Hybrid seeds

When cross-pollination occurs between seed varieties. Seeds saved from hybrid seeds will not produce plants like the parent plant.

Pollination

The transfer of pollen from male to female reproductive organs to produce fruit and seeds.

Cross-pollination

The transfer of pollen from one variety of plant to the female flower of another variety of plant causing unpredictable results in the fruit and seeds.

Biennial

A flowering plant that takes two years to produce fruit and seeds.

Fermentation

A process that mimics natural chemical reactions by allowing seeds to break down organic barriers and prepare for germination. The fermentation process breaks down germination inhibitors and protects against certain diseases.

A commitment to growing plants from seeds is a gift to you. And the seeds you save and return are a gift to your community.

042015

Seed Library Locations

Dusenberry-River Library
5605 E River Road #105
520.594.5345

Flowing Wells Library
1730 W Wetmore Road
520.594.5225

Himmel Park Library
1035 N Treat Avenue
520.594.5305

Joel D. Valdez Main Library
101 N Stone Avenue
520.594.5500

Martha Cooper Library
1377 N Catalina Avenue
520.594.5315

Oro Valley Library
1305 West Naranja Drive
520.594.5580

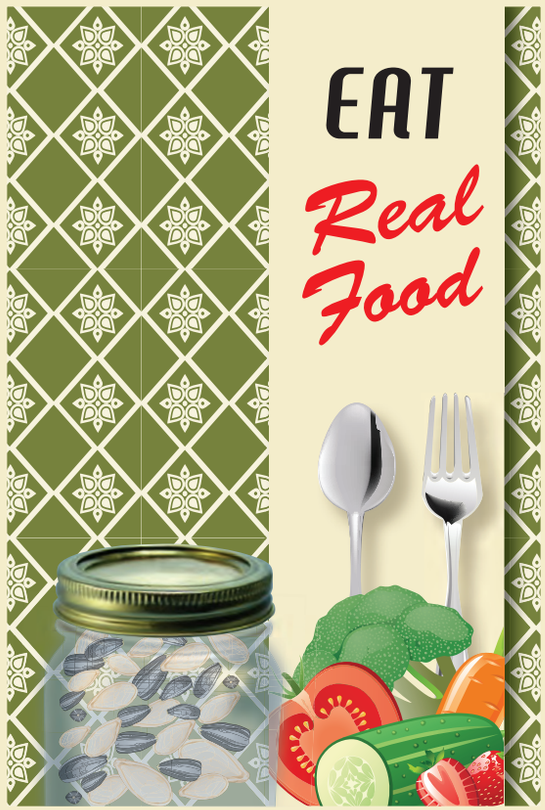
Quincie Douglas Library
1585 E 36th Street
520.594.5335

Salazar-Ajo Library
15 W Plaza Street #179
Ajo, AZ 85321
520.387.6075

INFOLINE 520.791.4010
www.library.pima.gov

Share

Seeds *from the* **PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**



USING YOUR
Seed Library

Saving and Sharing Seeds

The seeds you borrow from the PCPL Seed Library are free, and yet they are priceless.

We hope you learn a lot as you experience the joys of gardening and seed saving. As you grow as a gardener and experience success in your garden, please consider bringing some seeds back to share the fruits of your labors with the Seed Library community.

Choosing Seeds

The seeds that you'll find in our libraries are all open-pollinated or heirloom varieties, meaning seeds saved from these plants will produce fruit the next season which will be the same as the parent plant. Our seeds are categorized by how difficult they are to save, not grow. Please feel free to try growing any seed that interests you. We all learn by trying new things.

When growing to save seed, please try to match the *seed saving* difficulty with your gardening expertise. Here are some guidelines for growing plants to save seed.

Easy Seeds

Easy seeds are great for beginners and grow plants that are less likely to cross-pollinate with other plants in that family.

Tip: Stick with one variety of a plant, or separate different varieties with a taller buffer crop or distance.

Advanced Seeds

Advanced seeds grow plants that are wind, insect pollinated, or biennial and very likely to cross-pollinate with other plant varieties, resulting in a "mystery" plant. They may also take more than one season to produce seeds.

Tips: Stick to a single plant variety, stagger growing times, and use tenting or hand pollination techniques to preserve the purity of the seed. Separate similar plants by placing them a good distance apart, like in the front and back yard. It's also very important to check the botanical name to ensure which plants are related and susceptible to cross-pollination.

Three Ways to Save Seeds

At harvest time, please take some extra steps to save seeds for others to borrow and plant. By returning a portion of the seeds you save from your strongest, tastiest, and most vigorous plants, you'll help keep our seed library growing.

Dry Seed Processing

For plants with seeds that grow on the outside of the plant.

- Allow the seed to dry on the plant, and collect the seedpods before they break open.
- For plants with seeds that develop in the center of the flower, allow the plant to dry.
- When the stem holding the seed head turns brown, harvest the seeds.

Tip: Collect dry seeds under dry, warm conditions to prevent mold and reduce additional drying time.

Wet Seed Processing

- For seeds that grow inside the fleshy fruit of the plant.
- Rinse off the seeds and dry them thoroughly.
- If the seeds have a gel-like coating, use the fermentation process.

Tip: If you're not sure if your seeds have a coating, float them in a small amount of water. You'll be able to see the coating in the water.

Fermentation Seed Processing

- For seeds with a gel-like coating.
- Mix the seeds and the seed juice with a little water in a small plastic or glass container with a lid.
- Allow the seeds to ferment for 4 - 6 days.
- When a layer of mold has formed on top of the water and the seeds sink, the fermentation is complete. Add more water, swish it around, and remove the mold and pulp. The good seeds will sink to the bottom, while the bad seeds will float to the top. Remove the bad seeds.
- Drain the water from the seeds and set them out on a plate, screen, or paper towel to dry thoroughly. Once the seeds are completely dry, place them in a moisture-proof container. Label and store the seeds.
- Return a few seeds in a labeled container to the Seed Library.

Tip: Use the fermentation process for seeds from tomatoes, cucumbers, some squash, and some melons.

Words to Know

Open-pollinated or Heirloom Seeds

Varieties which have been grown for so many successive generations that their physical and genetic qualities are fairly stable. These seeds will be "true to type" if saved.