

## IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

**Annual:** A plant that completes its full life cycle in one growing season.

**Biennial:** A plant that usually completes its life cycle in two growing seasons, growing vegetatively during the first season, then producing flowers and seeds and dying during the second season.

**Genetic diversity:** The vast numbers of different species as well as the diversity within a species. Genetic diversity ensures that certain groups of species or populations will be able to adapt to specific environmental factors.

**Germination rate:** The emergence of a young plant from a seed. For example, an 80% germination rate means 8 out of 10 tested seeds were proven viable and able to sprout.

**Heirloom:** An open-pollinated variety that has been grown and shared from generation to generation within a family or community. Produces true-to-type seeds.

**Hybrid:** A plant or variety created by crossing two different parent varieties. Hybrids can be identified on a seed packet by the word “hybrid” or “F1”. Does not produce true-to-type and may yield unexpected results.

**Open-pollinated:** A variety that, when allowed to cross-pollinate only with other members of the same variety, produces offspring that display the character traits of the variety. Produces true-to-type seeds.

**Perennial:** A plant that can live for more than two years, usually producing flowers and seeds for many years.

## A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Seeds Trust

Seed Savers Exchange

Mt. Garfield Greenhouse and Nursery

Bryan Reed at CMU/WCCC

Snake River Seed Cooperative

Mesa County Library Volunteers

The Friends of Mesa County Libraries


Pueblo Seed and Food Company

Sherry Schenk from the Great Ol'  
Broads for Wilderness



## CONNECT WITH US:

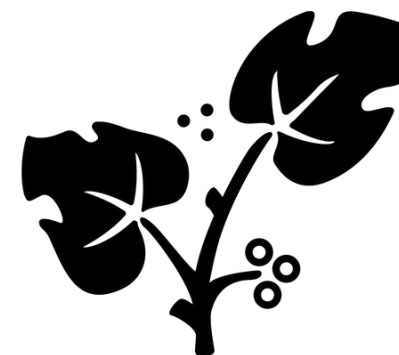
 443 N 6th Street  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

 970-243-4442

 [ask@mcpld.org](mailto:ask@mcpld.org)

 [www.mesacountylibraries.org](http://www.mesacountylibraries.org)

# Seed Saving Information



**SEED LIBRARY**  
MESA COUNTY LIBRARIES

## WHAT IS A SEED LIBRARY?

A seed library is a seed-sharing project that provides educational resources and houses free seeds for the public to enjoy. It is not mandatory to return seeds; however, seed libraries are kept alive by gardeners planting the seeds, growing them to maturity, then saving and bringing back as many seeds as possible.

The Mesa County Libraries Seed Library aims to promote food security, encourage gardening knowledge, and create awareness around seed saving for our community to successfully support a diverse landscape. Thanks for being a part of it!\*

*\*Mesa County Libraries cannot guarantee viability or high germination rates from the Seed Library's donated supply of seeds.*

## LOCAL RESOURCES

Ask the Mesa County Libraries Gardener in Residence for tips! (Available April-September)

CSU Tri-River Area Extension Office: 970-244-1834

## ONLINE RESOURCES

**Seed Savers Exchange:** [www.seedsavers.org/learn](http://www.seedsavers.org/learn)

**Native Seeds:** [www.nativeseeds.org](http://www.nativeseeds.org)

**Seeds Trust:** [www.seedstrust.com/resources-1](http://www.seedstrust.com/resources-1)

**Community Seed Network:**

[www.communityseednetwork.org](http://www.communityseednetwork.org)

**CSU Tri-River Area Extension:**

<http://tra.extension.colostate.edu/gardening-hort>

**Visiting our online catalog for seed saving and gardening books:** [www.mesacountylibraries.org](http://www.mesacountylibraries.org)

## SEED SAVING BASICS

### Harvesting Guidelines

- Choose healthy, undamaged seeds to save
- Be sure seeds are clean of unwanted sticks, chaff, seed pods, etc. This will reduce the bulk that is stored as well as the threat of some possible pests and diseases.
- Remember to label your seeds (feel free to use the MCL Seed Library donation slips!)

### Seed Storage Tips

- Store in a cool, completely dark dry place (indoors is recommended for temperature control)
- Store in airtight containers
- Make sure seeds are completely dry before packaging them and storing. This is important to help avoid rot or bacteria growth.
- Seeds that are airtight, completely dry, and frozen can remain viable for many years.

### Helpful Tools

- Fine mesh strainer for seed cleaning
- Tub, container, or bucket for threshing
- Paper bag for isolating varieties to avoid cross-pollination
- Mason jars, envelopes, baggies for storage
- Paper plates, paper towel or cardboard for drying out seeds. (If using a paper towel, avoid the dimpled kind and instead use the brown, commercial paper towel if possible.)

**Visit the MCL Seed Library to find crop-specific handouts for growing and saving seeds!**

## SEED ISOLATION AND CLEANING INFORMATION

### Seed Isolation to Avoid Cross-Pollination

In seed saving, it's essential to prevent cross-pollination of crops that are not self-pollinating by keeping plants of different varieties separated by distance. This keeps seeds collected from open-pollinated varieties true-to-type. Isolation by distance is the most fail-proof way to prevent cross-pollination, but you can get creative when such isolation distances are not feasible.

Some plant species require longer isolation distances than others. Visit [www.seedsavors.org](http://www.seedsavors.org) for a **crop-by-crop seed saving distance guide**, and for more information about **methods to isolate your crops**.

### Dry Processed Seeds

Cleaning dry seeds usually involves simply drying and crumbling the pods or husks after growing to maturity, then screening or 'winnowing' the seeds to separate them from the chaff (the leaf/plant material outside the seed).

**Dry seeds include:** Beans, okra, peppers, most herbs, onions, carrots, lettuces

### Wet Processed Seeds

Cleaning wet seeds requires washing to clean the seeds and to separate them from the surrounding pulp. Some wet seeds (such as tomatoes) are best fermented for several days to remove germination-inhibiting substances from the seed coats. Fermenting can also help seeds as by killing molds or mildews. When fermented, viable seeds sink to the bottom and poor quality seeds float to the top.

**Wet seeds include:** Tomatoes, eggplants, squashes, melons, cucumbers