

Eau Claire Grows

Community Seed Library

L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library
400 Eau Claire Street, Eau Claire

Seed Planting and Saving Chart

Plant	How to Grow	How to Save Seeds
Arugula	Sow seeds outdoors as soon as soil can be worked and danger of hard frost has passed. Plant seeds 1" apart and ¼" deep. Seeds will germinate in 5-7 days. Thin to 1-6" apart. Best grown in cooler weather. Plant in full sun or partial shade.	Arugulas will cross-pollinate. Separate varieties by ¼ mile. Allow plants to bolt and form seed stalks. Seed heads may need to be protected from bird damage and rain when drying on the plants. Seeds are produced over a 2-3 week period and will require repeated harvesting.
Basil	Start indoors 4-6 weeks before planting out. Space plants 4-6" apart in all directions. Plant seeds just beneath the surface. Seeds germinate in 5-30 days, so keep moist. Prefers full sun and rich, well- drained soil.	Basil will cross-pollinate with other varieties of basil and must be separated by 150' while flowering. Plants form seed capsules containing four seeds. Allow seed capsules to dry, then harvest and separate by hand.
Beans	Sow seeds outdoors after danger of frost has passed and soil and air temperatures have warmed. Plant seeds 2" apart and 1" deep in rows 36-48" apart. Beans prefer full sun. Provide support for pole beans. Harvest snap beans frequently for increased yields. Shell beans should be picked when seeds are plump in the pods.	As a precaution never plant two white seeded varieties side-by-side if you intend to save seed because crossing may occur but not be visible. It is always best to save seed from plants that ripen first and are free from disease. Harvest seed pods when completely dry, crush in a cloth or burlap sack, and winnow the seeds from the chaff.
Carrots	Sow carrot seeds about 3-4 weeks before the last frost. Seeds need consistent moisture until they emerge. Sow the seeds less than an inch apart and thin them to 2-4 inches after they grow to a few inches. Roots will mature in 65-87 days.	Hand pick each umbel as it dries brown and allow to mature in cool, dry location for an additional 2-3 weeks. Screen and winnow to clean. Carrot seed is naturally hairy or "bearded". Debearding in the cleaning process does not affect germination.
Catnip	Sow seeds indoors or directly into the soil starting around mid-spring. Space seeds 6-8 inches apart in well fertilized soil. Plant your seeds 1/4-3/4 in. deep. Harvest leaves as they mature. Keep the leaves well watered and cool.	After the blooms become dry and turn brown, cut them off. Crush the flower heads in a bag over a bowl, letting the seeds fall into the bowl. Spread seeds out to dry for a few days at room temperature before storing.
Chives	Sow seeds indoors ¼" deep 4-6 weeks before last frost. Transplant outdoors 4-8" apart as soon as soil can be worked in spring. Chives are also easy to direct seed. Chives prefer full sun to partial shade.	Chives are a perennial that produces seed each season. Chives will not cross with any other Alliums. The blossoms are insect pollinated and then go on to form seed heads. When the heads start to dry, cut off, dry further, and thresh.
Cilantro	Sow seeds outdoors ½" deep after last frost. Germinates in 10 days. Thin to 8-10" apart. Prefers rich well-drained soil and full sun to partial shade.	Cilantro will cross-pollinate with other varieties of cilantro so varieties must be separated by ½ mile while flowering. Seeds can be harvested when they are dry on the plant.

This chart provides growing and harvesting information for each variety of seed offered.

Looking for more information on starting a garden or harvesting seeds? Stop by Information and Reference on your next visit to the library.

