

OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Seed Library

Why a seed library?

People have been farming for thousands of years. One easy and sustainable way to keep your garden, is to save seeds for next year. Seed saving is a great way to save money, but there are a lot of other reasons to save your seeds.



When you save and share seeds you:

- Develop seeds that become acclimated to our local climate
- Grow plants that are more pest resistant
- Know where your food is coming from
- Create a culture of sharing and community
- Support a sustainable future for your community and your garden!

If you already save seeds, consider contributing to our seed library!

How to get started

Borrowing seeds from Oregon Public Library is free and easy!

1. Select packets of seeds and check them out from the library.
2. Grow your plants and enjoy the harvest.
3. Collect and return some seeds if you are able. There is no penalty for not returning seeds.



Available Seeds in 2024

Herbs

- Basil
- Chives
- Cilantro
- Dill
- Oregano
- Parsley

Flowers

- Hollyhock
- Marigold
- Red Poppy

Vegetables

- Beans
- Carrot
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Pepper, Serrano Chili

Native Plant seeds were collected and donated by the Oregon Nature Alliance and Dane County Parks.

Native Plants

- Blue Aster
- Black-Eyed Susan
- Bottlebrush Grass
- Butterfly Weed
- Coneflower
- Golden Alexanders
- Hoary Vervain
- Lavender Hyssop
- Little Bluestem
- Milkweed
- Native Garden Mix
- Nodding Onion
- Prairie Dropseed
- Rattlesnake Master
- Wild Bergamot

Selecting Seeds:

Choose seeds for plants that will work in your garden space.

Light requirements

- Unless otherwise mentioned, assume that vegetables and flowers need *full sun*, meaning at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.
- *Partial Sun* means the plant needs 3-6 hours of sun and has a great emphasis on receiving at least the minimal sun requirements. *Partial shade* means that the plant will need some relief from the direct, intense heat of the sun.
- *Full shade* means the plant can survive on less than 3 hours of direct sunlight each day. Very few plants, especially vegetables, require full shade.

Starting seeds indoors versus direct sowing

- Seeds should be started at different times. Tender plants should be started inside about 6 weeks before the last frost and then planted outside when the threat of frost has passed. Other seeds are planted directly (direct sow) in the outdoor soil and don't mind it a little cold. Native plants and a few others require a cold period to break down the outside shell of the seed.

Length of growing season

- The amount of time it takes to get a harvest varies from plant to plant. In the notes on each seed, be sure to figure out when the plant will be producing a harvest so that you will get a harvest before your plants freeze in the autumn.

Smooth Blue Aster - Wisconsin Native

Symphotrichum leave



Image from IllinoisWildflowers.info

About:

Smooth Blue Aster is a flowering native plant in Wisconsin. It typically occurs in prairies, rocky glades, and dry open woods. The flower is on stalks from 2-4 feet tall and blooms in late summer. Delicate blooms in shades of blue, purple, and even sometimes white, make this a beautiful addition to a perennial flower garden.

Planting:

Smooth Blue Aster seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May). Lightly cover seeds in potting mix less than 1/8 inch deep and keep soil moist. You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Rake the soil and lightly tap seeds into the soil. Do not plant seeds more than 1/4 inch deep.

Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.

Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seed pod to develop. If the pods are harvested too early, the seeds will not be mature and will not grow. Once the pod has turned brown, it will naturally open and release seeds. Once the seed pod has opened, collect the pods and store in a paper bag.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Sweet Genovese Basil

Ocimum basilicum



About:

Sweet basil is often used in fresh salads or added to dishes near the end of cooking. The plant is easy to grow and harvest. It's sensitive to cold so it should not be planted outside until all danger of frost has passed. Basil can also be grown year-round indoors as a potted plant. It should be placed in direct sunlight away from cold drafts.

Planting:

Produces in 70 days from sowing.

You can direct sow basil after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Or you can start basil inside in early April and then transplant outside to a location with full sun.

Plant seeds by covering them with about ¼-inch of soil. The growing basil seeds should germinate within a week. Once you see a couple pairs of leaves, you should thin the basil plants to be about 6 to 12 inches apart. Thinning the plants will help the surviving plants thrive by giving their roots plenty of space to grow.

During the growing season, pinch off any of the blossoms. If you allow the basil to bloom, it makes the plant less tasty.

Seed Collection:

When you are done with your growing season, allow the basil to bloom and let the flowers turn brown. Harvest the seed clusters when they are brown and spread them on a screen to dry. Place the clusters in a bowl, swirl the plant material around, and collect the small seeds that sink to the bottom.



Basil starting to flower



Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2022

Kentucky Wonder Pole Beans

Phaseolus vulgaris



Image from Seed Savers Exchange website

About:

Beans are wonderful to grow not only because of the vegetable it produces but because the plant enriches the soil with nitrogen.

Kentucky Wonder Pole Beans are one of the most popular beans of all time and a favorite of American gardeners since the late 19th century. This variety can be relied on for peak flavor, productivity, and wide adaptability. Yields abundant clusters of thick, meaty 9 inch green pods. Been pods are stringless when young. Delicious fresh, cooked, frozen, or dried for shell beans.

Planting:

Produces in 65 days.

Plant after last frost date (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Sow in rows 24 inches apart. Sow seeds 3 inches apart and cover with 2 inches of fine soil. Seedlings emerge in 10-14 days depending on soil and weather conditions. Thin gradually to stand 12 inches apart when seedlings are 1-2 inches high.

You will need some sort of support or trellis as vines can grow to be 8 feet long.

Keep sowing bean seeds every 2 weeks for a constant supply of beans.



Seed Collection:

Let a few bean pods stay on the plant until they are brittle and dry. Then harvest the pods and let them dry for 1-2 weeks. Another method is to pull the entire plant up and hang to dry. Once the pods are dry, shell them being careful not to break the seed coats.



Seeds donated in 2022

Black-Eyed Susan - Wisconsin Native

Rudbeckia hirta



Image from Old Farmer's Almanac website

About:

The “black eye” of black-eyed Susans refers to the dark brown center of its daisy-like flower head. Black-eyed Susans grow about 2 feet tall with flowers with a diameter of 2-3 inches. Butterflies, bees, and other insects are attracted to the flowers for their nectar. As insects drink the nectar, they move pollen from one plant to another, causing it to grow seeds that can move about easily with the wind.

Planting:

Direct sow seeds about 6 weeks before the average last frost (late April). Since black-eyed Susans can spread between 12 to 18 inches, plant seeds closer to prevent lots of spreading, or plant further apart to prevent the spread of disease. Check plants regularly to see if they need watering; avoid letting them dry out, and avoid excess moisture on the leaves, as it can encourage disease. Deadhead the flowers (remove the faded/dead flowers) to prolong blooming.

Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seed pod to develop. If the pods are harvested too early, the seeds will not be mature and will not grow. Once the pod has turned brown, it will naturally open and release seeds. Once the seed pod has opened, collect the pods and store in a paper bag in a cool dry place.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024

Bottlebrush Grass - Wisconsin Native

Elymus hystrix



About:

Bottlebrush Grass is a tall native grass growing 2-3 feet tall and 1-2 feet wide. The long seed heads feature bristly-looking flower heads growing perpendicular to the stem that strongly resemble a brush used to clean bottles. The plant tolerates dry to moist soils and does well in full sun or part shade. Birds are attracted to the large seeds.

Planting:

Bottlebrush grass seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process

happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May). Lightly cover seeds in potting mix less than 1/8 inch deep and keep soil moist.

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Rake the soil and lightly tap seeds into the soil. Do not plant seeds more than 1/4 inch deep.

Seed Collection:

At the end of the season, the seed heads will begin to ripen and turn color. Strip the seed from the stem; gloves may be necessary for protection from the barbs. Separate the seed from the plant material. Store seeds in a cool, dry place.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Butterfly Weed - Wisconsin Native

Asclepias tuberosa



About:

Butterfly weed is a milkweed variety that is native from Florida to Canada. Milkweed plants are the sole host plants for monarch butterflies and their nectar-rich blooms also provide essential food to native bees and many other pollinators. This plant produces lovely, bright orange flowers that once established will bloom from summer to fall and as a perennial will come back year after year.

Planting:

Butterfly weed seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May). Lightly cover seeds in potting mix less than 1/8 inch deep and keep soil moist.

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Rake the soil and lightly tap seeds into the soil. Do not plant seeds more than 1/4 inch deep.

Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.

Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seed pod to develop. If the pods are harvested too early, the seeds will not be mature and will not grow. Once the pod has turned brown, it will naturally open and release seeds. Once the seed pod has opened, collect the pods and store in a paper bag in a cool dry place.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Little Fingers Carrot

Daucus carota



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company

About:

Carrots are a wonderful root vegetable that are easy to grow. This variety is a great mini carrot from France. This variety is 3-4 inches long and can be pulled easily. The carrots have a smooth skin and deep orange color with little to no core. The carrots are very sweet and crisp – once you taste these it will be hard to go back to store-bought imitations! They can also be grown well in containers.

Planting:

Produces in 50-60 days.

Direct sow in a sunny spot as soon as soil can be worked in the spring (early to mid-April). Plant seeds thinly in rows 12 inches apart. Thin to 1-2 inches between plants. Thinning the plants will help the surviving plants thrive by giving their roots plenty of space to grow. Plant another crop in late summer for a fall crop.



Seed Collection:

Carrots will flower the second year and then develop seeds. If you are growing in a container, you can bring the container inside to overwinter the plant for it to bloom the following summer. But because it gets too cold in Wisconsin for carrots to overwinter outside, you will have to dig your carrots up and store them inside overwinter. If possible, dig carrots when the soil is relatively dry. Shake or gently brush the roots to remove as much soil as possible, but do not wash them. Trim the carrot tops down to a few inches above the crown. Store the carrots in a container with wood shavings, clean dry sand, dry leaves, dry peat moss, or any other medium to prevent mold. In spring, plant the carrot again with the crown just above the soil line (like it had been before they were dug up). The plants will now flower.

Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2022 and 2023

Staro Chives

Allium schoenoprasum



About:

Chives belong to the same family as onion, leeks, and garlic. They are a hardy, drought-tolerant perennials. They grow in clumps from underground bulbs and produce round, hollow tasty leaves that are much finer than onion.

In mid spring to early summer, they produce round, pink flowers similar in appearance to clover. The leaves are used in many dishes for flavoring and the flowers can be eaten or used in bouquets. Chives can be continually harvested throughout the summer. The leaves should be cut at the base to allow for new growth.

Planting:

Produces in 75-85 days and is a hardy perennial.

Plant seeds in a sunny location in early summer (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day) 1/4 inch deep. Place 4-6 seeds every 6 inches or 1-2

seeds per inch. Thin to 2-3 plants every 2-8 inches. Thinning the plants will help the surviving plants thrive by giving their roots plenty of space to grow.

A mature plant grows to be 12-18 inches tall.

Seed Collection:

Chives may not bloom the first year they are planted. Allow to overwinter outside and when they come up in the spring allow them to bloom and let the flowers turn brown. Before the seeds begin to shed from the flowers, harvest the seed. Dry on screens and rub to remove the seeds from dried flower.



Seeds purchased from Johnny's Selected Seeds in 2020

Slobolt Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

Cilantro is one of the most widely used culinary herbs in the whole world. The fresh greens are called cilantro and the dried seeds are called coriander. Cilantro is a tasty garnish or great when added to fresh salads. Bolting refers to the process of a crop producing a flower and then producing seed. Often once a plant bolts, the flavor of the plant changes, and this is the case with cilantro. So it is nice that this variety is a slow bolting strain.



Cilantro starting to flower

Planting:

Produces in 50 days.

Direct sow after the threat of frost has passed (usually between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Sow seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep, 1-2 inches apart, in rows 8 inches apart.

Sow every 2-3 weeks for continuous harvest.

Seed Collection:

Let cilantro bolt and flower. Cilantro flowers will form small green balls which will become the seeds. Once the seeds turn brown, they are ready to be collected. Pinch flowers off the plant and dry on screens. Rub to remove the seeds from the dried flower.



Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2019

Coneflower - Wisconsin Native

Echinacea pallida



About:

Wisconsin is the upper range of this mid-west native plant. Coneflower does best in well-draining soil that is not too wet. It has a long taproot that, once established, makes it extremely drought-tolerant. It blooms with pale purple or yellow petals in early summer and provides nectar to many pollinators, including hummingbirds and butterflies.

Planting:

Coneflower seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May). Lightly cover seeds in potting mix less than 1/8 inch deep and keep soil moist.

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Rake the soil and lightly tap seeds into the soil. Do not plant seeds more than 1/4 inch deep.

Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.

Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seeds to develop. Once the seedhead has turned brown, clip the seedhead and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Shake the seeds free of the seedhead and return in the provided envelope.



Heirloom Dill

Anethum graveolens



About:

Dill is an annual herb in the celery family. It is used most commonly in salads, soups, and for pickling. Dill has a vibrant yellow flower that is also nice in flower arrangements, although it smells very strongly of dill.

Planting:

Dill does not grow well when transplanted, so start the seeds fresh in a sunny spot in early summer after the

threat of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day). Direct sow dill seeds about ¼ inch deep and in rows 18 inches apart, then rake the seeds into the soil.

As soon as the plant has 4 or 5 leaves, you can start harvesting. Successive sowings can be done every three weeks to harvest fresh greens continuously. For extended harvest, do not allow flowers to develop.



Seed Collection:

Allow the dill plant to flower and go to seed. The flowers will turn brown as the seed heads develop. Clip the stems off the plant and let dry for a few days. Then you can easily pluck the dill seeds from the flowers.

Each flower produces a lot of seed. If you let flowers go to seed in your garden, it will naturally re-sow for the next season.

Seeds donated at the end of the 2023 growing season

Golden Alexanders - Wisconsin Native

Zizia aurea



About:

Golden Alexanders is covered with brilliant golden, three to four inch-wide umbels that bloom for several weeks in late spring. This is an excellent low-growing perennial for heavy clay soils in semi-shade to full sun. Moist, well drained soil is best, but this very adaptable plant will tolerate both wet and dry conditions, as long as there is plenty of moisture early in the growing season.

Planting:

Golden Alexander seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May).

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day).

Space plants 18-24 inches apart. Germination may be erratic over several weeks.

Seed Collection:

After the flowers fade, the small, ribbed seeds will begin to form. Strip the seeds from the plant as soon as they easily come loose from the stems. Store the seed in a cool, dry place.

Seeds donated from Dane County Parks in 2024



Hoary Vervain - Wisconsin Native

Verbena stricta



About:

Hoary vervain is native to the upper mid-west and blooms from early summer to fall. It grows to about 2 feet tall and prefers dry, well-draining soil and full sun. Its seeds are eaten by small mammals and birds, and it is a larval host for the Common Buckeye Butterfly.

Planting:

Hoary vervain seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on the seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. In addition, the winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions). To plant in spring, you can place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in a plastic bag and put in the refrigerator for about two months. After that, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. Plant on the surface (do not cover with soil, as these seeds need light to germinate) of potting soil or seed starting mix and keep moist. It may take a year or two before your plant blooms.



Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seedhead to develop. Once the seedhead has turned brown, it can be clipped off. Shake the seeds out of the seedhead and store in a paper bag to dry for a couple weeks. Return the seeds in the provided envelope.



Seeds collected with permission locally by the Oregon Nature Alliance 2022



Hollyhock

Alcea rosea

About:

Hollyhock is a classic cottage garden staple that bloom mid-summer with numerous flowers on tall spikes. This variety is a biennial, meaning the plant completes its lifecycle over 2 years. Seeds are a variety of dark pink, light pink, and white.

Planting:

Before starting seeds in spring, soak seeds in hot water (110 °F) for 12 hours. Hollyhock have hard shells and soaking them softens the shell making germination easier. Seeds sown in fall do not need to be soaked.



Seeds can be sown directly outdoors in fall or about a week before last frost (early May). Sow at just ¼ inch deep and about 2 feet apart. Plant in full sun to partial shade. Due to their height, protect from winds and provide support such as a fence, wall, trellis, or stake.

If you want to start indoors, start seeds about 9 weeks before the last average frost date (mid-March). Seedlings can be placed outside two to three weeks after the last frost (early June).

Seed Collection:

Allow some of the flowers to go to seed. When the flowers have changed into large, brown pods, snap them off and drop them into a paper bag to dry out further. After a few days, remove the seeds from the seed pods being careful to remove any chaff, the pods that hold the seeds.



Images from seed donator's garden

Seeds donated at the end of the 2022 growing season

Lacinato Kale

Brassica oleracea



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

This variety has a long history traced back to Tuscany in the 18th Century. Also known as Dinosaur Kale or Tuscan Kale, this variety is a primitive open kale with 2 inches wide strapped leaves that are 10 inches long on 2-3 feet tall plants. Kale is very tolerant of cold temperatures and the flavor becomes sweeter after a hard frost.

Planting:

Produces in 65-80 days.

Direct sow or start indoors and plant outside just before last frost

(early May). Sow seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep, 2-4 inches

apart, and in rows 30-36 inches apart. Thin plants to 18 inches apart when the seedlings are 2-3 inches tall.

Pick the leaves from the bottom up for continuous harvest.



Seed Collection:

Kale is biennial, meaning that it takes 2 years for the plant to complete its life cycle. In the fall, mulch your kale plants. In the spring, the kale will send out shoots and flower. After the flowers die back, long green pods will emerge. Let the pods turn brown and collect the pods. Inside the pods are the seeds.



Kale flower

Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2023

Lavender Hyssop - Wisconsin Native

Agastache foeniculum



About:

This beautiful biennial is native to the mid-western USA. The masses of tall lavender-blue spikes atop deep green foliage are a great source of nectar and pollen to nourish butterflies, honeybees, native bees and hummingbirds and make great cut flowers.

Planting:

Sow seeds indoors just beneath the surface of the soil 8-10 weeks before the last frost. Hyssop seeds will germinate in 14-21 days. Transplant outside in the spring after the last frost. Set plants 12-24 inches apart. Lavender Hyssop prefers full sun to partial shade and dry, well-drained soil.

Seed Collection:

Harvest the seeds when the flowers have dried and turned brown. Cut the flower heads off the stems and place them in a paper bag. Shake the bag to release the seeds. Store the seeds in a cool, dry place until ready to use.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024

Lettuce, Red Mix

Lactuca sativa



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

This variety of slobolt leaf lettuce has the best flavor of all the Grand Rapids types and as the name implies, one of the slowest of all the varieties to go to seed. Nice pleasant flavor, never bitter.

Leaf lettuce is a quick and easy way to get material to make salads. A head of lettuce will take longer to develop whereas leaf lettuce can be grown and harvested multiple times in a cut and come again fashion.

Planting:

Produces in 45-55 days.

Direct sow in a sunny to partial shade spot as soon as soil can be worked in the Spring (early to mid-April). Plant seeds thinly in rows 12 inches apart. Thin to 8-10 inches between plants. Thinning the plants will help the surviving plants thrive by giving their roots plenty of space to grow.

To harvest, pinch or cut leaves just above the soil surface and allow to grow back. Continue harvesting over several months, or until plants begin to lose flavor. Once plants bolt (flowers), the harvestable leaves will become bitter.

Seed Collection:

Only collect seeds from slow bolting plants to produce progeny that doesn't bolt early in the season. The seeds are ready to harvest when dry, about 10-24 days after flowering. Rub the seeds from the stalk and remove the coarse plant material.



Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2022

Little Bluestem - Wisconsin Native

Schizachyrium scoparium



Image from hort.extension.wisc.edu

About:

Little Bluestem is a warm-season perennial bunch grass native to North America. It grows 24 to 72 inches high and changes color throughout the year from blue-green in the spring to reddish-brown in the fall. Little bluestem requires full to partial sun and prefers well drained soils though it will tolerate most soil types. This grass provides excellent cover for ground nesting birds.

Planting:

Little Bluestem seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter

sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May).

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day).

plant prefers dry and well-drained soil, and tolerates drought and heat well. It also adapts well to various soil types such as sand, rocky soil, and clay. Do not fertilize, since this plant actually prefers poor soil.

Seed Collection:

At the end of the season, the seed heads will begin to ripen and turn white. Strip the fluffy seed heads from the stem. Separate the seed from the plant material. Store seeds in a cool, dry place.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Marigold, Variety

Tagetes patula



Image from Johnny's Selected Seeds website

About:

Marigolds are known for their pungent scent and bright orange blooms. This variety is a tricolor. Marigolds can be great flowers for a vegetable garden because they can deter small animals and some common pests from bothering your plants.

