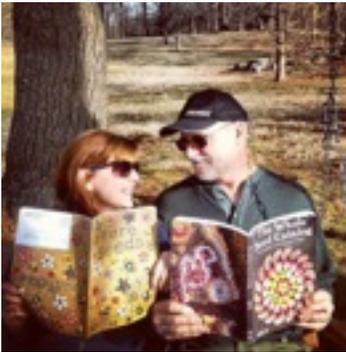




*Inspiring Gardeners Since 1988*  
*Kentucky's First Organic Garden Center*

## **PRACTICAL ORGANIC GARDENING, SEED TO HARVEST**



### **SEEDS:**

GM crops are created by adding genetic material from one species into the DNA sequence of another species. The result of genetic modification by laboratory methods is a combination of genetic materials that could not occur naturally. You will not find GM seeds in a home garden center at this time.

Hybrids are developed through traditional breeding, where pollen is moved between members of the same species. Plant breeders carry pollen from one plant to another by hand or with the help of insects to produce controlled crosses of two individual plants. Hybrids are typically bred for increased vigor, pest resistance, larger fruit size, or for commercial purposes, shippability. Hybrid cultivars are developed over many years. A few examples of hybrid plants are Sun Gold tomatoes and many of the "super hot" chili peppers, such as the Carolina Reaper. You cannot save the seeds from hybrid plants for planting, you will have inferior plants that are not true to the parent plant. You are able to root cuttings ("take clones") if you would like to reproduce a hybrid.

You may hear discussion about open pollinated seeds. Open pollination is achieved by insects, birds, wind, or other natural mechanisms. The seeds of open-pollinated plants will produce new generations of those plants. One of the bigger challenges in maintaining a strain by open pollination is avoiding introduction of pollen from other strains. Based on how broadly the pollen for the plant tends to disperse, it can be controlled to varying degrees by greenhouses, tall wall enclosures, or field isolation.

Heirloom seeds are open pollinated cultivars that have been kept true to variety, with no cross pollination, through careful cultivation methods for over fifty years. Baker Creek Seed Company is using tent enclosures in its own gardens to house the plants. Bumble bees are then introduced to control the pollination. This prevents cross-pollination from undesirable sources, as well as preventing cross-pollination between strains. Heirloom seeds can be saved and replanted, ensuring a trustworthy supply of family food year after year. When saving seeds, separate cultivars of the same plant variety to prevent cross pollination.

NOTE: Both Baker Creek and High Mowing Seeds are Non-GMO Project verified. They are the only two seed companies in the US currently testing seeds at high risk for GM contamination for cross-pollination with GM varieties.

**SEED STARTING VS BUYING PLANTS:** Benefits of seed starting include increased variety of plants to choose from, having complete control over what is used on your plants, and quite often, healthier plants to start your garden. Healthier starts = healthier and better garden performance, and better harvests. More and more plants are available that are locally grown and organic, or at the very least, not sprayed with pesticides.

Starting your own plants is not difficult with the right equipment and space, primarily a grow light of some sort and a warm area.

To assist with timing your plant starts, there are several apps and online resources. One of our favorites is from Mother Earth News, it is a free, personalized planting reminder called "What to Plant Now" that is emailed to you directly. <http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/what-to-plant-now-zl0z0903zalt.aspx>

**TRADITIONAL TILLED GARDENS AND RAISED BEDS:** Raised bed gardening has exploded in popularity. Maybe it is the clay soil so many of us have here in Kentucky! If you are looking for less weeds & pests, better soil, higher yields or simpler maintenance, raised beds are a great choice. We have personally invested in several new raised beds each year, while still maintaining a tilled garden plot. We now have 10 + raised beds, most measuring 4' x 8' or 3' x 6'. Our tilled, traditional garden is where we plant our corn, beans, and plants such as melons and squash that like to sprawl across large areas. We use weed cover on our tilled bed. Our raised beds are used for tomatoes, peppers, smaller squash cultivars, potatoes, asparagus, greens, herbs, carrots, broccoli, etc.

**STAGGERING HARVESTS:** If you are canning or preserving food, big yields ripening all at once is a bonus! For the kitchen to table gardener, you may prefer staggering harvests over the entire season to ensure a constant supply of the freshest produce.

**PEST CONTROL:** Organic gardening requires a realistic expectation of pest control. There are many pest repellants made from botanicals, garlic, hot peppers, etc. that can be used as prevention. Botanical insecticides will kill the insects eating your plants, but also quite often kill beneficials as well. They do break down quickly, usually in three days or less, and are not systemic. Beneficial insects may be used. We suggest using a combination of these controls, and also wisely choosing plant varieties.