

Brisbane Seed Savers



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Newsletter – Issue No: 001

Welcome to Brisbane Seed Savers!

By joining this group which is a *Local Seed Network (LSN)*, you have joined with others who are actively conserving our heritage open pollinated seeds.

Our First Meeting

With the Christmas season rapidly approaching, I would love to meet with you all in an informal setting to get to know everyone and discuss the future aims of our group.

As there are only about 10 members at this stage, it would be fantastic if everyone could make this first meeting. If you have children, they are certainly welcome and we could ensure that the meeting is near one of the playgrounds for their entertainment, please let me know when you RSVP.

Saturday 29th November – Roma Street Parklands at 2.00pm

Note: If you are unable to attend, please let me know ASAP and I will try to organise an alternative time that is suitable to everyone.

How to Save Seed - Tomato

Tomato's are considered a 'fleshy fruit', to save these seeds follow the steps below:

1. Tomato's self pollinate, however a certain amount of natural cross pollination will occur between varieties and the more so with older varieties of tomato. Seed Savers recommend that you plant in blocks or rows with a tall row of beans, or other climbers between varieties will reduce chances of hybridisation to zero.
2. Select the best fruit off the healthiest plants that have been allowed to ripen just beyond eating stage. It is said the best for seed saving is those from the lower three hands of each plant but this should not preclude collecting from the whole bush. Seed can be collected from only one bush if that is all you have.
3. Scoop the seeds out of the fruit into a large container of water and leave to ferment for a few days and a beneficial fermentation with take place acting on the sticky gel that surrounds the seeds. This deals with diseases such as bacterial spot, speck and canker.
4. Once the foam has formed, scoop it off the top, add water and pour through a sieve. Wash and rub seeds until clean.
5. Place seeds on shiny paper to dry. Rubbing between your palms after a couple of hours can stop them sticking.

Seeds can be stored for up to four years in temperate regions.

Sourced from *The Seed Saver Handbook* by Michel & Jude Fanton



Locally Adapted Varieties

After an almost disastrous attempt at growing zucchini and tomato recently I have been madly researching what I am doing wrong. At this point, I think the main reason was

Growing the wrong variety for my climate at the wrong time of year.

From what I have been studying recently there are a number of ways to successfully grow food all year round. The quickest way is to only grow varieties that are already suited to the climate, an alternative is to grow ordinary varieties over a number of years and save seed from the best of these until a locally adapted variety is created.

Feedback from other members about what grows through summer in our climate would be greatly appreciated. I expect that capsicum, chilli, non hearting lettuces (especially red), pumpkin and melons would all go well. I have heard that Ceylon Spinach, Luffa, Bunching Onion and cherry/ truss tomatoes are also being grown by members of Northey Street City Farms and I am hoping to try these very soon and will keep you all informed of my progress.



Organic Control Tips

Condy's Crystals (potassium permanganate)

These are most useful in the home garden. A just-pink solution watered over seed beds will help in controlling damp-off.

Moss growing on bare moist soil can be controlled by spraying with a Condy's crystal solution. It is also a deterrent to slugs and other insects. Some garden fungi are also controlled. At least three sprays seven days apart are recommended. Don't forget the wetting agent.

Wetting Agent

Most plants and insects are difficult to wet and sprays do not adhere to leaf surfaces or insects. To ensure that the chemical solutions are spread evenly over the surface areas of leaves and insects the wetting agents are absolutely necessary. In most cases, if wetting agents are not used, the spraying mix will be wasted as it will not be effective.

Pure soap only (eg Lux flakes) is best for home gardeners, however Pest Oil, Chemsprod or Neem Oil can also be used.

This information was sourced from 'All Your Gardening Questions Answered' by Tom Wyatt is a fantastic book. It is very helpful and has so much useful

information I would consider it a must have for all gardeners.

Featured Vegetable – Watermelon (*Cucurbitaceae*)

Cultivation: Watermelons need a long, hot growing season and a lot of space but are easy to cultivate in the right climate. They prefer loamy soil. Pruning of the vine is beneficial but less so than for rockmelons.

Saving the Seed: Watermelons will not cross with any other Cucurbit except other watermelons, pie melons and Citron Melons. Depending on bee activity, isolation distances should be adjusted. Hand pollination ensures purity but is only 75% successful. Use several males for one female.

Harvest: The watermelon is ready to pick when the little tendril next to the fruit turns brown and a sharp tap with the finger produces a hollow sound.

Seed Collection: Store for a week longer until totally mature. Scoop out the seed, or save while eating, wash in a colander and dry them on a cloth. Seeds from the central portion are the most robust and fully developed, being the first to form. It is neither necessary nor advisable to ferment the seeds.

Sourced from The Seed Saver Handbook by Michel & Jude Fanton



My Seed Collection

I have a variety of seeds that I have purchased from numerous sources which are blogged on both Brisbane Local Food & Home Growers Exchange. While I do not have unlimited supplies, I am more than happy to share these varieties with other members to further the aims of the group.

Please email me if you are interested, especially if you are currently growing varieties of seed that are from produce sourced from supermarkets.

I have harvested heaps of Coriander seeds, some Green Zebra tomato and some basil. Let me know if you want any of these seeds.

The Seed Savers Handbook – Michel & Jude Fanton

This is a very important reference book for anyone wanting to save seed (and in fact anyone wanting to grow from seed) and I can not recommend it highly enough.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy I have a supply available for \$18.00 each to members.

If you have any suggestions, articles, comments, advice, feedback or would like to see specific content featured please email me.

Donna McCallum