Planting:

Marigold may be grown from seed indoors and transplanted outside after frost, or sown directly in the garden after frost.

To sow indoors, plant 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May). Sow seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep in seed starting soil. Keep the soil moist but

not too wet, and seedlings should emerge in 7-14 days. Thin seedlings to one seedling per cell when they have two sets of leaves. Thinning the plants will help the surviving plants thrive by giving their roots plenty of space to grow. Transplant hardened-off seedlings to the garden after the threat of frost has passed (between Mother's Day to Memorial Day). Plant 6 inches to a foot apart.

Seed Collection:

Allow some of the blooms to turn brown. Pinch the withered petals of the flower between your thumb and index finger of one hand, and the base of the flower head with the other hand. Gently pull the withered petals. The petals should slide clear of the base with a bunch of pointy black spears attached which are the seeds. Place in a dry paper envelope so any moisture from the seeds can continue to dry.



Seeds donated in 2022

Cinderella Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnate

About:

'Cinderella' Swamp Milkweed's vanilla-scented flowers are a treat for the senses. Deep pink petals with white centers bloom in 2" wide clusters. Compact in form, 'Cinderella' makes an excellent choice for small, sunny gardens and performs well in low spots and moist areas. Like all swamp milkweeds, 'Cinderella' is a vital host plant for Monarchs, providing essential food and habitat for both the growing caterpillars and adult butterflies.



Image from American Meadows website

Planting:

Plant seeds in late fall up until the ground is frozen (October -November). Plant seeds 1.5 inch deep and 4-6 inches apart.

Seed Collection:

The flower head will develop into a seed pod. Wait until the pod has turned brown to harvest seeds, even better if it has already split open. Store in paper bags in a cool dry place until ready to plant. Leave 25% of the pods on the plants to allow for natural dispersal in the area the seeds were collected from.



Seeds donated at the end of the 2022 growing season



Image from extension.unh.edu/milkweed

Common Milkweed - Wisconsin Native

Alcea rosea

About:

Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) produces purple/pink flower clusters that wildflower gardeners love. Milkweed is one of the Monarch Butterflies' favorite plants and will bring many winged friends to your garden or meadow. It can be a challenge to grow but once established it will thrive for years to come and spread quickly.

Planting:

Plant seeds in late fall (you can plant up until the ground is frozen. Plant seeds 1.5 inch deep and 4-6 inches apart.

Seed Collection:

The flower head will develop into a seed pod. Wait until the pod has turned brown to harvest seeds, even better if it has already split open. Store in paper bags in a cool dry place until ready to plant. Leave 25% of the pods on the plants to allow for natural dispersal in the area the seeds were collected from.



Image from fs.fed.us



Image from extension.unh.edu/milkweed

Seeds donated at the end of the 2022 growing season



Nodding Onion - Wisconsin Native

Allium cernuum



About:

Nodding onion is an easy-to-grow native plant that is well-known for its downward facing blooms in shades of white to light lavender. It grows just over a foot tall and can grow in sun or part shade in a variety of soil conditions, including damp clay. Its flowers attract a variety of pollinators, and since it's part of the onion family, rabbits and deer tend to avoid it.

Planting:

Nodding onion seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May).

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day).

Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.



Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seeds to develop. Once the seedhead has turned brown, the black seeds will be visible. Clip the seedhead and store in a paper bag to dry for a couple weeks. Separate the black seeds from the other dried plant material and return in the provided envelope.

Seeds collected with permission locally by the Oregon Nature Alliance 2022



Greek Oregano

Origanum vulgare hirtum



Image from Johnny's Selected Seeds website

About:

Oregano is a culinary herb often used in Spanish, Italian, and French food. This variety has a strong oregano flavor with characteristic dark green leaves and white flowers. Another great thing about this variety is that it is perennial to our USDA Zone.

Planting:

Start indoors 8–10 weeks before last frost (late March to early April). Sprinkle seeds on the top of the growing medium and tamp them into the soil mix. Do not cover seeds, as they require light to germinate. Keep moist until germination. Transplant to individual containers when seedlings have 4 true leaves.

