

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 2025

Herbs

- Chives
- Dill
- Sage*

Flowers

- Marigold
- Poppy
- Cinderella
Swamp
Milkweed

Vegetables

- Beans
- Carrot*
- Lettuce*
- Sweet
Pepper*
- Tomato*

*Seeds were donated by A.P. Whaley

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

Native Plants

- Anise Hyssop
- Blue Smooth Aster
- Butterfly Weed
- Prairie Clover
- Coneflower
- Culver's Root
- Golden Alexander
- Bottle Brush Grass
- Little Bluestem Grass
- Prairie Dropseed Grass
- Hoary Vervain
- Native Garden Mix
- Nodding Onion
- 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.

Anise Hyssop—*Wisconsin Native*

Agastache foeniculum



Image from donator's garden

About:

This beautiful perennial has a fragrance of mint and licorice. Leaves can be dried and made into tea and the flowers add a lovely flavor on salads. Plants will self-seed readily, with success in well-drained soils.

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 can also add interest in bouquets. An established plant will flower throughout the summer until it sets seeds. This plant fares better in dry conditions than many other members of the mint family.

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 (even in dappled sunlight) and dry, well-drained soil.

In Spring, if the plant is snipped to just above the first true leaves, it will branch and produce more flowers. As flowers are harvested the plant will produce more stems for even more flowers!

Seed Collection:

Allow some flowers to turn brown. Cut the flower heads off the stems and place them in a paper bag. Shake the bag to release the very small seeds. Store the seeds in a cool, dry place until ready to use.



Seeds donated in 2024 for the 2025 growing season

Smooth Blue Aster—*Wisconsin Native*

Symphotrichum laeve



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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in

plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 and 2025



Stringless Blue Lake Bush Bean

Phaseolus vulgaris

About:

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

Blue Lake Bush beans are a variety of green bean that are stringless, tender, and have a crisp texture. They are a popular choice for canning and freezing, but can also be eaten fresh.

The growth habit of bean plants can be described as either “bush” or “pole.” Bush varieties remain short and do not require support, produce earlier than pole varieties, but do not produce as long as pole beans.



Image from thegardeingworld.com

Planting:

Produces in 60 days.

Plant after last frost date (between Mother’s Day and Memorial Day). Sow in rows 24 inches apart. Sow seeds 4 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.

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.



Image from seedsforgenerations.com

Seeds donated in 2024 for the 2025 growing season

Kentucky Wonder Pole Beans

Phaseolus vulgaris



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.

Image from Seed Savers Exchange website The growth habit of bean plants can be described as either “bush” or “pole.” Pole varieties need a support or trellis to climb and bear over a longer period of time.

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 2024 for the 2025 growing season

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 but also avoid excess moisture on the leaves as it encourages 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 2025

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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 and 2025



Purple Prairie Clover—*Wisconsin Native*

Dalea purpurea

About:

Purple Prairie Clover likes a sunny spot and thrives in medium to dry soils. This plant is not picky when it comes to the soil characteristics, as long as the site is well-drained. Purple Prairie Clover has a deep taproot that ensures it will last in any native planting. The plant grows 1-3 feet tall.

Prairie clovers are able to capture nitrogen from the air and fix nitrogen in the plant. The plants then act as a natural soil fertilizer when the spent plant material is left to enrich the soil.

Planting:

Seeds need to be removed from their hull. Many seed companies do this for you but if you have collected seeds directly from the plant, they need to be scarified by lightly rubbing the seeds between two sheets of sandpaper.

Seeds then need to go through 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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:

It can take several years for plants to establish enough to produce blooms and seeds. After the flower has bloomed, allow the seeds to develop. Once the seed head has turned brown, clip the seed head and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Shake the seeds free of the seed head.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Image from minnesotawildflowers.info



Image from Prairiemoon.com



Leafy Prairie Clover—*Wisconsin Native*

Dalea foliosa

About:

This species is now on the brink of extinction in natural areas. This perennial plant grows in medium to dry locations and prefers full sun but will tolerate part sun. It does need to have space and does not tolerate being shaded out by other plants. Leafy prairie clover is as the name suggests, more more leafy than other prairie clovers and is about 18 inches tall, with a purple bloom from July to September. The flowers attract plenty of pollinators.

