

LEISURE

FUN IN BORDERLAND

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have interesting pastimes or hobbies.
Call the Journal at 285-7411

The time is ripe to save seeds

Before we get caught up in the flurry of fall, let's save seeds from plants that we want in our gardens next season. If treated correctly, these seeds will provide us with healthy plants next spring plus we'll save dollars and keep alive a part of history that might otherwise be lost.

Saving seeds boils down to three steps: selecting suitable plants for seeds, harvesting at the right time, and storing seeds properly.

Which plants produce seeds that we want to keep? Many are hybrids which are produced by specifically cross-pollinating two varieties to produce a unique third variety. The creation of hybrids offered by seed companies has given us plants with disease resistance, larger-than-life flowers, less acidic tomatoes, etc. Seeds



Becky
LIVERMORE
MASTER GARDENER

from hybrids often do not produce offspring that maintain the characteristics of the hybrid parents. For example, seeds from my hybrid Celebrity tomatoes will produce tomatoes, but it's anyone's guess what qualities they'll have.

With this in mind, save seeds from annual plants that you think aren't hybrids. For many years I've saved seeds from my favorite heirloom

tomatoes. An heirloom is any garden plant that has a history of being passed down within a family, often for 50 years or more. These heirloom tomatoes from my garden (Opalka and Hanson's Yellow) produce seeds that will ensure like plants/fruits the next year.

Choose seeds from vigorous, healthy plants with the best tasting fruit or largest, most colorful flowers as parents for next year's crop. Don't save seed from weak or off-type plants. Save seed from as many individual plants as possible.

Harvest seeds from "dry" fruit (beans, peas, gourds, sunflowers, corn, etc) when the seeds are dry and rattle in the pod or have begun to fall off the plant. Wait until "wet" fruit (melons, summer squash, tomatoes, cukes, etc.) is totally ripe. Split

the fruit, scoop out and wash seeds, then dry them away from heat and light on cloth towels until completely dry.

Mother Nature often intervenes by scattering seeds before we get them. Remedy this by tying a small paper bag or piece of cheesecloth over the seedhead while it's drying and still on the plant. Then wait for the seeds to mature completely. This process may take longer than expected, sometimes a month after we normally would harvest the crop to eat. Be patient. The more mature the seed on the plant, the better.

Dry seeds thoroughly in a cool, well-ventilated place before storage. Seeds that aren't dried completely may mold. Remove the chaff/hulls from seeds by rubbing them between your hands or smashing them with

a rolling pin – a perfect stress-reliever!

Saving seeds from tomatoes requires a special process. Scoop seeds from perfect, uncooked tomatoes. Put seeds/pulp in a glass jar with a cup of water. Cover but do not seal. Stir mixture twice a day. Within a week, this mixture will ferment and seeds will sink to the bottom. Pour off liquid, rinse seeds and spread them out to dry.

Store seeds in airtight containers and place them in a dry, dark, cool place where ideally the temperature is around 40 degrees. Be sure to label each container so you know what's what. Today I think I'll remember that the Opalka tomatoes are in the old mustard jar, but by next spring that memory will be out the window.

Seed saving is smart and easy. Considering that many seed companies are now owned by major chemical companies, it's especially important that we keep the old seed strains alive that aren't modified or that don't contain systemic pesticides.

To find reliable information about gardening and other horticultural topics, go to the University of Minnesota Extension website <http://www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo/>. Local master gardeners will also answer your gardening questions via a voice-mail service. Call 444-7916, leaving your phone number, name and the nature of your question. A volunteer master gardener will give you a call.

Visit
The Journal
on

facebook®

Search: Ifalls Journal

Tchotchke
(choch•key)

meaning:
trinket, doohickey, gizmo, whatchamacallit

Getting your kid's to sleep earlier.

We know you've heard that a warm glass of milk packs a sleep-inducing punch, but did you know that bananas, turkey, peanuts and yogurt are also loaded with sleep-triggering tryptophan? Serve up a small tryptophan-rich snack about 30 minutes before bed and your kid will be sleepy and full at bedtime.

Pencil as Key Lubricant

If a key is sticking in the lock, scribble on its edges with a trusty number two. Graphite in the lead helps the key glide and turn more easily (so it also makes your day go more smoothly).

Homework Tips

Step 1. Find a location in the house where homework will be done.
Step 2. Set up a homework center.
Step 3. Establish a homework time.
Step 4. Establish a daily homework schedule.
Build in breaks. Establish incentive systems.

Duct Tape as Light Bulb Loosener

Safely loosen a hard-to-remove light bulb. Press the center of a footlong strip of tape to the middle of the bulb. Fold each loose end in half so it sticks to itself. Gripping each end between a thumb and index finger, give a counter clockwise twist to loosen the bulb.

Overnight Caramel French Toast

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup light-colored corn syrup
- 1/4 cup butter
- Cooking spray

- 10 (1-ounce) slices French bread (soft bread such as Pepperidge Farm)
- 2 1/2 cups 1% low-fat milk
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

PREPARATION

Combine first 3 ingredients in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat 5 minutes or until mixture is bubbly, stirring constantly. Pour mixture evenly into a 13 x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.
Arrange bread slices in a single layer over syrup in dish.
Combine milk and next 4 ingredients (through eggs) in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Pour egg mixture over bread slices. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight.
Preheat oven to 350°.
Combine 2 tablespoons granulated sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle evenly over bread.
Bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until golden. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.