Webster Public Library | 980 Ridge Road | Webster, NY 14580 | P 585.872.7075 | websterlibrary.org

Seed Library at Webster Public Library

All you need to know about Webster Public Library's Seed Library!

About Webster Public Library's Seed Library
Seeds are free to "checkout" from the library. We ask that a portion of the seeds you save be returned back to our Seed Library, to keep the library self-sustaining.

Our Seed Library is organized by plant families. Each drawer is labeled with the plant family name and some common members of the family.

How to "Checkout" Seeds

- For large seeds (e.g. bean seeds), take 2-3 seeds per plant.
- For all other seeds, take the whole packet or a few seeds per plant.
- For those growing open pollinated seeds, please save some of the seeds from your harvest and bring them back to the seed library.
- Envelopes are available to hold the seeds.
- Please fill out our Form for Seed Checkout, then place in the completed forms drawer.

How to "Return" or Donate Seeds

Seed donations are welcome at any time. To ensure the purity of each seed variety, it is important that seeds coming back to the collection are grown and saved properly.

Please make sure your seeds are:

- Dry
- Clean
- Properly saved
- Labeled with as much information as possible
- Fill out our Seed Donation Form
- Place your seeds in an envelope, then place it in the Seed Donations Box located on top of the seed library.

New to Seed Saving?
Start with seeds labeled "super easy" on the drawer. These seeds are great for beginners because they produce plants like the ones you planted.

Super Easy to Save Seeds
Plants in these families are self-pollinating. Seeds will be the same as the parent plant.

- Artichoke, cardoon endive, lettuce, sunflower
    - Allow plants to flower then collect dry seeds.

Much of the information in this document is from the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library.

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- Bean, lentil, pea, peanut, soybean
    - Allow beans and peas to dry in their pods on plants before collecting and storing.
- Cape gooseberry, eggplant, ground cherry, pepper, tomatillo, tomato
    - Allow fruits to fully ripen, separate seed from fresh fruit, rinse and dry seeds before storing.

Easy to Save Seeds
Plants in these families are self-sterile, cross-pollinating, or outbreeding; these plants will cross with other plants of their species.

To save seeds from these plants:

- Allow only one variety in each species to flower at a time
- Let multiple plants of one variety flower to ensure pollination
- Chives, garlic, leek, onion
    - For bulbing varieties, replant bulb when it sprouts.
    - These plants won't flower until the second year, after winter.
    - Let seeds dry on plant and then collect.
- Amaranth, beet, chard, quinoa, spinach
    - For beet and chard, only let one variety flower at the same time.
    - For spinach, let many plants flower at once for pollination.
    - Let the seeds dry on the plant and then collect.
- Carrot, celery, caraway, chervil, cilantro (coriander), dill, fennel, parsley
    - For carrot, plants will cross with Queen Anne's Lace. Don't save carrot seeds if Queen Anne's Lace grows nearby.
    - Flowering may not occur until the second year.
    - Let the seeds dry on the plant and then collect.

Difficult to Save Seeds

Plants in these families are outbreeding and pollinated by wind or insects. Therefore, these plants will easily cross with unseen nearby plants and may create odd/inedible varieties. These seeds require hand pollination, tenting, and other methods to ensure seed purity.

- Asian greens, broccoli, brussels sprouts cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, turnip
    - Exceptions that are easy to save seeds: Arugula, rutabaga
- Cucumbers, gourds, luffa, melons, pumpkins, summer squash (ex: zucchini), winter squash (ex: acorn)
    - Exceptions that are easy to save seeds: Uncommon cucurbits (ex: gourds, mixta squash, luffa)
    - Hand pollinate plants in this family to ensure purity.

- Barley, corn, millet, sorghum, wheat
    - Exceptions that are easy to save seeds: Sorghum
    - Corn easily crosses with different, unseen varieties; it is unlikely that saved seeds will be the same as the parent seed.

More Information about Seeds & Plants

Plant Families

- Families: Plants with the same flower (and reproductive) structure are in the same family.
- Genera/Genus: Closely related plants. Crosses between genera are rare but can occur.
- Species: Plants with similar fruit, flowers, and leaves. Plants in the same species will easily cross with each each other.
- Cultivars: Produced in cultivation by selective breeding. Can cross with each other but will not cross with other species. When saving seeds, you want to maintain a cultivar or breed a new one.
- Example:
    - Family: Cucurbitaceae
    - Genus: Cucurbita
    - Species: Cucurbita pepo
    - Cultivars: Acorn squash, warted gourd

Types of Seeds:

- Open-Pollinated or Heirloom Seeds: Grown for so many generations that their physical and genetic qualities are stable. New seeds will remain the same as it's original seed
- Hybrid Seeds: May produce something different or nothing at all. Seed packets with "hybrid," "F1," or "VF" written on them will not produce plants like the parent plant.