

# Seed Collecting and Germinating Information

## What does the seed look like?

The following are some websites that show pictures of various seeds. Often it is challenging to figure out what part is the seed and what is the chaff.

<https://www.prairiemoon.com/seeds/>

<https://sheffields.com/seeds-for-sale/>

<http://theseedsite.co.uk/db1.html>

<https://wildplantsfromseed.com/index.php>

## Seed Saving Process

### Dry Seeds

Step 1 – collect seed on a day that is dry with little wind movement. Some seeds are quite light and will blow out of your hand as you collect them. Collecting moist seed increases the chance of moldy seed.

Step 2 – label seed with date it was collected, common and botanical name. This step is very important since seed is very difficult to recognize simply by looking at it. Several seeds look the same and are impossible to tell what plant they are from without growing the seed to determine.

Step 3 – let the seed dry out for 1 – 3 weeks in a cool, dry environment out of the sun.

Step 4 – separate the seed from the chaff (dried parts around the seed). If you have strainers of various sizes available, they can be very useful in separating the chaff from the seed. Some seeds come in little “packages” on the stem that contain hundreds of seeds. They may be very hard to break open. A rolling pin can be used to help break the package open. Also, the longer you let them dry out, the easier it is to open the package.

### Wet Seed

Some seeds come with a jelly substance around them when picked from the plant e.g. tomato seeds. There are various methods to clean the jelly substance off the seed. You may choose to soak the seed in water (changing the water daily) to remove the jelly. Another method is to clean the seed under running water while pressing the seed against a strainer. This will remove the jelly and leave the clean seed in the strainer. You may also ferment the seeds in water to remove the jelly coating. Then follow steps 2 and 3 above.

## Seed Storage

Ensure the seed is completely dried before packaging. It is best to store the seed in a cool, dry (most important) environment. Paper envelopes are a good option for storing the seed. You can then put the envelopes in a glass or plastic container to keep all moisture out.

Seeds of Diversity is a great resource to learn about seed saving and storing. Their website is:

<https://seeds.ca/seed-gardening-resources/>

## **Seed Treatments**

### **Cold Stratified**

Some seeds need to go through a cold period in order to break dormancy. This can be done by placing the seed in a cold location for 2 – 3 months. Often perennial seeds will need this treatment. This process happens naturally to the seeds left in the garden over winter.

### **Scarified**

This involves “nicking” the seed coat to allow for germination. One must be careful not to damage the seed embryo inside.

### **Heat Treated**

Some seeds need to be heated or go through a fire in order to break dormancy.

### **Pelleted Seeds**

Some very small seeds are coated in a layer of clay to make them easier to handle.

## **Seed Planting Resources**

The following websites provide information on germinating and planting seeds.

<https://tomclothier.hort.net/page02.html>

<https://onrockgarden.com/index.php/germination-guide/germination-guide>

<https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/how-to-start-seeds/5062.html>

### **Light requirements**

Full sun – Plants need at least 6 hours of direct sun daily

Part sun – Plants thrive with between 3 and 6 hours of direct sun per day

Part shade – Plants require between 3 and 6 hours of sun per day, but need protection from intense mid-day sun

Full shade – Plants require less than 3 hours of direct sun per day

## **Seed Companies in Canada**

There are many seed companies located in Canada. For a listing of the companies, please follow the link below.

<https://seeds.ca/diversity/seed-catalogue-index/>

## **Invasive Plants**

For information on what to plant instead of Ontario's invasive plants, please see the following link.

<https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/grow-me-instead/>