

Host a Seed Swap (Activity)

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Gardeners have been swapping seeds for thousands of years in their homes, marketplaces, and town squares. It is a great way for gardeners to share extra seeds or swap them for new plants they want to try or use to expand their collection. Many seed packets contain more seeds than one gardener needs. Instead of letting these go to waste, sharing or swapping a portion of the packet is a great way for everyone to save money.

New and experienced gardeners will enjoy sharing seeds, gardening tips, and the company of fellow gardeners at a seed swap. It can be a small gathering of friends and work colleagues or a much larger group of fellow garden club members, community gardeners, and library patrons.

Take the Lead

Contact a few fellow gardeners and pick a date, time, and location for the seed swap. Your kitchen table or the lunchroom at work are perfect places for small groups to gather. Perhaps your library is willing to make one of its meeting rooms available for larger groups and other patrons to swap seeds.

Timing

It is never too late to gather gardeners together and share seeds.

Spread the Word

Texts, emails, and phone calls work great. Larger groups and libraries will be able to help spread the word to their members using different methods of communication, including social media.

Supplies Needed

Encourage everyone to bring their own supplies and provide extras scattered on the tables throughout the room.

- Small envelopes
- Markers or pens to label the seed packets
- Name tags so people can get to know each other (*optional*)
- Paper for taking notes (*optional*)

Seeds to Share

The fresher the seeds, the greater the percentage of seeds that will sprout (germinate). Leave the seeds in their original packets whenever possible. The package contains important planting information. Place a sheet of information next to the seeds with the plant name, recommended planting date, and any other helpful information if needed. Consider making copies of the information so everyone taking a few of the seeds from larger packets, or seeds you've collected, has the needed information they need to be successful.

Organize the Space

Set up and label individual tables or portions of tables for various types of seeds, including Vegetables, Annual Flowers, Perennial Flowers, Native Plants, and Miscellaneous. Create signs with the name of the seed type to be placed on the tables or designated locations. This will make it easier for people to add their seeds to share and find the seeds they want to take home. These can be as simple as a handwritten sign taped to the table or mounted on a pencil set in a mug or flowerpot. Crafty hosts may want to create signs from catalog pictures, old seed packets, drawings, or paintings.

Doing More

- ◉ Invite participants to bring and share small, clean, recycled pots or food containers for people to take and use for starting seeds indoors.
- ◉ Have a display of seed-starting supplies needed to help new gardeners.
- ◉ Provide written information on how to start plants from seeds indoors and directly in the garden.
 - [The University of Wisconsin-Madison Vegetable Cultivar Planting Guide](#) is an older publication with tips on when to plant seeds indoors and out.
 - Melinda Myers' books:
 - ❖ Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition
 - ❖ MN & WI Getting Started Garden Guide
 - ❖ MN & WI Month-by-Month Gardening
 - ❖ Michigan Getting Started Garden Guide
 - ❖ Michigan Month-by-Month Gardening
- ◉ Provide a reading list of seed starting and garden books available from the library.
- ◉ Ask an experienced gardener to do a presentation on starting plants from seeds.

Everyone participating in the seed swap is sure to leave with more than just seeds. Gathering with fellow gardeners is sure to introduce you to a few new plants, some helpful gardening tips, and keep you inspired and excited for the garden season ahead.

Webinar Registration Links,
Videos & DIY projects and
other activities are available
via QR Code:

