

All about seeds

By Aunt Dooley

When you are ready to plant the garden, you have a few choices. You can buy plants from local nurseries and transplant them into your garden, or you can grow everything from seeds.

The advantage buying plants is you have more time before you must get them in the garden. The disadvantage is in not knowing how they were grown to that point.

The advantage to seeds is you know exactly how they will be raised, fertilized, etc. The disadvantage is you need to get started earlier for anything you need to start indoors and transplant later.

I prefer to use seeds to start my plants. So, the next question is: What kind of seeds to use?

You basically have 3 choices: Heirloom seeds, Hybrid seeds or Genetically modified seeds or GMO's. Ok, What's the difference?

Heirloom seeds are seeds that have been around for a long time and will reproduce true to the mother plant. They are not always what you are used to seeing in the store produce department, but they have some wonderful varieties you may learn to love. These are great if you want to save your own seeds as you can save seeds from your best producing plants and expect similar plants from them.

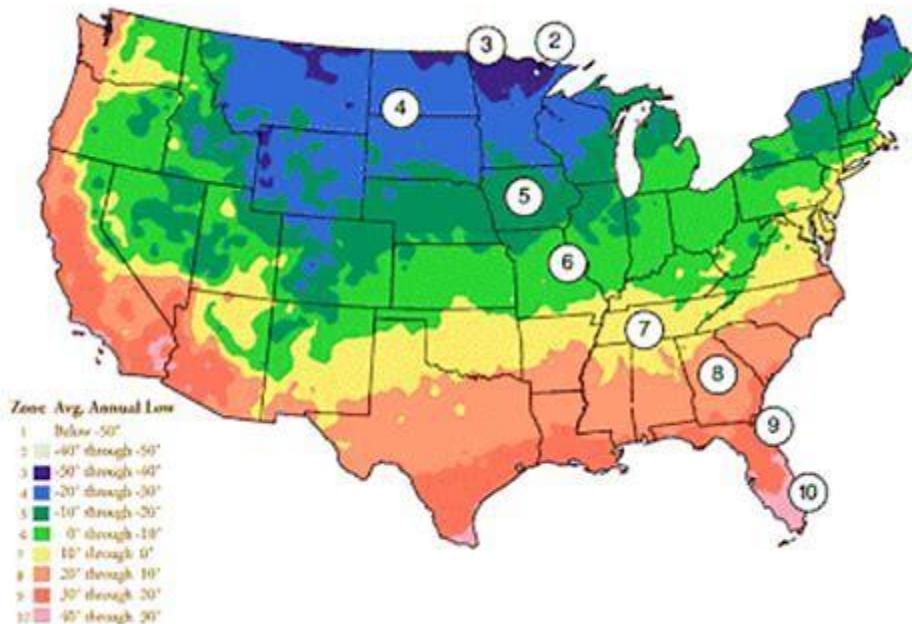
Hybrid seeds are a cross of 2 varieties. These are **NOT** GMO's, however. Lots of stuff you see in the produce department are from Hybrids. There is nothing wrong with using hybrids. The thing you need to be aware of is that if you want to save seeds you will not know which of the 2 parent plants traits will come out the next year but it will not be the same as the mother plant.

And as for GMO's I ain't going there! They will not reproduce, so no seed saving and many of these companies have patents on their seeds and would sue you if you tried to do that. There is a long list of reasons not to use them in my opinion.

What varieties of seeds should I use? Because of the difference in the length of the growing season, amounts of rain, temperatures and such some plants do better in certain areas of the country than others. For instance, it is difficult to grow Big

beefsteak tomatoes here in Texas. It just gets too hot for them. But Cherry, grape and other smaller varieties do great.

The United States is divided into planting Zones. Find out what zone you live in to get the best varieties for where you live. For instance, I live in Zone 8. Some maps make it Zone 8a.



I like to go to Howard Garrett for a list of varieties to plant in my area.

www.dirtdoctor.com. Another great source is your county extension office. Here is the link to Denton County <https://denton.agrilife.org/> They have lots of great info and a link to the master gardeners in your area. However, if you really want to plant a variety that is not suggested give it a try. You may have to baby it a little more but who knows it may be worth it.

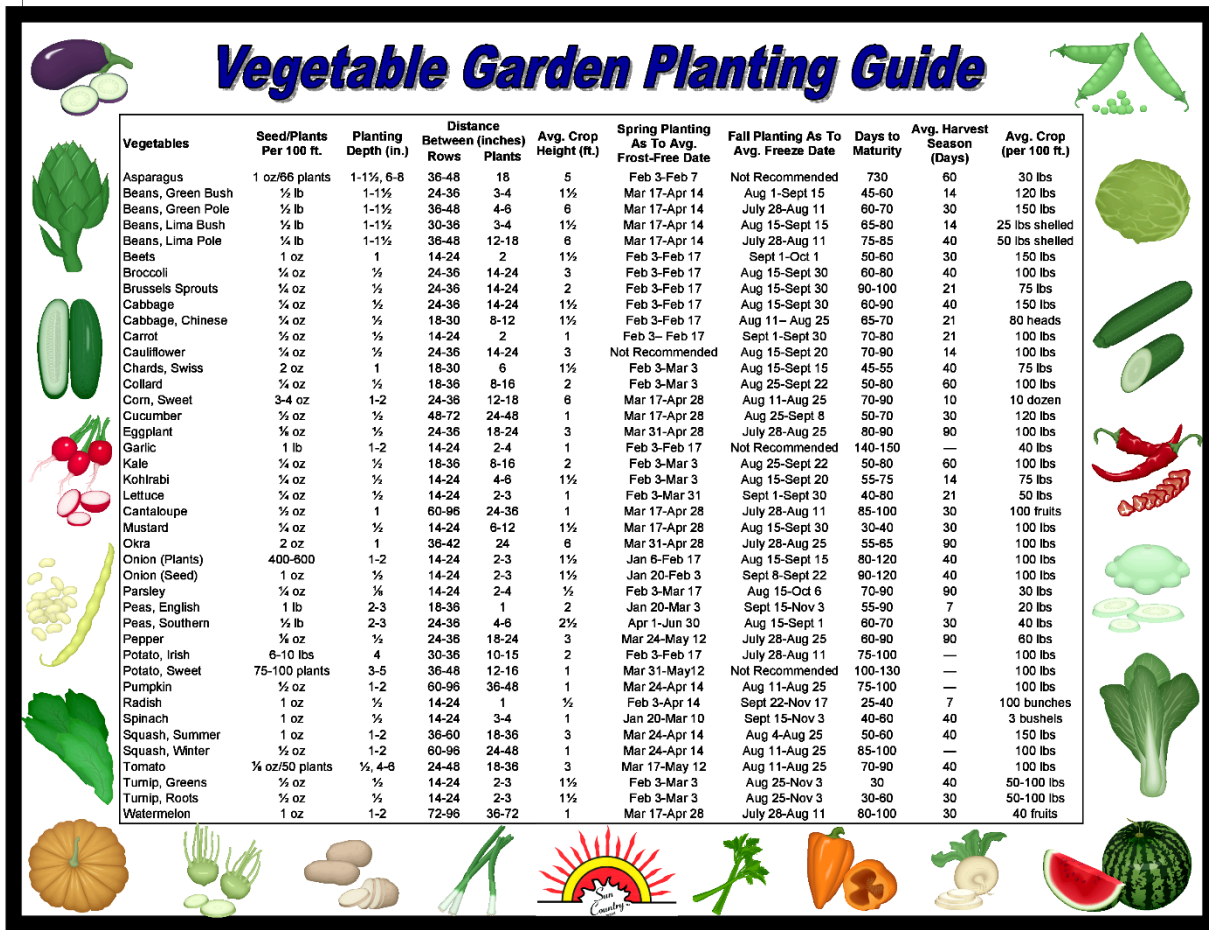
What things can I direct sow, what needs to be planted in seed trays first? I guess technically everything can be directly sowed into the garden bed, but if you want to get a head start on the growing season you will need to start seeds in seed trays or peat pots indoors. I do some of both. For instance, I start tomatoes, peppers and some herbs in pots in my greenhouse. I found that if I direct sow tomatoes, they do not get big enough to really produce a lot before the Texas heat gets to them. The

same with the peppers and herbs. I plant about 6 weeks before my last freeze date which is April 6th. You can find you freeze dates here:

<https://davesgarden.com/guides/freeze-frost-dates/index.php?q=75068&submit=Go>

I do plant most of my seeds directly into the garden soil. I am talking about all lettuce, spinach, beets, radishes, cucumbers, beans, squash, carrots, garlic, onions, watermelon, cantaloupe.

