

## **CLEANING AND STORAGE OF SEEDS**

Your seed should be thoroughly cleaned before donation. Searching through seed heads and calyces for seed can be quite time consuming. Seed is the hard, plump material which cannot be crushed between your fingers. Discard any soft, loose fibrous material.

After collection, seeds must be dried well and placed in a paper container. Mould can destroy seeds stored in plastic. Glassine envelopes work well for storage. We have found that donation of just one glassine envelope full of seeds provides a sufficient quantity to fill all our orders unless the seeds are large. Glassines can be obtained from ORG&HPS by e-mailing [seedex@onrockgarden.com](mailto:seedex@onrockgarden.com).

Once seed has been collected it should be stored in a cool dry place such as a basement. In his blog, Robert Pavlis, an ORG&HPS member, explains that storage in the refrigerator at this point will interfere with maturation of the embryo.

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/storing-collected-seed-fridge-or-freezer>.

Your own stash of leftover seed presumably will be very dry if it is not sown within a year. The stash probably will not then be harmed by storage in a freezer. Old seed might be coaxed into germinating by using GA-3. Other approaches are soaking the seed in malt extract, beer or an enzyme-based product. (J.L. Hudson, Seedsman)

No matter how carefully you have stored your seed, whether of garden origin or purchased commercially, please do not donate it to the Seedex unless it was collected in the current year. Our reputation for offering good seed relies on donation of fresh material.

## **CHAFF IS NOT THE SAME AS SEED**

The family Asteracea (commonly known as composite flowers) as well as some others must be prepared carefully before donation. Many of the fruits are empty and only a few contain viable seeds. Achillea, Aster, Anaphalis, Solidago and Syneilesis are but a few examples of plants whose seed heads are composed primarily of chaff.

With 8000 -10,000 packages of seed to prepare, our packaging volunteers usually cannot spare the time to go through a pile of chaff looking for viable seed. You should hear the groans when a packer encounters uncleaned seed! In cases where the donation contains a lot of chaff, packers are told to put a generous quantity of the questionable material in each package in hopes that there are at least 3 good seeds in each order. Unfortunately, if the order is being sent outside Canada where the import of uncleaned seed is prohibited, the package might be confiscated.

If you are keeping the seedheads for your own needs, cleaning is not as important. Break apart the seed head and sow the entire contents. The few seeds amongst the chaff will likely germinate despite the non-viable material around them.