

## SAVING YOUR SEEDS

**Pole beans, Bush beans, lima beans, Fava beans, cow peas, runner beans, snap peas, snow peas** are all in the Family *Fabaceae*. Harvest seeds when the pods are brown and dry.

\*\*\*In North Texas, Fava Beans and peas enjoy cool weather. Fava beans are best planted in September for a February harvest. Peas can be planted in September for harvest in November, and again in February for a spring harvest. Other beans prefer our long warm season.

**Broccoli, Cauliflower, Radish, Brussels Sprouts, Kale, Kohlrabi, Collards, Cabbage, Turnips, Rutabagas** are in the Family *Brassicaceae*. Brassicas produce seed pods, called *Siliques*, in their second year. Leave your plants in the ground to over-winter, or *vernalize*. The following Spring, the plant will flower and produce edible Siliques. When these Siliques dry and brown, harvest the seeds.

\*\*\*In North Texas, Brassicas do best and taste sweeter when planted in September for a February vegetable harvest, or a June seed harvest.

**Carrots, Parsnips, Parsley, Cilantro** are in the Family *Apiaceae*. These Biennial vegetables are left to vernalize and will produce flowers and seeds the following Spring. These are pollinated by insects and can cross with wild varieties, so obtaining pure seed is a challenge, but can be done if the group of plants are isolated, and pollinators are introduced to the sheltered area.

\*\*\*In North Texas, carrots and parsnips do well and taste sweeter when planted in September and harvested throughout Winter and into the following Spring.

**Peppers, Eggplants, Tomatoes, Ground Cherries**, are different species within the Family *Solanaceae*. The seeds of these "Nightshades" should be harvested when the plant is fully mature. For Eggplants, this is when the fruit is Yellow and begins to crack. For others, when the fruit is soft and just past the best stage for eating. Tomato and ground cherry seeds should be fermented. This process removes the gel coating from the seeds so that they will not mold in storage. Place seeds in a glass of water and leave on the counter for a few days. Then rinse, strain, and dry.

**Cucumbers, Squash, Musk Melons and Watermelons** are different species within the Family *Cucurbitaceae*. While they are all in the family, they will only cross with others of the same species. Therefore, Watermelons cannot cross with cantaloupes (a muskmelon) and cucumbers cannot cross with squash. However, different varieties within the same species will regularly cross-pollinate, and so should be hand pollinated and isolated. The seeds of cucumbers and squash should be collected when the fruit is fully ripe. For cucumbers, this is usually when the fruit is large and yellow. For squash, this is when the fruit is large and has cured, or developed a hard skin.

\*\*\*winter squash and summer squash are grown within the same warm season. Winter squash is so-called, because it develops a hard skin after curing and can therefore be stored over winter.

**Beets, Spinach and Swiss Chard** are in the Family *Amaranthaceae*. The Biennial plants will grow large in their second season, flower and grow seed stalks. Beets and Chard are the same species and will cross-pollinate. Spinach will grow small pods. In each case, allow the seed stalks or pods to dry and then harvest the seeds.

\*\*\*In North Texas, these grow best during cool weather. Swiss Chard and beets can grow through our summers, but may develop a woody texture and flavor. Spinach enjoys our winter weather.

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