So when do I plant what? This is where the zones become very important. Most garden centers have free vegetable garden planting guides you can pick up. It will tell you when to plant each type of plant as well as how deep to plant, distance between plants, days to maturity and more. It gives both spring and fall planting times. Here is the one I have been using for the North Texas area. Just search for Vegetable planting guide to get one for your area. It is important to know what the average last frost date is for your area.



Vegetable Garden Planting Guide

Vegetables	Seed/Plants Per 100 ft.	Planting Depth (in.)	Distance Between Rows (inches)	Plants	Avg. Crop Height (ft.)	Spring Planting As To Avg. Frost-Free Date	Fall Planting As To Avg. Freezes Date	Days to Maturity	Avg. Harvest Season (Days)	Avg. Crop (per 100 ft.)
Asparagus	1 oz/66 plants	1-1½, 6-8	36-48	18	5	Feb 3-Feb 7	Not Recommended	730	60	30 lbs
Beans, Green Bush	½ lb	1-1½	24-36	3-4	1½	Mar 17-Apr 14	Aug 1-Sept 15	45-60	14	120 lbs
Beans, Green Pole	½ lb	1-1½	36-48	4-6	6	Mar 17-Apr 14	July 28-Aug 11	60-70	30	150 lbs
Beans, Lima Bush	½ lb	1-1½	30-36	3-4	1½	Mar 17-Apr 14	Aug 15-Sept 15	65-80	14	25 lbs shelled
Beans, Lima Pole	½ lb	1-1½	36-48	12-18	6	Mar 17-Apr 14	July 28-Aug 11	75-85	40	50 lbs shelled
Beets	1 oz	1	14-24	2	1½	Feb 3-Feb 17	Sept 1-Oct 1	50-60	30	150 lbs
Broccoli	¼ oz	½	24-36	14-24	3	Feb 3-Feb 17	Aug 15-Sept 30	60-80	40	100 lbs
Brussels Sprouts	¼ oz	½	24-36	14-24	2	Feb 3-Feb 17	Aug 15-Sept 30	90-100	21	75 lbs
Cabbage	¼ oz	½	24-36	14-24	1½	Feb 3-Feb 17	Aug 15-Sept 30	60-90	40	150 lbs
Cabbage, Chinese	¼ oz	½	18-30	8-12	1½	Feb 3-Feb 17	Aug 11- Aug 25	65-70	21	80 heads
Carrot	¼ oz	½	14-24	2	1	Feb 3- Feb 17	Sept 1-Sept 30	70-80	21	100 lbs
Cauliflower	¼ oz	½	24-36	14-24	3	Not Recommended	Aug 15-Sept 20	70-90	14	100 lbs
Chards, Swiss	2 oz	1	18-30	6	1½	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 15-Sept 15	45-55	40	75 lbs
Collard	¼ oz	½	18-36	8-16	2	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 25-Sept 22	50-80	60	100 lbs
Corn, Sweet	3-4 oz	1-2	24-36	12-18	6	Mar 17-Apr 28	Aug 11-Aug 25	70-90	10	10 dozen