Transplant hardened-off seedlings to the garden after the threat of frost has passed (between Mother's Day to Memorial Day), spacing plants 12 inches apart in rows 18 inches apart.

To keep plants healthy, pinch back new growth, remove any old wood at the end of the winter. You can harvest entire stems just as plants are coming into bloom, cutting about 2 inches above the base of the plant. An established planting can be cut back two to six times during the growing season.



Seed Collection:

Allow the plant to flower, which may not happen in the first year. The flower will turn brown and develop seeds. Cut off the flower with seeds and put it in a paper bag and leave the paper bag in a cool, dry place for about two weeks. Remove the dried flowers from the paper bag and crush them to release the seeds. Gently blow to remove the debris and the seeds will be left behind. Store the seeds in an envelope or small paper bag.

Seeds purchased from Johnny's Selected Seeds in 2022

Native Garden Mix - Wisconsin Native



Image from UW Madison Arboretum website

About:

Native plants support the entire food web by providing food for insects, birds, bats, small mammals and other wildlife. This native garden mix includes black-eyed susan, bottlebrush grass, butterfly weed, golden alexanders, lavender hyssop, little bluestem, smooth blue aster, and wild bergamot. The plants grow from two to four feet tall and can grow in sun or partial shade in medium soil moisture.

Planting:

Native plants can be planted into the ground at almost any time of the year with the exception of late fall and winter. Ideal planting time is early spring, as this gives the plants roots all summer to get established before winter; but any time throughout the summer up until about mid-September are still good times to plant. Remember if planting outdoors in the heat of the summer, your plants will require diligent watering to keep them from drying out.

Seed Collection:

One way to tell when many native plant seeds are ready to harvest is to look for dry seed heads. The former flower, now seed head, will be dry along with a portion of the stalk immediately below it. Others that disperse by wind will appear dry and fuzzy at maturity (i.e., asters) and should be harvested right at this stage. Generally, look for seeds that are dry, hard, and dark in color.

It is advisable to limit the amount of seed taken from any one given plant. Taking one third (or less) of the seed ensures that the plant will sustain itself for future enjoyment and harvest.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024

Italian Giant Parsley

Petroselinum crispum



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

Italian Giant is a flat-leafed parsley and the preferred variety for cooking. Outer leaves can be clipped while the middle ones continue to grow. Can be used to flavor all kinds of dishes, soups and salads. Once it is established, it is easy to grow.

Planting:

Produces in 50-75 days.

Starting seeds indoors is recommended because it can take a week or two to germinate. Soaking seeds in water overnight can help speed up germination. Start seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May).

Transplant hardened-off seedlings to the garden after the threat of frost has passed (between Mother's Day to Memorial Day).

Direct sow method: seed after danger of frost has passed. Thin seedlings to 12 inches apart.

Seed Collection:

Parsley is a biennial plant which means it will produce flowers and seeds in its second year of growth. Since parsley will likely not overwinter outside, you can plant in a pot and keep on a sunny window sill overwinter and then plant outside again to get the plant to flower.



After the parsley plants have finished flowering, the flower will turn brown and develop seeds. Cut off the flower with seeds and put it in a paper bag and leave the paper bag in a cool, dry place for about two weeks. Remove the dried flowers from the paper bag and crush them to release the seeds. Gently blow to remove the debris and the seeds will be left behind. Store the seeds in an envelope or small paper bag.

Seeds purchased from A.P. Whaley in 2022

Serrano Chili Pepper

Capsicum annuum



About:

Serrano Chili Peppers are a variety of hot pepper. Abundant, 2-4 inch fruits ripen from dark green to deep crimson. This variety of pepper is a great choice for making pepper sauce and hot chili sauce. This pepper is slightly more hot than jalapeno and is considered “Medium” heat. The hotness varies from 8,000 to 23,000 Scoville Heat units.

Planting:

Produces 75-80 days from transplant outdoors. If possible, avoid cross-pollination with other pepper varieties.

Start indoors 8 weeks before the last frost (around the middle of March). Sow at a depth of 1/4 inch. The seeds will germinate in 10-20 days. Plant outdoors after the threat of frost has passed (between Mother’s Day to Memorial Day) 18 inches apart in full sun.

