Once they are dry you can rub them off into an airtight container.



Simply scrape seeds out with a spoon and spread on a paper towel to dry. You can still eat the fleshy part!

Garlic

Garlic is generally not grown from a true seed - it is grown by splitting up a clove and planting individual bulbs, so there is no problem with cross-pollination. It is super easy to grow!



Processing hard-shelled seeds

Some seeds are very hard to get out of their pods or shells (such as seeds in the cabbage family: kale, cabbage, broccoli, radish etc.). To process these, an easy way is to stomp on them!



Processing radish seed. 1: Put seed pods in a wooden box; 2: Stomp on them; 3: Stomped seed pods; 4: Put stomped seed pods in a bowl; 5: 'Winnow' them by tipping them into the box in a gentle breeze, or while blowing gently on them - this blows away the lighter material, leaving the (generally) heavier seeds behind; 6 & 7: Partially-winnowed seed; 8: Fully-processed seed.