Prairie clovers are able to capture nitrogen from the air and fix nitrogen in the plant. The plants then act as a natural soil fertilizer when the spent plant material is left to enrich the soil.

Planting:

Seeds need to be removed from their hull. Many seed companies do this for you but if you have collected seeds directly from the plant, they need to be scarified by lightly rubbing the seeds between two sheets of sandpaper.

Seeds then need to go through 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

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Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.

Seed Collection:

It can take several years for plants to produce blooms and seeds. 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.

Seeds donated by Dane County Parks in 2024



Image from fs.usa.gov



Image from Prairiemoon.com



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. Cut leaves at the base of the plant 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 2024

Dragon Carrot

Daucus carota



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company

About:

Carrots are a wonderful root vegetable that are easy to grow. Dragon is the most refined purple carrot available to gardeners. The beautiful reddish-purple exterior makes an amazing contrast with the orange interior when sliced. The interior color can vary from orange to yellow. This selection has a wonderful sweet almost spicy, true carrot flavor.

Originally bred by Dr. John Navazio from a Chantenay type, the skin is thin so carrots do not need peeling.

Carrots average 5-7 inches long.

Planting:

Produces in 75-80days.

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 over winter 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 and produce seed.



Little Fingers Carrot

Daucus carota



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.

Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company 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 over winter 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 and produce seed.



Seeds donated from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2024

Light Purple 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 in 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 seed head has turned brown, clip the seed head and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Shake the seeds free of the seed head and return in the provided envelope.



Seeds donated by the Oregon Nature Alliance in 2023



Yellow Coneflower—*Wisconsin Native*

Ratibida pinnata



About:

Ratibida pinnata, commonly called Yellow Coneflower, is native to prairies and savannas throughout the midwest. 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 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 seed head has turned brown, clip the seed head and store in a paper bag to dry a couple weeks. Shake the seeds free of the seed head and return in the provided envelope.



Seeds donated by the Oregon Nature Alliance in 2024



Culver's Root—*Wisconsin Native*

Veronicastrum virginicum



About:

Culver's Root, sometimes called Culver's physic or black root, grows well in many different conditions from full sun to part shade, damp soil to well drained.

Culver's Root is prized for its strong vertical statement in the garden. Mature plants can reach heights of 5-6 feet, and form a large clump with multiple stems. The tall unbranched stems are topped with elegant spires of white flowers, blooming for several weeks in midsummer. Butterflies and numerous native bees will visit the popular flowers.

Planting:

Culver's Root 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

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Allow 2 or 3 seasons to establish and flower.

Seed Collection:

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



Image from prairiemoon.com

Seeds donated by the Oregon Nature Alliance in 2024



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 $\frac{1}{4}$ 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 for the 2024 growing season

Golden Alexanders—*Wisconsin Native*

Zizia aurea



About:

Golden Alexanders produces 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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. 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 2025



Bottlebrush Grass—*Wisconsin Native*

Elymus hystrix



About:

Bottlebrush Grass is a 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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:

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 2025



Little Bluestem Grass—*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 2-5 feet 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

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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.

This 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

Prairie Dropseed Grass—*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 starting 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 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 for the 2023 growing season



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 seeds to increase germination. The easiest way to do this is to plant the seeds in the fall and let the process happen naturally. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 head to develop. Once the seed head has turned brown, it can be clipped off. Shake the seeds out of the seed head 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 for the 2023 growing season



Lettuce Mix

Lactuca sativa



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

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.

This lettuce mix is a must for every garden and is a well balanced mix of Baby Oakleaf, Bronze Beauty, Buttercrunch, Crispt Mint, Freckles, Ice Queen, Outredgeous, and Tango.

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 and 2025

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 hold 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 2024 for the 2025 growing season

Cinderella Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnate

About:

'Cinderella' Swamp Milkweed forms beautiful flower clusters that go from deep pink to white. The plant reaches about 3 feet in height but is otherwise fairly compact and great for small gardens. It prefers sunny areas with moist soils; it doesn't mind clay. Although not a native plant, swamp milkweeds are still a host plant for Monarchs.



