



Garden Center and Nursery

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# Saving tomato seeds

The gel that surrounds tomato seeds contains chemicals that prevent seed germination. Seeds come equipped with mechanisms that stall germination until the time is right. When a ripe tomato falls to the ground, it rots away, gel sack and all, and the seeds are left to germinate.

## Replicate the rotting process

Cut open a very ripe tomato and squeeze the seeds into a jar. Stir the seeds once a day for 3-5 days. A fungus will form, ferment, bubble and smell awful. This fermentation process will kill many seed-borne diseases.

After 3-5 days, add some fresh water to the jar and shake it vigorously. The fungus and unviable seeds will float to the top, while the good seeds settle on the bottom of the jar. Pour off the fungus and water, rinse your seeds and allow them to dry. Spread the seeds on a glass or ceramic pan to dry completely.

Another way - put the seeds and a little water in a sieve and run cool water over them. Swish them around to allow the gel to run out of the sieve. You won't get all the gel off, but a thorough rinsing should be sufficient. Let the seeds drip dry, then spread on a paper towel to finish drying. The seeds will stick to the paper, but just roll it up to store the seeds.

## Storing seeds

When seeds are dry, store them in a cool, dry place away from pests. Be sure to label with the variety and date that you saved them. Tomato seeds may remain viable for up to four years. Don't save seeds from the fruits of hybrid plants unless you have the space and time for experimentation. Hybrid seeds are produced by crossing two different parent plants. Seeds saved from hybrids generally revert to the undesirable parent varieties.