Cucumber	¼ oz	½	48-72	24-48	1	Mar 17-Apr 28	Aug 25-Sept 8	50-70	30	120 lbs
Eggplant	¼ oz	½	24-36	18-24	3	Mar 31-Apr 28	July 28-Aug 25	80-90	90	100 lbs
Garlic	1 lb	1-2	14-24	2-4	1	Feb 3-Feb 17	Not Recommended	140-150	—	40 lbs
Kale	¼ oz	½	18-36	8-16	2	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 25-Sept 22	50-80	60	100 lbs
Kohlrabi	¼ oz	½	14-24	4-6	1½	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 15-Sept 20	55-75	14	75 lbs
Lettuce	¼ oz	½	14-24	2-3	1	Feb 3-Mar 31	Sept 1-Sept 30	40-80	21	50 lbs
Cantaloupe	¼ oz	1	60-96	24-36	1	Mar 17-Apr 28	July 28-Aug 11	85-100	30	100 fruits
Mustard	¼ oz	½	14-24	6-12	1½	Mar 17-Apr 28	Aug 15-Sept 30	30-40	30	100 lbs
Okra	2 oz	1	36-42	24	6	Mar 31-Apr 28	July 28-Aug 25	55-85	90	100 lbs
Onion (Plants)	400-600	1-2	14-24	2-3	1½	Jan 6-Feb 17	Aug 15-Sept 15	80-120	40	100 lbs
Onion (Seed)	1 oz	½	14-24	2-3	1½	Jan 20-Feb 3	Sept 8-Sept 22	90-120	40	100 lbs
Parsley	¼ oz	½	14-24	2-4	½	Feb 3-Mar 17	Aug 15-Oct 6	70-90	90	30 lbs
Peas, English	1 lb	2-3	18-36	1	2	Jan 20-Mar 3	Sept 15-Nov 3	55-90	7	20 lbs
Peas, Southern	½ lb	2-3	24-36	4-6	2½	Apr 1-Jun 30	Aug 15-Sept 1	60-70	30	40 lbs
Pepper	¼ oz	½	24-36	18-24	3	Mar 24-May 12	July 28-Aug 25	60-90	90	60 lbs
Potato, Irish	6-10 lbs	4	30-36	10-15	2	Feb 3-Feb 17	July 28-Aug 11	75-100	—	100 lbs
Potato, Sweet	75-100 plants	3-5	36-48	12-16	1	Mar 31-May 12	Not Recommended	100-130	—	100 lbs
Pumpkin	¼ oz	1-2	60-96	36-48	1	Mar 24-Apr 14	Aug 11-Aug 25	75-100	—	100 lbs
Radish	1 oz	½	14-24	1	½	Feb 3-Apr 14	Sept 22-Nov 17	25-40	7	100 bunches
Spinach	1 oz	½	14-24	3-4	1	Jan 20-Mar 10	Sept 15-Nov 3	40-80	40	3 bushels
Squash, Summer	1 oz	1-2	36-60	18-36	3	Mar 24-Apr 14	Aug 4-Aug 25	50-60	40	150 lbs
Squash, Winter	¼ oz	1-2	60-96	24-48	1	Mar 24-Apr 14	Aug 11-Aug 25	85-100	—	100 lbs
Tomato	¼ oz/50 plants	½, 4-6	24-48	18-36	3	Mar 17-May 12	Aug 11-Aug 25	70-90	40	100 lbs
Turnip, Greens	¼ oz	½	14-24	2-3	1½	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 25-Nov 3	30	40	50-100 lbs
Turnip, Roots	¼ oz	½	14-24	2-3	1½	Feb 3-Mar 3	Aug 25-Nov 3	30-80	30	50-100 lbs
Watermelon	1 oz	1-2	72-96	36-72	1	Mar 17-Apr 28	July 28-Aug 11	80-100	30	40 fruits