For best taste, pick Serrano peppers while they are still green or just beginning to change coloring.

Seed Collection:

Pick peppers which are fully ripe (turned red and about 3 weeks after the green fruit is harvested). Remove seeds and spread them on a screen to dry.

Seeds donated in 2022

Red Poppy

Papaver rhoeas

About:

Red Poppy, also known as Flanders Poppy, is famed around the world for the carpet of red beauty it creates when in full bloom. Deer resistant and attractive to pollinators, Red Poppies can be planted in any region of the US



Image from seed donator's garden



Image from American Meadows website

Planting:

Seeds can be direct sown in very early spring before the last frost (March-April) or in fall (September-October).

Seeds are very small. For more even dispersal, the seeds can be mixed with 9 parts sand. Prepare a small area of soil by tilling and smoothing until level. Direct sow seeds in fall by sprinkling on top of prepared soil. Plant in full sun to partial shade.



Watch for small furry seedlings to appear in spring.

Seed Collection:

Allow some of the flowers to go to seed. When the flowers have changed into brown circular pods, remove the pod from the plant and shake seeds out of the top of the pod. Small black seeds will come out of the holes on the top of the pod.



Seeds donated at the end of the 2022 growing season

Prairie Dropseed - Wisconsin Native

Sporobolus heterolepis



About:

Prairie dropseed is an attractive native grass that forms clumps of cascading foliage. It thrives in hot, dry conditions and is best planted in full sun - though it can tolerate some shade. Its seeds are a great source of food for birds in the fall. At around 2 feet tall, prairie dropseed can make a great border for a native garden.

Planting:

Prairie dropseed seeds do not require cold stratification in order to germinate. Seeds can be planted directly outside in the fall, or started indoors at any time. If planting indoors, use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. Plant just under the surface in potting soil or seed starting mix and keep moist. In addition, the winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions). This plant starts small, but quickly turns into a beautiful clump of long slender grasses.



Seed Collection:

Seeds will develop in fall. Strip seeds from grass and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Return seeds in the provided envelope.

Seeds collected with permission locally by the Oregon Nature Alliance 2022



Rattlesnake Master—*Wisconsin Native*

Eryngium yuccifolium



About:

Rattlesnake master is a distinctive native plant that grows to a height of around 4 feet and has leaves that are very similar to a Yucca plant. It has many white ball-shaped flowers and is a host plant of the black swallowtail butterfly. This plant prefers medium soils, blooms through most of the summer, and brings a unique form to any native garden.

Planting:

Rattlesnake master seeds benefit from cold stratification which helps break down the hard protective shell on seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Additionally, winter sowing method can be used (scan QR code for instructions).

To plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. Use a pot that is at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging the precious roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors. After about a month, you can start the seeds indoors. 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May).

You can also direct sow cold stratified seeds after the danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day).

Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.



Seed Collection:

After the flower has bloomed, allow the seedhead to develop. Once the seedhead has turned brown, clip it off and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Crush the seedhead to separate the seeds and return in the provided envelope.



Seeds collected with permission locally by the Oregon Nature Alliance 2022



Wild Bergamot - Wisconsin Native

Monarda fistulosa



Image from wisflora.herbarium.wisc.edu

About:

Bergamot is a highly adaptable native plant that thrives in all but the wettest of soils. The fragrant lavender flowers are a popular nectar source for pollinators and attract a wide variety of bees and butterflies.

Planting:

Direct sow bergamot seeds outdoors in early spring while the soil is cool and there is still a chance of a light frost (April to early May). Cover the seeds with a light dusting of soil. When the seedlings have two sets of true leaves, thin them to 18 to 24 inches apart.

If you prefer to start the plants indoors, start them eight to ten weeks (sometime in March) before you plan to transplant them outside.

Seed Collection:

The bergamot seeds usually mature 2-3 weeks after the flowers bloom. After the flower has bloomed, allow the seed pod to develop. If the pods are harvested too early, the seeds will not be mature and will not grow. Once the pod has turned brown, it will naturally open and release seeds. Once the seed pod has opened, collect the pods and store in a paper bag in a cool dry place.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024