

ADVANCED

Broccoli, Kale, Cauliflower, Cabbage, & Brussels Sprouts

Broccoli, kale, cauliflower, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts will cross-pollinate with other members of the *Brassica oleraceae* family, and require an isolation distance of 2 km for purity. Because they are self incompatible (they can't self pollinate), caging is not recommended for beginner seed-savers.

Allow plants to mature and turn yellow as the flowers bloom and grow into pods. Once the pods have dried, remove the plant from the ground and hang to dry in a non-humid place for 2 weeks.

Remove the dried pods from the plant and crush them with a rolling pin to remove the seeds. Separate the chaff from the seeds.

Corn

Corn is predominately wind pollinated and should be isolated by a distance of 2 km. Corn seed is ready to be harvested 4-6 weeks after the eating stage. Pick ears after husks turn brown, pull back husks, and allow the ears to dry completely in a cool, non-humid location.

To remove seeds, grip dried ears by hand and twist, allowing kernels to fall into a container.

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Pumpkin, Squash, Cucumber & Melons

Pumpkins, squash, cucumber and melons will all cross-pollinate within their species so the simplest solution is to plant only one of each species when seed saving (recommended isolation distance is 1 km):

Citrullus lanatus- watermelon

Cucumis melo: cantaloupe, casaba, honeydew, muskmelon

Cucumis sativus: cucumbers

Cucurbita (various): summer squashes, pumpkin, zucchini, gourds, winter squashes

If isolation is not possible, hand pollination can be done:

Starting in July, watch for mature flowers. When flowers turn yellow but have not opened, tape them shut with masking tape.

The next morning, pick at least one male flower and remove the tape and petals. This will leave behind a stem and the stamen, which is covered with mature pollen. Unseal the female flowers carefully. Using the (male) stamen like a paintbrush, coat the pistil of the female blossoms with pollen and then reseal the blossoms to prevent further pollination by insects.

It is helpful to “flag” un-pollinated female flowers by tying strings or twist ties around the stems and then removing them after pollination.

To save seeds from melons and winter squash, cut open at the eating stage and remove the seeds, rinse thoroughly, and allow to air dry until they break instead of bending.

To save seeds from summer squash and cucumbers, leave them on the vine to ripen past the tender stage until they become soft and shriveled. Cut open, scrape the seeds into a bowl, wash, drain, and dry.