

Seed Saving ABC's

- Annual** Annual plants complete their life cycle in one season. Sprouting, flowering, fruiting and bearing seed all in one year. (Examples: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, basil, etc.)
- Biennial** Biennial plants take two years to complete their life cycle. Usually they grow leaves their first year, flower, fruit and bear seed in their second year. (Examples: carrots, onion, cabbage, etc.)
- Cross pollination** Cross pollination is the transfer of pollen from a different plant of the same species. (I.e. a cabbage might cross pollinate with kale or Brussels sprouts. Seed saved from this plant will not produce cabbage like the original, but who knows maybe you'll have some interesting new plant variety.) An easy way to avoid cross pollination is to only plant one variety.
- Heirloom** An heirloom variety is a plant variety that has a history of being passed down within a family or community. An heirloom variety must be open-pollinated, but not all open-pollinated plants are heirlooms.
- Hybrid** Commercial Hybrid seeds are the crossing of seed varieties by human intervention. Seeds saved from hybrid seeds will not produce plants like the parent plant.
- Indeterminate** An indeterminate plant will continue to grow and produce flowers and fruit until killed by frost or another external factor. (I.e. indeterminate tomatoes will continue to flower and produce until frost)
- Determinate** A plant that stops growing once it has reached full maturity. (I.e. determinate tomatoes, often called "bush tomatoes", grow to a shorter height and produce fruit all at once.
- Open-Pollinated** Open-pollination is when pollination occurs by insect, bird, wind, humans, or other natural mechanisms. Open-pollinated plants are more genetically diverse. This can cause a greater amount of variation within plant populations, which allows plants to slowly adapt to local growing conditions and climate year-to-year.
- Self-pollinated** Self-pollination is the transfer of pollen within one flower. Plants that self-pollinated are easy to save seeds from (i.e. peas, beans, tomato, etc.)
- Genetic Diversity** The greater the genetic diversity within a plant, the greater chances of long-term survival. This is because there are more diverse traits such as disease resistance and drought tolerance. Seed saved from a small amount of plants will lead to less genetic diversity and inbred plants that are more susceptible to disease.
- GMO** GMO (Genetically-modified-organisms) seeds have been engineered in a laboratory to contain genes from other species and life forms. These seeds are also patented and it is illegal to save seed from these plants.
- Perennial** A plant that that lives for more than two growing seasons, either dying back after each season, or growing continuously, as some bushes do.
- PVP (Plant Variety Protection)** The plant Variety Protection Act of 1970 allows plant breeders of a new distinct variety to obtain property rights for that variety for 18 years. These seeds will be labeled with PVP. It is illegal to save seeds from these varieties.

For a list of PVP varieties visit: <http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/pvplist.pl>