



Seed Collecting- Native Flowers

Bring all seeds back to the front desk at the Prince George Library in a labeled envelope or plastic bag.

Fall is a great time to collect all of our native plant seeds.

Scarlet Beebalm/Wild Beramot (Family: Lamiaceae)

1. Once the flower blooms, let the bloom dry out on the stalk.
2. When most of the petals have dried up and fallen off, snip the papery husk off the stem. Some seeds may already shake out depending on how far along in the drying process they are.
3. Place the husks in a brown paper bag (or unsealed container) to let them continue drying.
4. Crush or shake the husk to separate any remaining seeds once they are dry. Separate out the chaff (parts of the husk) from the seeds.

Cutleaf or Pink Coneflower (Family: Echinacea)

Coneflower seeds must be cold stratified. This means it needs a cold period, winter, to produce seeds that will grow.

1. Once the flower blooms, let the bloom dry out on the stalk. Leave the stalks through the winter.
2. In early spring, snip the papery husk off the stem. Some seeds may already shake out depending on how far along in the drying process they are.
3. Place the husks in a brown paper bag (or unsealed container) to let them continue drying.
4. Crush or shake the husk to separate any remaining seeds once they are dry. Separate out the chaff (parts of the husk) from the seeds.

Common Milkweed (Family: Apocynaceae)

Milkweed seeds need to be cold stratified. This means it needs a cold period, winter, to produce seeds that will grow. Unlike the other native plant seeds we offer in the seed library milkweed creates seed pods.

1. In early spring go out to find seed pods which will still have some seeds inside. Some may have been lost to the elements.
2. Collect the pods and place them in a dry container until they are fully dried.
3. Separate the seeds from the fluffy white silk, called coma.

Alternatively you could collect the seeds from unopened pods, once they've begun to go brown, and plant the seeds in the fall so that they are cold stratified in the ground.



Seed Collecting- Vegetables and Herbs

Bring all seeds back to the front desk at the Prince George Library in a labeled envelope or plastic bag.

Cucumbers (Family: Curcubits)

Cucumbers as we eat them do not produce a seed that will grow. To get viable seeds you must allow the cucumber to grow big and fat on the vine before harvesting. It will also turn yellow or orange as it grows large. Once it is very large, but before it begins to rot on the vine you can harvest it and begin the process below.

1. Cut the cucumber in half lengthwise and scoop the seeds out of the middle cavity.
2. The seeds will be incased in pulp. To remove the pulp the best way is to ferment it off. Put the seeds and pulp in a container with water and let it sit for several days, giving it a stir or shake every day. After about 3 days check if the seeds have been released from the pulp.
3. Check to see if the seeds are viable. Put the seeds in fresh water, viable seeds will sink and nonviable seeds will float.
4. Dry the seeds by spreading them out in a thin layer on a paper towel or absorbent cloth. Make sure seeds are fully dry before storing them.

Dill (Family: Apiaceae/Umbellifers)

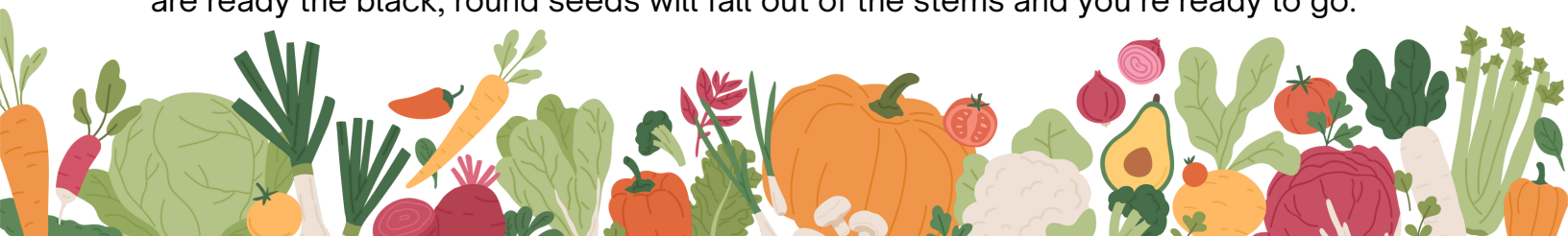
For dill seeds the natural growth of the plant is to put out flowers and then seeds. Unlike some herbs where flowering can turn the herb bitter, Dill flowers are also part of the herb used for culinary reasons including pickling. Simply wait for your dill to grow into this stage and leave the seeds on the stem until they turn brown. Once they are brown and drying you can collect them easily. You might also want to collect them so the dill doesn't naturally reseed itself.

Basil/Thyme/Parsley/Rosemary (Family: Lamiaceae)

To collect seeds from most herbs you will need to let it flower, and this may make the leaves taste bitter, so think about when you want to let the plant flower. In these instructions basil is used but any of the flowering herbs can be swapped in.

*Note that parsley does not flower until its second year. In our climate (zone 7) parsley outside may or may not survive the winter, but if you have a mature parsley plant that flowers the instructions are the same as below.

1. Let the basil go to seed and wait until the petals fall off leaving brown paper husks behind.
2. Snip the whole flower head when collecting seeds, some may already shake out depending on how far along in the drying process they are.
3. Place the flowers in a brown paper bag (or unsealed container) to let them continue drying. They can take up a month to fully dry out depending on the humidity. When they are ready the black, round seeds will fall out of the stems and you're ready to go.



Sugar snap peas (Family: Legumes)

Peas are an easy seed to collect as the pea we eat is the same seed you planted to grow the pea! Simply leave the pod on the vine instead of picking them. Wait until the pod turns yellow or brown and dries out. The peas inside should rattle when you shake them. Once you harvest them, take them out of the pod right away, and spread them out on a tray or plate to fully dry. You cannot over dry them, and they are done when they look shriveled and hard.

Watermelon (Family: Curcubits)

To save watermelon seeds the melon must first be fully grown, a good sign of this is if the vine connected to the fruit has started drying out.

1. Cut the watermelon open and scoop out the seeds.
2. Clean the seeds. If the seeds have a lot of pulp attached you can ferment them in a container of water for a day or two, stirring daily, to remove the pulp. If your seeds are mostly clean you can rinse them under water in a colander.
3. Lay the seeds out in a single layer on a paper towel to dry.

Radish (Family: Brassica)

Radishes need to be left in the ground past the point where they can be eaten for seed pods to form. Once this happens the root will become starchy and bitter and most likely unpleasant to eat.

1. Allow the plant to flower and it will form seed pods. Wait for the seed pods to turn brown and dry out. They are unlikely to break open in the field.
2. Collect the seed pods and break them open.
3. Separate the chaff (broken bits of pod) from the seeds by hand.
4. Lay the seeds out on a try or dish for a few days until fully dried.

Carrots (Family: Apiaceae/Umbellifers)

Carrots do not flower their first year. They are biennial and require vernalization (a cold period) to flower and seed. In our climate (Zone 7) carrots can be overwintered with heavy mulch. This process will ruin the carrot root for eating, and is advanced gardening. If you wish to try getting carrot seeds follow the process below and consider doing your own research on how to vernalize plants.

1. Overwinter your carrots with a layer of thick mulch on top of the plants OR vernalize the carrot roots in storage (a fridge or cold basement) and replant them in the spring, looking out for any damaged or diseased roots in the process.
2. If your plants survive vernalization you should see flowers forming on the green leafy heads. Allow the flowers to turn brown and dry out.
3. The seeds should be easy to pick from the head and have a tendency to burst, or spill on to the ground if they over dry. This process is similar to collecting seeds from other umbellifers like dill.