I keep a list on Excel of what seeds I have, when I got them and how many of them. Here is just a little example that.

Seed Variety	# of Seeds	where from	when bought
Artichoke - Green globe		Heirloom solutions	2014
Asparagus - Mary Washington		Heirloom solutions	2014
Beans - blue lake bush 274	40	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - Borlotto Di Vigevano Nano	40	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - contender Bush	40	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - contender Bush		Preparedness seeds	2012
Beans - Landreth Stringless 2 pkg	40	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - Long Chinese red noodle	25	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - Pole Kentucky wonder	25	dfw food storage	2014
Beans - Purple Dove	40	Baker Creek	2020
Beans - Royal purple pod buxh	40	Baker Creek	2019
Beans mix - contender and Royal purple		My seeds	
Beans- Red swan Bush	40	Baker Creek	2020

I keep where I got them from so if I am unhappy with them I won't buy them from that source again. Of vice versa if I love them I will rebuy.

Many people recommend storing your seeds in your refrigerator or freezer. I use to do that but I just have too many now so I keep them in my food storage room that I keep at a cooler temperature.

Seed packages have lots of great info on them. Below are some of the bean varieties I am going to plant this year.

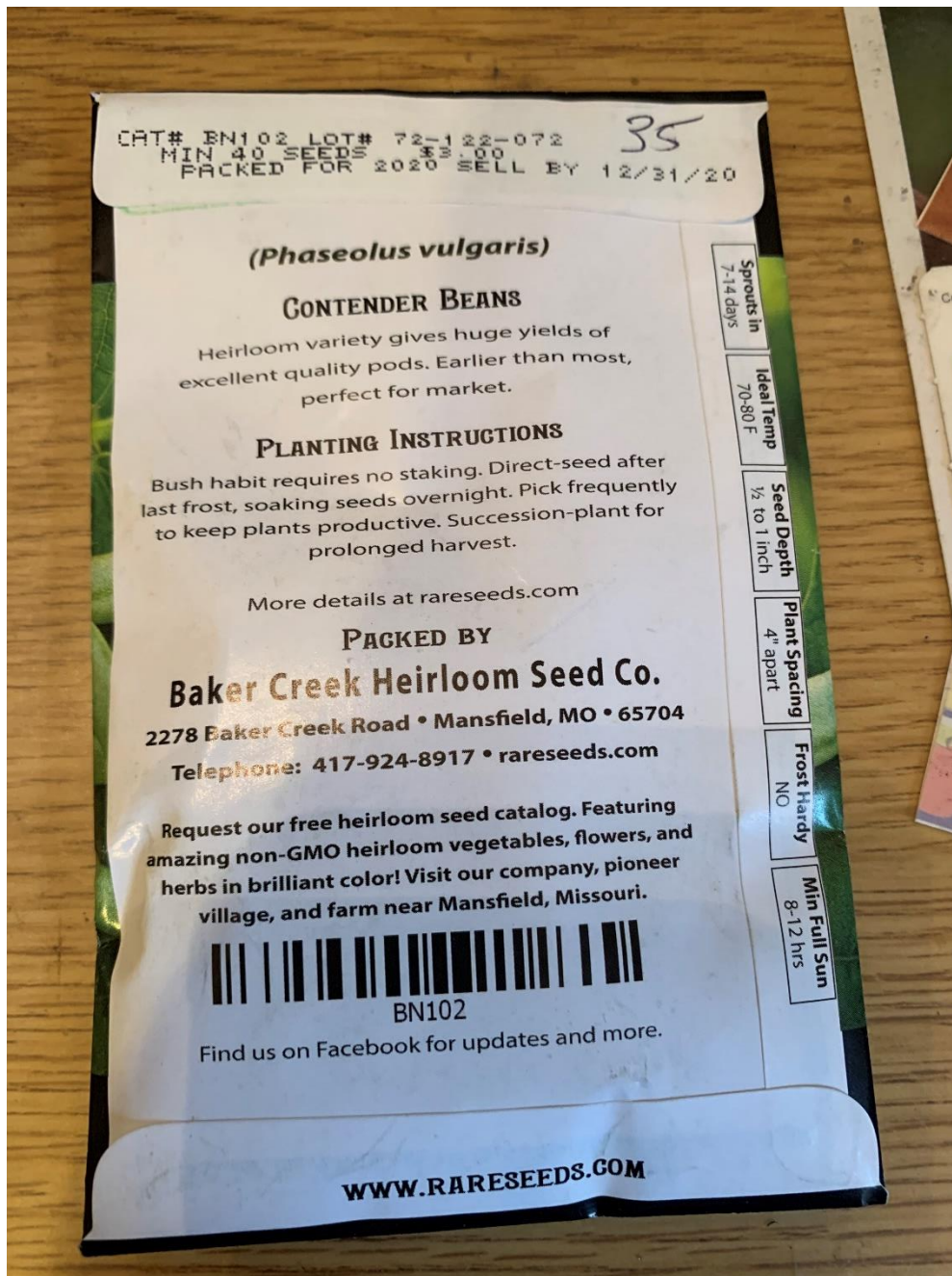


Notice I wrote the year I got them on the package. The paper clips are to keep it closed when I have not used the all. I tried to just reseal them but It didn't work and since I keep all the seeds of the same type in a ziplock bag they started getting mixed up.

There is lots of great info on the back of the seed package also. It gives you the scientific name of the variety of seed. Planting instructions, when it was packed and for whom. The minimum number of seeds in the package.

FYI you wont get the number of seeds on package with small seeds but you generally get hundreds of them. I am talking things like carrots, lettuce and herbs.

Along the side notice it tells you sprout time, ideal temperature to sow, seed depth, plant spacing, frost hardiness and how much sun it needs. All these are important to get the best harvest possible.



It is a good idea to take pictures of the front and back of your seed packages so that if you save your own seeds from the plants you still have all the info. Or just save those packages, they don't take up much room.

Next week I'll be talking about how I decide what to plant where and how much and all those details. Below is a list of companies that sell Heirloom seeds.

Companies that sell Heirloom seeds

Note: Always ask questions of a company if you want to verify they are not part of the corporate giant. Things change and companies are under pressure to survive. Some may sell out.

While all these companies claim to be GMO free some of them do sell hybrids so be sure it says heirloom if that is what you want. You will need heirloom if you are going to save your own seeds to plant next year.

The companies highlighted in Yellow I have bought from and are happy with the results.

