



# One Seed at a Time Project

## Organic Seeds & Seed Bank



**TOMATOES:** Sow indoors 6 weeks before last frost at 80-90F, 1/4" deep, 4 seeds/in. Prick out when 1/12" high to 2"-3" apart. Set out after danger of frost, 18"-24" apart in rows 4' apart. Stake or cage indeterminate varieties for best results.

**HARVEST:** If possible, allow tomatoes to completely ripen before harvesting for seed production. Unripe fruits, saved from the first frost, will ripen slowly if kept in a cool, dry location. Seeds from green, unripe fruits will be most viable if extracted after allowing the fruits to turn color.

**PROCESS:** Cut the tomato into halves at its equator, opening the vertical cavities that contain the seeds. Gently squeeze out from the cavities the jelly-like substance that contains the seeds. If done carefully, the tomato itself can still be eaten or saved for canning, sun-drying or dehydrating.



**CUCUMBERS:** Sow outdoors when all danger of frost is past and soil is well warmed. Sow in rows or hills 1/2" deep and 3" apart in rows, rows 5' apart, or plant in hills 4' apart. 5-6 seeds per hill, thin to 8" in row or 3-4 plants per hill.

**HARVEST:** Cucumbers raised for seed cannot be eaten. They should be left to ripen at least 5 weeks after eating stage until they have turned a golden color. First, light frost of the season will blacken vines and make cucumbers easier to find. Undamaged fruits can be stored in cool, dry place for several weeks to finish ripening.

**PROCESS:** Slice fruit lengthwise and scrape seeds out with spoon. Allow seeds and jelly-like liquid to sit in jar at room temperature for 3 or 4 days. Fungus will start to form on top. Stir daily. Jelly will dissolve and good seeds will sink to bottom while remaining debris and immature seeds can be rinsed away. Spread seeds on a paper or screen.



**SPINACH:** Sow in spring as soon as soil can be worked. Plant successions every 7-10 days until late spring, 1/2" deep and 1" apart in rows 12"-15" apart. For fall and winter sow late summer until 6 weeks before 20 degree nights.

**HARVEST:** Some outside leaves can be harvested for eating without harming seed production. If possible, wait until all plants have dried brown. Pull entire plant and hang in cool, dry place if necessary at the end of the growing season.

**PROCESS:** Strip seeds in upward motion and let them fall into container. Chaff can be winnowed. Use gloves for prickly-seeded types.



**SWEET CORN:** Sow outdoors in spring after all danger of frost is past and soil has warmed. Plant 1" deep, 3-4 seeds/ft. in rows 30" apart. Thin to 8"-12" apart in row. Plant in blocks of at least 4

rows to insure good pollination.

**HARVEST:** Corn seed is usually ready to be harvested 4-6 weeks after eating stage. If growing season is not long enough, pick ears after husks turn brown. Pull back husks and complete drying in cool, dry location.

**PROCESS:** Process all but very large amounts of seed by gripping dried ears by hand and twisting allowing kernels to fall into container. Any remaining silk and chaff can be winnowed.



**BUSH BEANS:** Sow outdoors after all danger of frost is past and soil is warm, 1" deep and 2" apart in rows 18"-24" apart. Sow every 2 weeks until mid-summer or two months before first frost for a continuous supply.

**HARVEST:** Allow pods to dry brown before harvesting, about six weeks after eating stage. If frost threatens, pull entire plant, root first, and hang in cool, dry location until pods are brown.

**PROCESS:** Small amounts of pods can be opened by hand. Flail larger amounts. Remove large chaff by hand or fork. Winnow remaining particles.



**LETTUCE:** Transplants: Sow 3-4 seeds/in, and cover lightly. At true leaf plant 1"-2" apart in flats. Set out 9"-12" apart from early spring to early fall. Sow every 10 days for a continuous supply.

Direct seed from early spring to late summer, 2 seeds per inch, 1/8" deep. Thin to 9"-12" apart.

**HARVEST:** Some outside leaves can be harvested for eating without harming seed production. Allow seed heads to dry 2-3 weeks after flowering. Individual heads will ripen at different times making the harvest of large amounts of seed at one time nearly impossible. Wait until half the flowers on each plant has gone to seed. Cut entire top of plant and allow to dry upside down in an open paper bag.

**PROCESS:** Small amounts of seed can be shaken daily from individual flowering heads. Rub with hands to remove remaining seeds. If necessary, separate seeds from chaff with screens.