Plant	How to Grow	How to Save Seeds
Cucumbers	Sow seeds outdoors directly into hills about 12 inches across after the last frost of the season. Make sure that the hills are about 6 feet apart and plant 6-8 seeds per hill at 1/2-1 inch depth and 1 inch apart. Matures in 50-60 days.	Let ripen at least 5 weeks after eating stage until they have turned a golden color. 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. 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 towel until dry.
Eggplant	Sow seeds indoors 8 weeks before last frost. Plant ¼" deep. Seeds will germinate in 14 days. Transplant outdoors 18-24" apart once danger of frost has passed and soil is warm. Eggplants prefer full sun. Using landscape fabric or black plastic can accelerate growth and productivity in cooler climates.	Eggplants will cross-pollinate, so isolate ¼ mile from other eggplants or plant in insect-proof cages covered with screen. Let the fruits grow far past maturity. Seeds are much easier to remove from overripe fruits. Most seeds are brown and are usually located in the bottom portion of the fruit.
Lettuce	Sow seeds outdoors as soon as soil can be worked in spring. Plant seeds 1" apart and ¼" deep. Seeds will germinate in 7-14 days. Thin to 6-8" apart for Looseleaf. Lettuce is best grown in cooler weather and prefers full sun or partial shade.	Allow plants to bolt and form seed stalks. Seed heads may need to be protected from bird damage and rain when drying. Seeds are produced over a 2-3 week period and will require repeated harvesting.
Morning Glory	Sow these seeds directly into your garden after the last frost. The seeds do best when chipped and soaked in warm water for 24 hours, then planted 1/2 of an inch under the soil. They will germinate in 5 to 21 days and you can thin to 4-6 apart as they grow. These flowers will do well in full sun and should be given a trellis to climb.	Harvest dry seed pods and crack them open over a paper towel-covered plate. Place the plate in a warm, dark spot where it won't be disturbed to allow the seeds to continue drying. After one week, try to pierce a seed with a thumbnail. If the seed is too hard to puncture, they have dried enough.
Peas	Peas thrive in cool weather. Sow seeds outdoors as soon as soil can be worked in spring. Plant seeds 2-3" apart and ½-1" deep in rows 24" apart. Seeds will germinate in 7-14 days. Double rows of peas can be planted on each side of a trellis.	Select the healthiest plants for seed. Allow pods to dry on the plant before harvesting and separate seeds from pods by hand. If birds start eating the seeds before the pods are completely dry, they can be harvested slightly green and brought indoors to dry.
Peppers	Sow seeds indoors ¼" deep 8 weeks before last frost. Seeds will germinate in 14 days. Germinates best in warm soil. Transplant outdoors 12-24" apart when soil is warm. Peppers prefer full sun.	Peppers will cross-pollinate, so separate by at least 500' or plant in insect-proof cages covered with window screen. Select peppers that are ripe, fully colored, and show no signs of disease to save for seed. Remove seeds from core and place on a paper plate to dry.
Spinach	Spinach grows best in cool weather and should be planted in early spring or late summer to produce a fall crop. Plant seeds 1" apart and ½" deep. Seeds will germinate in 7-14 days. Thin to 6-8" apart.	Spinach will cross-pollinate with wind-blown pollen from other spinach varieties. Harvest seeds when they are completely dry on the plant. It may be necessary to wear leather gloves because the seeds can be very prickly.
Sunflowers	Sow seeds outdoors ½" deep and 6" apart in rows 24-36" apart after the last frost. Seeds germinate in 10-14 days. Prefers full sun to light shade and well-drained rich soil.	Will cross-pollinate and must be separated by ½ mile to ensure pure seed. Harvest the heads when they have completely filled out, lost all of their petals and the backs begin to turn brown. It may be necessary to cover heads to protect them from birds. Allow to dry then shell by hand.
Tomato	Sow seeds indoors 6 weeks before last frost. Plant ¼" deep. Seeds will germinate in 7-14 days. Transplant outdoors 24-48" apart when soil has warmed. Support indeterminate plants with a cage or trellis. Tomatoes prefer full sun.	Cross-pollination between modern tomato varieties seldom occurs. Do not save seeds from double fruits or from the first fruits of large-fruited varieties. Pick at least one ripe fruit from each of several plants. Squeeze seeds and juice into a strainer and wash, spread on a paper plate, and dry.