



TOMATO SEED SAVING



PLANTS Must use seed from plants that are open-pollinated and each variety of tomato plant should be far enough apart so that none of their foliage touches one another.

HARVEST Use fully ripe tomatoes-the best you can find of the variety you choose.

PROCESS Cut tomato in half at its equator (that is so ½ has a stem and the other ½ has the blossom end). Open the little vertical cavities that contain seeds or scoop out with a small spoon. (If done carefully, the rest of the tomato can be eaten or dried).

Place this jelly and seed material into a small glass jar. Add a small amount of water and cover loosely with cheesecloth or a paper towel. Put the jar in a warm location 60-70 degrees F, for about 3 days. Stir the mixture once each day. Be sure to label each jar if you are processing more than one variety.

A layer of white fungus will begin to appear on top of the mixture after a couple of days. This fungus eats the jelly like coat that surrounds the seeds and will prevent the seeds from germinating until you plant them. It also produces antibiotics that help to control seed-borne diseases.

After three days, fill the jar with warm water, let the contents settle and begin pouring out the water along with pieces of tomato pulp and any immature seeds that float to the top.

Viable seeds are heavier and settle to the bottom of the jar.

Repeat the process until the water being poured out is almost clear and seeds line the bottom of the container.

Pour the clean seeds into a strainer. Let the excess water drip out and invert the strainer onto paper towels or newspaper.

Allow the seeds to dry completely (usually a day or two) breaking up the little clumps into individual seeds.

Label and store your seeds in packets of wax paper or plastic bags and protect from moisture.

GLOSSARY

- Hybrid** Varieties resulting from natural or artificial pollination between genetically distinct parents. Seed from these plants will not produce an identical plant as the parent.
- Open-pollinated** These varieties are stable varieties, resulting from the pollination between the same genetically similar parents. *NOT HYBRID*
- Self-pollination** When pollination takes place within a single flower, usually before it opens. Cross pollination is unlikely unless insects are known to invade the flowers before pollination is complete. *TOMATOES ARE SELF-POLLINATORS*
- Heirloom** Since heirloom varieties have become popular in the past few years: the term has taken on a very broad meaning. Most tomato experts have classified HEIRLOOMS into four categories:

Commercial Heirlooms: Open-pollinated varieties introduced before 1940 or tomato varieties more than 50 years in circulation.

Family Heirlooms: Seeds that have been passed down for several generations through a family.

Created Heirlooms: Crossing two know parents (either two heirlooms or an heirloom and a hybrid) and de-hybridizing the resulting seeds for however many years/ generations it takes to eliminate the undesirable characteristics and stabilize the desired characteristics, perhaps as many as 8 years or more.

Mystery Heirlooms: Varieties that are a product of natural cross-pollination of other heirloom varieties.



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