PLANNING FOR SEED SAVING

seed savers albury - wodonga

Notes prepared by Lou Bull and presented at various Seed Savers Albury-Wodonga events.

WHY PLAN?

- Aim for high quality seed
- Helps guarantee seed that is viable, locally adapted, genetically diverse and well understood
- Good planning makes it easier to grow, select and collect good quality seed

WHAT MAKES GOOD QUALITY SEED?

- Good record keeping
- Understanding the plants to be grown
- Observing isolation rules to prevent crosses for the plants to be grown (seed viability)
- Reserving several healthy plants and fruit
- Select best fruits/pods or seed heads
- Harvesting when fully ripe
- Cleaning and drying seeds thoroughly (reduce insect & disease attack, good viability)
- Seed then used again by other growers (keeps it viable and locally adapted)

RECORD KEEPING


Seed Savers Albury – Wodonga Plant Data Sheet

Plant name:
Plant variety:
Other common names:
Year collected
Collector's code
Collector's Name:
Post Code (geographic reference)
Plant's description (e.g. size, colour etc.)
Further description (please indicate appropriate categories)
annual
biennial
perennial
used as (please indicate more than one type if appropriate)
herb
vegetable
flower
fruit
fodder
fibre
tree
shrub
vine
ground cover
other (specify)
planted in
spring
summer
autumn
winter
any time
propagated by
seed
cutting
bulb
tuber
other
growing requirements (specify)
resistant to
drought
frost
pest
disease
other (specify or add name of pest or disease)
what months did you collect this seed
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
number of plants these seeds were collected from
has this seed been treated in any way, e.g. fermented, frozen, other (specify)

For individual plant species/varieties:

- Work through the Seed Savers' Seed Data Sheet [used Greek Spinach example]

  Grab our blank data sheets and more info here.

For the network (such as Seed Savers Albury-Wodonga):

- Who is growing what species (diversity of plants being grown and available)
- Age of seed in storage
- Skills of network members (knowledge of particular plants etc)
- What seeds are going in and out of network
- Record of plant species & varieties within the network
- Growing conditions for different plants and varieties - locally
- Use of different plants species & varieties

UNDERSTANDING PLANTS TO BE GROWN & ISOLATION RULES

Check the plants:

- Pollination and propagation methods (cross or self-pollinated or grown by cuttings/tuber) see the *Seed Savers' Handbook* for this information
  [used the Greek Spinach as an example to work through]
- Growth habit (annual, biennial, perennial)

A flowering brassica – insect pollinated and may cross with others in its family

Observe required isolation rules to keep the seed pure:

- By distance
- Timing
- Bagging
- Caging/caging on alternate days

IDENTIFY SELECTION CRITERIA FOR COLLECTION:

- What characteristics are you looking for from your plant?
  E.g taste, timing, quantity, disease/drought resistance...
- Rouge out plants that don't meet criteria (be ruthless)
- Mark well the plants/fruits to keep seed from so that don't all get eaten and identify when to stop eating from these plants (or maybe not at all)

HARVESTING

- For self pollinated plants reserve 1-6 plants to harvest seed from (e.g tomatoes, lettuce)
- For cucurbits – seeds from at least 6 fruits
- For corn, sunflowers and corn – some seed from as large a number of individuals as possible
- Broccoli and similar – from as many individuals as possible
  (pass the millions of seeds around!!)
- Collect fruits/seeds from plants when fully mature
- Collect fruits/seeds from plants when dry
- Dry seeds well

CLEANING SEED

- Cleaning removes trash and unwanted insects
- Clean seed must be as dry as possible
- See also our various seed cleaning notes!

STORAGE AND USE

- BEST in a dark and cool environment
- Use as soon as possible

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Find out more on our **website: ssaw.org.au**