GUILDFORD SEED BANK

Local Seed Saving –what is it and why is it important?

ABOUT US

Established in 2021, we are a community project dedicated to saving and swapping seeds in the Guildford, Godalming and Farnham areas.

Our mission is to preserve a wide diversity of plants, by growing, saving and sharing seeds – especially heritage and local varieties. We also want to help teach and encourage others to grow their own and save seeds.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SEED BANK?

LIVING SEED BANK

Rare or local varieties are grown on each year for preservation and sharing at seed swaps

SEED SWAP LOCATIONS

Permanent set of drawers in Guildford Library, seasonal in Haslemere Library – anyone can take and drop off seeds

ACCESS TO HEIRLOOM TYPES

Maintain a selection of varieties that are either hard to find or rare – not commercially grown

WHY SAVE SEEDS?

PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY

Each seed carries unique traits that help plants adapt to their environment and evolve over time.

UNIQUE VARIETIES

Preserve heirloom and rare plant varieties -many of which are no longer commercially available.

COST EFFECTIVE

Reduce the expense of buying expensive seed year on year.

FOOD SECURITY

We believe everyone should have access to seed to grow their own food, even if it is just a few herbs in a window box.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Promotes self-sufficiency, and fosters a connection with our land, soil and community.

WHAT SHOULD I SAVE SEED FROM?

DISTINCTIVE
Does it have traits you want to preserve for the next growing season? Is it in danger of being lost?

OPEN POLLINATED
Insect or wind pollinated – not enforced pollination or in-breeding. (Not an F1 hybrid)

TASTE
Does it taste nice, and do you/others enjoy eating it?

RELIABLE
Has it coped with local conditions/ extreme weather conditions?

HEIRLOOM VARITIES

OPEN POLLINATED SEEDS

ADAPTABLE

Genetically variable and therefore able to adapt to climate change and environmental conditions, evolving with them.

FOOD PLANT BIODIVERSITY

80% loss in Europe in the past century. Balances monoculture.

CAN BE SAVED

Everyone from farmers to allotment holders to gardeners can save and maintain

NON-GM OR HYBRID

Seed saved will be true to type and can be used to develop local varieties

Open Pollinated Variety

EASY SEEDS TO SAVE

PEAS & BEANS

Largely self-fertile so seed should come true to type – allow to dry out fully before saving.

TOMATOES

Start with an open pollinated variety (not a hybrid). *Potato leaved varieties may cross to some degree*.

CHILLIES

Need to be isolated (or only grow one variety) as the do cross easily with other chillies and peppers

FLOWERS

Foxgloves, scabious, cosmos, nigella, aquilegia – *easy to save, but don't necessarily come true to type*

MORE INVOLVED SEEDS TO SAVE

| CHARD & BEETROOT | Flower and set seed in the second year – can get very large (6ft). Need numerous plants to maintain diversity. |

| SQUASHES & PUMPKINS | Need to be hand-pollinated and isolated to ensure they don't cross. (Can lead to toxicity) |

| BRASSICAS | Large number of plants (~25) to ensure diversity and prevent inbreeding depression. Crosses easily with others. |

GUILDFORD SEED SWAP

- 4th seed swap event was 23 February 2025 at Trinity Centre, Guildford
- 600 packets of seeds swapped
- 50p donation per seed packet taken (*rather than swapped*)

2025

DORKING ECO HUB

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MORE ABOUT SEEDS

[Welcome - Open Pollinated Seeds (open-pollinated-seeds.org.uk)](open-pollinated-seeds.org.uk)

[Seed Sovereignty – A biodiverse and ecologically sustainable seed system](seedsovereignty.info) (seedsovereignty.info)

[LONDON FREEDOM SEED BANK – A network of food growers and gardeners in London dedicated to saving, storing and sharing open-pollinated seed](#)

SUPPLIERS

[Seed Co-operative (seedcooperative.org.uk)](seedcooperative.org.uk)

[Quality Vegetable Seeds from The Real Seed Catalogue UK. (realseeds.co.uk)](realseeds.co.uk)

[Tamar Organics – Organic Seed & Garden Supplies](#)

THANK YOU

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