



Digging It!

September , 2013

A Valuable Harvest!

People who work fulltime outside the home prefer to buy plants at the garden centre in a pot because it's a time-saver. You drive in, pay for the plant, go home and dig it into your garden. You get bigger plants sooner than starting them from seed but it can be expensive. Instead of spending your hard-earned dollars on plants, consider harvesting and saving seeds from your own fruit, flower and vegetable garden. Saving seeds is an economical and rewarding way to ensure that your favorite heirloom varieties are always available to you.

You can start as simply as collecting dead marigold flowers this fall and saving the seeds for planting in the spring.



If you try to grow plants from seeds that originated with a hybrid variety you may be surprised with the plant you end up with. These plants are sometimes sterile, or else they can revert to one of their parent varieties that created the original

hybrid. Regardless, it will not reproduce true to the fruit or vegetable you started with.

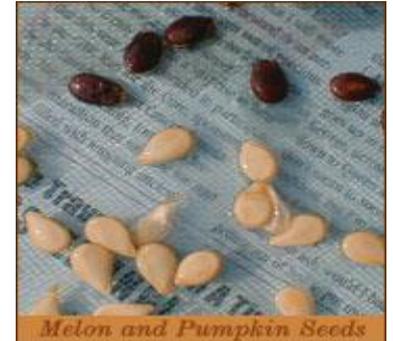
After your heirloom plants go to seed, snip off the seedpods that are beginning to open from the natural drying process and store them in a paper bag.

Label the bag with the name of the plant, the location in your garden where you harvested the seeds from, and the date. This will help you remember where you collected the seed. Keep track of which plant seeds do well and which ones don't so you'll know which seeds not to collect next time.

Keep the paper bag closed and put it in a cool location for two to three weeks of drying. Once they're all dry, tap and shake the closed bag to release the seeds from their pods.

To clean the seeds you'll need a shallow container or tray about one to two inches deep, lined with paper. You'll also need mesh strainers of different sizes to separate the different-sized seeds from the seed casings. Shake the contents of the bag into a strainer over your shallow container or tray and work

through the plant debris.



The seeds should sift through the mesh to the paper below. After you've completed this step, take the paper and roll it into a tube shape. Hold one end over a small jar and slide the seeds right inside.

Store the seeds until you're ready to propagate. Don't forget to label your jar, close it tightly and place it in the refrigerator. Storing the seeds in the frig will keep your seeds cool and fresh until you're ready to plant them.

Not only is harvesting your own seeds an economical and fun way to start your own garden each season, it's a great way to share with family and friends.

www.learntogrow.com May 12, 2013 was used as a reference for this article. Browse there to learn more about harvesting your own seeds!

Tracy Bosely,
Master Gardener

September TO DO List

- Divide perennials
- Mulch the garden, but avoid covering plants completely until the ground has frozen.
- When raking leaves use indifferent ways: add them to the compost pile, gather them into their own compost pile to decompose into leaf mold or mow them over and then file them into flower beds.
- Breakup leaves by putting them in a bucket and using a whipper-snipper to cut them into fine pieces.
- Amend soil and the lawn with fertilizer in preparation for next spring.
- Continue to water trees and shrubs until freeze up.
- Pull out annuals and add to the compost pile
- Keep compost covered during heavy rains and sprinkle with water if it is too dry. The correct level of moisture has the consistency of a wrung out sponge.
- Start cleaning, pruning, repotting and isolating houseplants that have been outside for the summer to ensure a bug-free re-entry. Spray the plants thoroughly with an insecticidal soap and repeat two more times .times, waiting 5 days between applications, before bringing them indoors.

Tip of the Month:

Leaves work best as a mulch as long as they have been properly shredded. You can shred your leaves by running over them repeatedly with a lawn mower, using a leaf shredder or placing them in a bucket and taking a weed wacker to them.

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Editor Cherin Harris-Tuck

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Master Gardeners of Simcoe County



Where to find us for free gardening advice!

September 17, 2013 Simcoe County Master Gardener Meeting, White Pine Board Room, Midhurst, 7:00 pm

*No richer gift has Autumn poured
From out her lavish horn.*

John Greenleaf Whittier

Ask a Master Gardener books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 or Gardening Guides for only \$1. Valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!



For information on Master Gardeners or arranging a lecture for your group please contact Tracy Bosley at 705-435-2608 or email her at tvbosley@rogers.com.