

A Method of Extracting Seeds from Tomatoes

1) It is very important to not mix seeds from different accessions together if you are working with more than one tomato variety. Always carefully label your containers, and make sure that they are clean before you put fruit or seeds into them.

2) The fruit can be picked when they first start to show signs of colour change, however, it is best to leave the fruits on the vine as long as possible so they achieve full ripeness. You may want to pick the tomatoes early to avoid a frost. Mature fruit can be collected after a frost but the unripe fruit should be avoided. The fruits can be collected as they ripen and stored in a refrigerator until you have several to process as once. Just prior to extracting the seed, allow the fruit to sit at room temperature until they all are ripe.

3) To extract the seeds, cut them in half through the middle, and squeeze out as many seeds as possible into a large drinking glass or small plastic container. A 750 gram plastic yogurt container works very well. A metal spoon is useful to scrape out the seeds on some drier varieties. Try to avoid getting too much pulp, since this will just cause problems later on. Do not add water to the seed extract unless the extract is very dry.



4) Let the tomato seed extract sit for a 3 or 4 days at room temperature. Stir the solution two or three times a day. Observe the seeds to see if the gelatinous seed coating is starting to disappear. Also look to see if the seeds are germinating. If the seed starts to germinate proceed to step 5) immediately.

5) Pour the seeds through a metal kitchen strainer (be sure that the seeds will not pass through the mesh). Wash the seeds very well, until there are only larger pieces of skin and pulp left with the seeds.



6) Put the seeds back into the large drinking glass or plastic container (clean first). Add water to the seeds until the container is almost full, and stir the seeds a bit. The pulp and skin will float to the top while the seeds remain on the bottom. Slowly pour off the water, pulp and skin. Do this several times until the seeds are clean.



7) Spread the seeds out to dry on a tray or plate. Plastic or porcelain works best since the seed will not stick. After a few days at room temperature, the seeds can be placed in an envelope.