

Ordering Garden Seeds

With the current weather you might not be thinking about your future garden, but now is the time to be thinking about ordering seeds for the 2024 growing season. A lot of companies sell out of special and popular varieties quickly as gardening has increased in popularity over the past few years. When browsing a seed catalog, website, or reading a seed packet in stores, you will find that there is a lot of information to consider when buying different varieties. This information can be overwhelming with the terms and abbreviations used.

Days to maturity: The number of days from planting until plants reach harvestable maturity.

Indoor sow: Seeds should be started indoors or in a greenhouse before being transplanted outdoors. This could be for cool season crops to reach maturity before it gets too warm out. This is also for longer growing crops such as tomatoes so that you can enjoy a harvest as soon as possible. When succession planning for multiple harvest, you may indoor sow some crops at different intervals.

Direct sow: Seeds are placed directly into the ground. For many varieties, you must wait until the threat of the last frost. Be sure to read the packet as some varieties are tolerant of cooler temperatures.

Number of seeds: The amount of seeds a packet will contain. Many will indicate how long of a row in feet that a packet can plant.

Treated: The seeds are coated with fungicides or insecticides to protect them from disease and pests during their germination and seedling growth. A lot of companies may add color to the coating so that they can be differentiated between those who are untreated.

Disease resistant: This is the degree of disease resistance exhibited by the plant. Disease resistance is often expressed with abbreviations, for example “V” for Verticillium Wilt. The abbreviations should be explained within the catalog. If you have had disease problems in the past, consider selecting disease resistant varieties; however, resistance could be compromised under high disease pressure.

Determinate plants: This term refers to the growth habit of a tomato plant. Plants will grow to a fixed, determined size, halting growth after flowering. They will mature all their fruits in a short period of time (usually about two weeks or so). These are most ideal for small spaces and container gardening. Determinate tomatoes harvest around the same time which makes it ideal for canning sauce or making large batches of salsa, canned tomatoes, etc.

Indeterminate plants: Plants continue to grow and set fruit throughout the growing season until killed by frost. These plants are vining and will need a trellis system. If you want a continual harvest of fresh tomatoes and have the space to maintain them, indeterminate tomatoes are ideal.

Open pollinated (OP): Open-pollinated seeds, also called “true to type” or “true to seed,” are a result of the natural pollination of two plants of the same variety. When planted, open-pollinated seeds should have the same characteristics as the parent plant. As long as pollen is not shared between different varieties within the same species, then the seed produced will remain true-to-type year after year. Open-pollinated plants can be cross-pollinating or self-pollinating.

Hybrid: Seeds from a cross of two or more known varieties. Hybrid varieties often have increased vigor, yield, or disease resistance but you if you save the seed, you will not get consistency in the next generation.

F1 - First Generation

F2 - Second Generation

Heirloom: Open pollinated, seeds from these plants have been passed down through many years. They tend to have a unique flavor, taste, and color. These plants may have poor disease resistance, shelf life, and an unpredictable yield when compared to hybrids. These seeds can be saved from the harvest and can be planted and enjoyed year after year, preserving the variety.

If you are new to gardening, the Adams County Extension Office is hosting a free Beginner Vegetable Gardening Series. This series will help you plan and prepare for the upcoming growing season. On February 13th, the topic is “Intro to Garden Planning & Starting Seeds Indoors.” This series will be held at the Adams County Fairgrounds from 6:00-8:00. Please call the extension office at 937-544-2339 to register. If you have any questions regarding seed ordering or anything agriculture and natural resources related, feel free to contact me at the office via email at stoneking.24@osu.edu or 937-544-2339.

Interested in a newsletter? To receive a newsletter of current agricultural and natural resources topics and events in the area, please contact the extension office with your mailing address for a physical newsletter or email address for an electronic version.

SAVE THE DATES

February 20th- GAP Training for Tobacco Producers. This training is from 9:00-11:00 at Raines Farm and Greenhouses. If you plan on attending, please contact the office to register.

February 27th- Fertilizer and Pesticide Applicator’s Training at the Adam’s County Fairgrounds. For those who need to renew, letters have been mailed out with registration information.

March 1st- Cow Calf School at Raines Farm. Focus will be on optimizing herd fertility. Cost to register is \$10.00. This workshop is from 9:00-2:30. Presentation topics include breeding season management, cow longevity and culling decisions, EPDs in action, synchronization strategies, and bull evaluation. Contact the extension office to register or for any additional information.

March 5th- Farm and Family Night at the Maysville Community and Technical College. This free event is from 6:00-9:00, with dinner starting at 4:30. We do not have tickets at the office yet, stay tuned for more info!

March 19th- Starting Seeds Indoors Workshop from 6:00-7:30 at the Adams County Fairgrounds. Call or email me to register for this free gardening workshop.

April 4th- Women in Ag Southern Regional Day Conference in Chillicothe, more details to come.