Adaptive Seeds <https://www.adaptiveseeds.com/>
All Good Things Organic (SW) <https://www.plantgoodseed.com/>
Amishland Seeds <https://www.amishlandseeds.com/>
Annie's Heirloom Seeds <https://www.anniesheirloomseeds.com/>
The Ark Institute <https://www.arkinstitute.com/>
Backyard Beans and Grains Project <https://www.resilientseeds.com/>
Baker Creek Seed Co. www.rareseeds.com
Beauty Beyond Belief (BBB Seeds) <https://www.bbbseed.com/>
Botanical Interests <https://www.botanicalinterests.com/>
Crispy Farms <https://www.localharvest.org/crispy-farms-M44716>
Diane's Flower Seeds <https://www.dianeseeds.com/>
Eden Brothers <https://www.edenbrothers.com/>
Family Farmer's Seed Co-op <https://lamontanita.coop/family-farmer-seed-coop-variety-quality-western-growing-conditions/>
Farm Direct Seed <https://farmdirectseed.com/>
Fedco Seed Co. <https://www.fedcoseeds.com/>
Grow Organic <https://www.groworganic.com/>
Heirlooms Evermore Seeds <https://shop.heirloomsevermore.com/>
Heirloom Seeds <https://www.heirloomseeds.com/>
Heirloom Solutions <https://www.heirloomseedsolutions.com/>
High Mowing Seeds <https://www.highmowingseeds.com/>
Horizon Herbs <http://horizonherb.somee.com/>

Hudson Valley Seed Library <https://hudsonvalleyseed.com/>
Humbleseeds <https://humbleseed.com/>
Growing Crazy Acres <https://growincrazyacres.com/>
Ed Hume Seeds <https://humeseeds.com/>
Irish-Eyes <https://irisheyesgardenseeds.com/>
Johnny seeds <https://www.johnnyseeds.com/>
Kitchen Garden Seeds <https://www.kitchengardenseeds.com/>
Knapp's Fresh Vegies <http://knapps-fresh-vegies.netfirms.com/>
[Kusa Seed Society](http://ancientcerealgrains.org/) <http://ancientcerealgrains.org/>
Lake Valley Seeds <https://www.lakevalleyseed.com/>
Landreth Seeds <https://www.landrethseed.com/>
Larner Seeds <https://www.larnerseeds.com/>
The Living Seed Company <https://www.livingseedcompany.com/>
Livingston Seeds <https://livingstonseed.info/>
Local Harvest <https://www.localharvest.org/>
[MIGardener](https://migardener.com/) <https://migardener.com/>
Natural Gardening Company <https://www.naturalgardening.com/>
New Hope Seed Company <https://www.newhopeseed.com/>
Nichol's Garden Nursery
<https://www.nicholsgardennursery.com/store/index.php>
Peace Seeds <https://www.peaceseedorganic.com/>
Prairie Road Garden <https://www.prairieroadorganic.co/>
Renee's Garden <https://www.reneesgarden.com/>
Restoration Seeds <https://www.restorationseeds.com/>
Sand Hill Preservation Center <https://www.sandhillpreservation.com/>
Seed for Security <https://www.seedforsecurity.com/>
Seeds Trust <https://www.seedstrust.com/>
Select Seeds <https://www.selectseeds.com/>
Siskiyou Seeds (NW) <https://www.siskiyouseeds.com/>
Southern Exposure <https://www.southernexposure.com/>
[Sow True \(SE\)](https://sowtrueseed.com/) <https://sowtrueseed.com/>

Survival Essentials <http://www.survival-essentials.com/>

Sustainable Seed Co <https://sustainableseedco.com/>

Tomato Fest <https://www.tomatofest.com/>

Trees of Antiquity <https://www.treesofantiquity.com/>

True leaf seeds – was Mountain Valley Seeds

<https://www.trueleafmarket.com/>

Turtle Tree Seed <https://turtletreeseed.org/>

Underwood Garden Seeds <https://underwoodgardens.com/>

Uprising Seeds <https://uprisingorganics.com/>

Victory Seeds <https://www.victoryseeds.com/>

Vermont Wildflower Farm <https://www.vermontwildflowerfarm.com/>

White Harvest Seed <https://whiteharvestseed.com/>

Wild Garden Seeds <https://www.wildgardenseed.com/>

Wildseed Farms <https://www.wildseedfarms.com/>

Wood Prairie Farm (NE) <https://www.woodprairie.com/>

Westwind seeds. <http://www.westwindseeds.com/>