

How easy is it to save seed?

This varies for each crop, depending on a number of factors.

- How easy is it to get the plants to the flowering and seeding stage in the first place?
- How easy is it to keep varieties true to type?
- How easy is it to finally collect and clean the seed?

Your situation can make a difference too. If you have a small garden, for example, crops which need a lot of space for a long time before they seed are a problem; if you have a spare allotment, however, they are not. Conversely, if the garden is in the middle of a town and no-one else on the block grows any vegetables, crops that cross pollinate will not be a problem. On an allotment or in a garden in an agricultural area, however, it may be difficult to keep them true to type.

The table shown can therefore only be a rough guide, but in general, the crops with the low numbers are easiest to grow and those with the high numbers, the most difficult. Thus in the various columns:

Annual:

4 - Crops that need a long growing season or some protection in order to produce seed.

1 - Crops that easily produce seed outside in most seasons.

Biennial:

4 - Crops that are difficult to overwinter.

2 - Crops that are a bit more trouble e.g. Crops that usually need lifting or storing, or otherwise protecting.

1 - Crops that often overwinter in the ground with no protection.

Space:

4 - Crops for which you need lots of plants/space.

1 - Crops for which you need only a small number of plants/small space.

Cross-pollination:

4 - Crops which cross pollinate readily.

1 - Crops which nearly always self pollinate.

Isolation:

4 - Difficult e.g. large isolation distance needed/ not easy to cage and use insects or hand pollinate. The difficulty does depend, however, on whether other varieties of the crops are likely to be flowering nearby. With biennials such as carrots and parsnips that are normally harvested in the first year, this may be unlikely.

2 - Moderate e.g. short isolation distances or can be caged and will self-pollinate

1 - Easy — only very short isolation distances necessary.

Harvest/clean:

4 - Seed difficult to collect and clean.

1 - Seed easy to collect and clean.

Crop	Annual	Biennial	Space	Cross pollination	Isolation	Harvest / clean
Aubergine	3		1	2	2	1
Beetroot		3	3	4	4	2
Broad bean	1		2	3	4	1
Broccoli, winter		1	4	4	3	2
Brussels sprout		1	4	4	3	2
Cabbage, spring		1	4	4	3	2
Cabbage, summer		3	3	4	3	2
Cabbage, winter		1	3	4	3	2
Carrot		2	2	4	3	3
Cauliflower, summer		4	4	4	3	2
Cauliflower, winter		3	4	4	3	2
Celery		4	2	4	3	4
Celeriac		2	2	4	3	4
Cucumber, g/house	3		2	4	2	2
Cucumber ridge	2		2	4	2	2
French bean	2		1	1	1	1
Kale		1	4	4	3	2
Kohl rabi		3	2	4	3	2
Leek		1	2	4	3	3
Lettuce	4		1	1	1	3
Melon	4		2	4	2	2
Onion		3	2	4	3	3
Parsnip		1	2	4	3	3
Pea	1		1	1	1	1
Pepper	3		1	2	2	1
Radish	2		2	4	3	3
Runner bean	3		3	4	4	1
Spinach	1		2	4	4	3
Squash	2		2	4	2	2
Swede		2	3	4	3	2
Sweetcorn	4		4	4	4	2
Tomato	2		1	2	1	2
Turnip		2	2	4	3	2