

Heirloom Farm

Celebrating America's Farming Traditions with Heirloom Farm

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An Heirloom Tradition

Before the advent of hybrid technology, farmers saved seeds for the next year's garden. These seeds sprouted new plants each season that were similar in appearance and taste to their parents. Seeds saved from generation to generation, known as "heirlooms," are said to be seeds that have been saved for at least 50 years and grow true to their parents.

Unlike heirlooms, hybrid seeds can't be saved in the same manner because they are cross-pollinations of plants and upon reseeding do not grow similar to their parent plant. Hybrids gained popularity among commercial farmers and backyard gardeners alike because of their disease resistance, uniform appearance and their ability to withstand travel and handling.

People today are becoming more concerned with what types of food they eat as well as how it is grown, which has also led them to seek more flavorful and healthy produce—heirlooms provide just that. Popular Farming™ Series: Heirloom Farm has everything you need to know about saving seeds and growing heirloom produce and flowers. With beautiful photos and in-depth articles, Heirloom Farm is a must-have for every garden and food enthusiast.

What You'll Find

The Popular Farming™ Series is a collection of magabooks™ that covers farming topics of interest to small farmers with more editorial pages and fewer advertisements. The series is designed to provide valuable information to both those who already have a small farm as well as those who are pondering the big move to the country.

As an all-encompassing guide to raising heirlooms, you'll find helpful and interesting information about all aspects of growing heirloom crops: what types of heirloom seeds are available, histories of rare varieties, how to control pests and boost soil fertility, how to preserve the harvest, how to save and start seeds, and ideas for cooking with heirlooms.

"The history of seeds is pretty straightforward, as you might expect. Man collects seeds from plants, man plants seeds the following year, man continues pattern in perpetuity In recent years, however, that circle has been fraught with controversy, one that pits 10,000 years of survival tradition against high technology. As heirloom gardeners and farmers around the world continue saving seed, propagating the best into next year's plantings, multi-national agribusiness companies are introducing an increasing number of new technologies to challenge those age-old habits." —Gretchen Heim Olson

Heirloom Farm has all the information you need to begin growing your garden produce and harvesting the seeds for future planting; all while enjoying the vivid colors, flavors and histories of these old-time varieties.

Start with Seeds

Saving seeds year after year may seem like a daunting task at first, but the savings to your pocketbook and the delight to your tastebuds will reward you time and again. However, this is not the only reward for saving seeds. The process of saving seeds is also one of weeding out the weakest among a variety—saving only the best seed for the next planting season. This ensures genetic diversity and food security as well as stronger varieties that are less susceptible to disease and more tolerant of environmental conditions.

"Seed savers cite several reasons for preserving the garden's offspring: assuring genetic diversity and thereby ensuring food security; breeding stronger heirloom and hybrid vegetable varieties for more nutrition, flavor, color, shelf-life, hardiness and disease resistance; and developing old varieties to be adaptable to a specific place and environment." —Tom Meade

If you are looking for even more information on how to find, grow and save heirloom seeds, check out the [Resources](#)

section for more references on all aspects of planting, saving and buying heirlooms.

How To...

From starting seeds to managing garden pests to harvesting seeds for the following year, there's a lot to know about growing heirlooms. Popular Farming's Heirloom Farm can offer help. Get detailed, do-it-yourself plans for freezing, drying and canning your heirlooms, as well as hints from expert gardeners on how to create your own cloches and warming lamps. Also get food historian William Woys Weaver's advice on how to select an heirloom variety and how to uncover its history in "A Scholar with Mud on His Boots."

"Preserving heirloom plants by saving seed entails more than knowing how to prevent cross-pollination or how to properly gather, store and dry the seeds. It requires careful attention to selection as well." –Cherie Langlois

Beyond the Seed

Popular Farming's Heirloom Farm brings you more than seed-saving tips. From transplanting seedlings to planning your garden layout to preserving your harvest to sharing your heirlooms as gifts, this is an adventure steeped in dazzling colors, Old World traditions and delectable flavors. The joy in growing your own food is the joy in savoring its delicious flavor and in providing good food for others to enjoy.

Discover how to build your garden with heirlooms that can be enjoyed year-round. Heirloom Farm has the tools and information to help you add a little history to your garden. It's the essential resource for every heirloom gardener and farmer.

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History Sown in Seeds

Seed saving is an act necessary for human survival. Learn why it's our duty to carry on tradition.
By Cherie Langlois

A Taste of Yesterday

Heirloom varieties have their own unique histories. Find out what makes these top 10 crops worth growing.
By Andy Tomolonis

Sprouting Seeds

Starting your own seeds, rather than buying seedlings, can free you from a pre-ordained gardening schedule.
By Andy Tomolonis

Planting the Heirloom Garden

Choose varieties and plan the arrangement of your heirloom garden to reduce pests and boost soil fertility.
By Jessica Walliser

12 Tasty Tomatoes

When it comes to flavor, heirloom tomatoes rule! Pick a few to entice your tastebuds.
By Sue Weaver

Our Edible Heritage

Cooking with heirlooms is a taste adventure. Try these recipes to discover the unique tastes and textures these prizes provide.
By Roger Yepsen

Gifts from the Heirloom Larder

Say "thank you" with a gift of goodies straight from your kitchen.
By Cheryl Morrison

Preserving the Heirloom Harvest

Learn to safely dry, can and freeze your heirloom harvest for year-round enjoyment.
By Cheryl Morrison

Blooming Heirlooms

Vegetables aren't the only plants with colorful pasts—think of heirloom flowers to add a bit of history and fragrance to your garden.

By Linda Tagliaferro

A History of Seeds in America

The business of selling seeds has a rather short but illustrious history. Learn where it's been and where it's going.

By Gretchen Heim Olson

Saving Seeds for Survival

Learn exactly how to save the seeds of some common garden crops.

By Tom Meade

A Scholar with Mud on His Boots

Discover what inspires internationally known and respected food historian, professor, plant breeder and seed saver, William Woys Weaver.

By Cherie Langlois

Slow Down with Slow Food

Preserving dying culinary traditions is the mission of the eco-gastronomic association, Slow Food USA.

By Sue Weaver

Resources

Heirloom seed sources, planting guides, organizations and books.

Glossary

Heirloom and garden jargon defined.

Why We Love Them

Heirlooms are the original "local food."

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