

## Seeds, Food Justice and Community

Where the seeds are from is also important in promoting food justice. Most seeds are controlled by a handful of corporations, such as Monsanto, DuPont and Syngenta. These corporations are among those that crafted the WTO policies that outlaws seed saving. The seeds that these corporations sell are not self-reproducing, which means you have to continue to buy them every year.

Lastly, using heirloom seeds can allow you to save more seeds than you might use for your household or community garden. Having extra seeds can allow you to participate in seed sharing and seed swapping, which allows people to experiment with seed diversity and build community through seed sharing.

If there are enough people saving seeds, neighborhoods and communities could even start a seed bank, which would allow for more people to benefit from heirloom seeds, eat healthier and promote greater food sovereignty.

Well House is committed to using heirloom seeds, saving seeds and sharing seed with the community.

Additional Resources on Seed Saving, Seed Sovereignty & Heirloom Seeds:



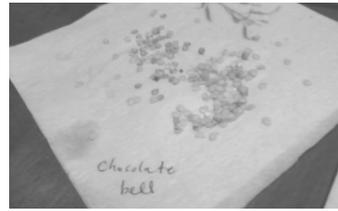
Navdanya  
[www.navdanya.org/](http://www.navdanya.org/)

Seed Savers  
[www.seedsavers.org/](http://www.seedsavers.org/)

Food First  
[www.foodfirst.org/](http://www.foodfirst.org/)



[OKTjustice.org](http://OKTjustice.org)  
[OKTable1@gmail.com](mailto:OKTable1@gmail.com)



## How to Save Seeds

By Camilla Voelkers & Jeff Smith  
Our Kitchen Table Food Garden Coaches



- First, make sure that the variety you're saving is open-pollinated, not hybrid. All heirloom tomatoes are open-pollinated. Open-pollinated varieties will come true from seeds, but hybrids are created by seed companies who carefully crossing two parent plants to yield seeds for the hybrid variety.
- It is important to be able to identify plants and when they are going to seed. Some plants will flower before going to seed ( kale or broccoli) while others contain the seed inside the mature fruit/vegetable (tomato or zucchini).
- Seeds that come from flowering plants should only be harvested when the seeds or seed pods are completely dry. Seeds saved directly from fruit or vegetables should be extracted from mature or over mature crops. For example, tomato seeds can be extracted from a tomato that you can eat, but when saving seeds from zucchini or cucumbers it is best to wait until the fruit is over ripe or even after the rotting process has begun.
- One key element is to make sure that seeds you are saving are properly dried before storing them. You can save seeds by:
  - drying them on a paper towel
  - drying them on a paper plate
  - drying them on a seed drying rack or piece of screen
  - Tomato seeds can also be saved by putting them in water.



Cut the tomato in half and scoop or squeeze out the seeds and gel into a small container labeled with the variety name.

Set the rest of the tomato aside for eating. Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of water. Set the container aside, out of the sun, for 3 to 5 days. A moldy film will probably form on top.

To separate the seeds: First carefully remove the film. Then add some more water and stir. Good seeds will sink, so carefully pour off the water and the floating bits of pulp. Repeat until all the pulp is gone and you have clean seeds. Drain them as well as you can (using a paper towel helps), then spread them in a single layer on a screen or a paper plate to dry. You can use paper towels, but the seeds tend to stick to them. Don't use plastic or ceramic plates! The seeds need to have the water wicked away from them. If you're saving multiple varieties, be sure to label the plates.

- Storing Seeds – You can store seeds in used seed packets, small envelopes, glass jars or yogurt containers. Just make sure the seeds are dry and stored in a dry, cool place. Humidity and direct sunlight will do damage to seeds.
- You can also save seeds by burying over ripe produce in potting soil, a flower-pot, a cold-frame box or directly in the garden. Just remember where you put it and the seeds are likely to germinate in the spring. You can separate the seedlings into pots in preparation for the new growing season.
- Drying Rack and Seed Cleaning design <http://thegrowinghome.net/2011/11/weekend-project-drying-racks-and-seed-cleaning-screens/>

Here is an estimate of the cost for building a seed drying rack similar to the one at Well House.

Pricing of materials (from Lowe's) for building a drying rack with 4 racks (1' x 2'), 4 shelves, with a frame that is 30" tall x 18" wide x 30" deep  
 Phifer 48in x 25ft Charcoal Aluminum Screen Wire - \$27.98  
 8 - 1" x 2" x 8' untreated wood @ \$3each = \$24  
 1 inch wood screws = \$5  
 \*Use a staple gun to adhere screen to the wood frame

Total = \$57



**DIY Seed-saving Rack**

## Food Justice & Seeds



When purchasing seeds for growing your own vegetables and herbs, always ask yourself:  
 1) What kind of seeds they are ?  
 2) Where the seeds are coming from?

When we say, what kind of seeds, we want to ask are the seeds hybrid and non-self producing or are they heirloom seeds? The difference is significant. Human interaction with seeds over the centuries has always led to some form of hybridization, since humans have been cross-pollinating plants for thousands of years.

However, there is a significant difference between original seeds or heirloom seeds and the kind of seeds that have been commercially developed by large corporations in recent decades.

Heirloom seeds are self-reproducing, in that the seeds that each plant produces can be saved and used again. Saving your own seeds can save you money and it promotes the maintenance of a rich diversity of seed stock.

Saving seeds is also a food justice issue, since the saving of seeds promotes greater food sovereignty for communities and it challenges the agribusiness created policy of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which makes it illegal for farmers/communities to save their own seeds. ([www.ifg.org/pdf/int'l\\_tradeshiva\\_WTO.pdf\\_1.pdf](http://www.ifg.org/pdf/int'l_tradeshiva_WTO.pdf_1.pdf))

These kinds of global policies have also been promoted in the US with Senate Bill S510, the Food Safety Modernization Act, which would also make seed saving a criminal act. ([www.naturalnews.com/030418\\_Food\\_Safety\\_Modernization\\_Act\\_seeds.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/030418_Food_Safety_Modernization_Act_seeds.html))

In addition, heirloom plants are also more resilient and don't rely on the kinds of chemical and fossil fuel based additives that hybrid and terminator seeds do. **Heirloom seeds yield produce that is more nutritious, tastes better and is less uniformed, meaning it does not ripen all at the same time.**

*Jar method of saving tomato seeds*