

EASY

Beans & Peas

Allow the pods to ripen on the plants until they're dry and starting to turn brown. This may be a full month after when you would normally harvest them to eat. Strip the pods from the plants and spread them out to dry indoors. Allow the pods to dry for at least two weeks before shelling.

Lettuce

When lettuce goes to seed, it gets taller, skinnier, and heavy at the top. Stake and tie the plants as they mature to prevent them from falling over.

When the lettuce plant dries out and the seed heads get dark instead of greenish, cut the stems just below the seed heads. Place in folded newspaper and hang to dry for at least 2 weeks in a dry place.

Place the dried stalks and seed heads in a large mixing bowl. Draw your fingers along each stalk to strip the seed heads and thoroughly crush the heads and stalks with your hands. Pick out the larger plant pieces as you go along until only seeds and small pieces of dried plant are left.

Swirl the bowl in a circular motion- the heavy seeds will drop to the bottom while the lighter plant pieces will move to the top. Tilt the bowl on an angle and gently blow air over the pile until the plant pieces are blown out of the bowl. Repeat the swirling and blowing process until only seeds remain.

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Tomatoes

Allow the fruits to ripen fully, and scoop out the seeds and their surrounding gel. Set aside the rest of the tomato to eat later.

Put the seeds and gel in a glass jar with enough water to cover them. Stir the mixture twice a day until it ferments and the seeds sink to the bottom, up to 5 days. Pour off the liquid and place the seeds in a colander. Rinse well before spreading them out to dry on paper towels.

Arugula

Leave plants in the ground to overwinter after harvesting leaves for eating during the growing season. Allow seeds to ripen and dry on the plant in the spring, but watch closely and harvest as soon as they dry because arugula pods will shatter and disperse seeds once dry.

Dill

When dill flowers are in full bloom, clip the flowers and hang upside-down in a folded newspaper. Allow flowers to dry for three weeks, during which the flowers will dry and release the seeds into the fold of the newspaper.

If the seeds do not voluntarily fall off, roll the seeds between your thumb and fingers to encourage them to drop. Blow gently to separate the lighter flower pieces from the heavier seeds.