Image from donator's garden

Planting:

Cinderella Swamp Milkweed 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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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:



Image from extension.unh.edu/milkweed

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 in 2024 for the 2025 growing season

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, Rattlesnake Master, 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.



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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 seed head has turned brown, the black seeds will be visible. Clip the seed head 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 for the 2023 growing season



King of the North Pepper

Capsicum annuum



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

This is the most reliable bell pepper for northern gardeners and produces sturdy plants with heavy yields of blocky, thick walled, 3-4 lobed fruits that ripen from green to red. The ripe peppers are often prepared stuffed or eaten fresh out of the garden.

Planting:

Produces 70 days from transplant outdoors.

Avoid cross-pollination with other pepper varieties.

The plant produces blocky, uniform fruits with a great sweet flavor. Start indoors 8 weeks before the last frost (around the middle of March). The seeds will germinate in 14 days. Plant outdoors after the threat of frost has passed (between Mother's Day to Memorial Day) 12-24 inches apart in full sun.

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 from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2025

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. Other winter sowing method can also be used (scan QR code for instructions). To prepare seeds to plant in spring, place the seeds in a wet paper towel then in plastic bag and put in the refrigerator.

To sow indoors, start cold stratified seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost (late April to early May) in pots that are at least 3 inches deep to prevent damaging roots when you transplant the seedling outdoors.

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 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



Green Culinary Sage

Salvia officinalis



Image from A.P. Whaley Seed Company website

About:

Sage is a perennial shrub widely used for flavoring meat, cheese, and bean dishes. This welcome addition to any herb garden is also a beautiful plant with green-gray leaves and purple flowers.

Planting:

Produces in 70-80 days.

Sage seeds can be direct-sown into the warm spring soil after all danger of frost (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day), but most

gardeners find it easier to begin the seeds indoors 6 to 8 weeks before the last anticipated frost (late March to early April).

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, 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 donated from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2025

Brandywine Pink Tomato

Solanum lycopersicum

About:

Probably the most famous heirloom tomato in the world. This Amish strain has been grown in Pennsylvania since the 1880s. Fruits can top 1 pound. Plants require good cages or staking. Not uncommon for one plant to produce 25-30 fruits per season.

Planting:

Indeterminate. Produces in 80-90 days from transplant.

Start indoors 6 weeks before the last frost (around late March) and seeds will germinate in 7-14 days.

Transplant outdoors after danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day) 24 inches apart in rows 3-4 feet apart and cage, stake, or trellis in full sun.

Seed Collection:

Harvest when fully ripe and squeeze the pulp and seeds from the fruit into a container. Add water and let ferment below 70 degrees for about 4 days stirring occasionally. Some seeds will float to the top and are not good for replanting. Throw these out. Drain the water and pulp, collecting the seeds that sunk to the bottom. Spread in a single layer on a paper towel and let dry for 1-2 weeks.



Image from A.P. Whaley website



Seeds donated from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2025

Indigo Blue Tomato

Solanum lycopersicum

About:

Indigo Blue Tomato is a stunning cherry tomato. The unripe fruit are amethyst purple and as they ripen turn almost black with a brick red bottom.

Planting:

Indeterminate. Produces in 75 days from transplant.

Start indoors 6 weeks before the last frost (around late March) and seeds will germinate in 7-14 days.

Transplant outdoors after danger of frost has passed (between Mother's Day and Memorial Day) 24 inches apart in rows 3-4 feet apart and cage, stake, or trellis in full sun.



Image from A.P. Whaley website

Seed Collection:

Harvest when fully ripe and squeeze the pulp and seeds from the fruit into a container. Add water and let ferment below 70 degrees for about 4 days stirring occasionally. Some seeds will float to the top and are not good for replanting. Throw these out. Drain the water and pulp, collecting the seeds that sunk to the bottom. Spread in a single layer on a paper towel and let dry for 1-2 weeks.



Seeds donated from A.P. Whaley Seed Company in 2025

Wild Bergamot

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 2025