

# Vegetable Seed Saving

**ALIVE-FNS Project**  
**Ayeyarwady Delta – Myanmar**  
**A sustainable technique for the Delta farmers**

## Seed saving of local varieties promotes better seed autonomy and reinforce food security



**Eggplant:** When cultivating more than one variety, put under **mosquito net**, before flowering, the **best plants with best characteristics** (fruit size, colour, plant health, productivity). Harvest the best fruits, at **full maturity** (yellowish-brown in colour), when it's **not good for consumption**. Cut eggplant in small pieces and extract the seeds in water, disregard floating seeds, keep the **best seeds** which have **sunk at the bottom**. Place the seeds in a fine sieve and clean the selected seeds under running water, **dry under shade** for 2 weeks. Winnow the dry seeds and store in a **closed container**, glass jar in a **cool dark place**.



**Yard Long Bean:** Cultivate YLB on trailing and with **wider spacing** for better seed quality. Remove **off type** and diseased plants (short, crooked, discoloured beans) and keep **best looking beans** for seed saving. Harvest the beans for seed saving when **fully dried** on the plant when the pods start to **open up**. Remove the beans from the pods, winnow and clean debris. Dry 2 weeks under shade, bite the seeds, if it does not leave a bite-mark the seeds are dry; store in a **closed container**, glass jar in a **cool dark place**.



**Cucumber:** Cultivate cucumber on trailing and with wider spacing for better seed quality. Remove **off type** and diseased plants (short, missed shaped, crooked) and keep best looking cucumber. Harvest cucumber for seed saving when the fruits are **fully ripe** (yellowish-brown in colour) and **not good for consumption**. Cut cucumber lengthwise, extract the seeds and ferment them in the cucumber juice and a bit of water for 2 days. Wash and dry the seeds for 2 weeks under shade. While bending the seed if it breaks the seed are fully dried. Winnow and store in a **closed container**, glass jar in a **cool dark place**.



**Snake gourd:** Cultivate snake gourd on trailing and with wider spacing for better seed quality. Remove **off type** and diseased plants (short, missed shaped, crooked fruits) and keep best looking long fruits from healthy plants. Best looking snake gourd can be marked with a red rope during vegetative stage to find them back later. Leave the snake gourd **fully maturing** on the plant until it become **orange-reddish colour**. Cut the snake gourd, extract the seed and clean the pulp from the seed by washing seeds in water to remove the red flesh. Dry under shade for 2 weeks. While bending a seed if it breaks the seeds are fully dried. Winnow and store in a **closed container**, glass jar in a **cool dark place**.



**Radish:** For seed saving cultivate at least **15-20 plants** of radish (as radish need to be cross-pollinated by insect), cultivate at **wider spacing** for better seed quality. Remove **off type** during vegetative state (crooked roots, forked, twisted roots, diseased plants). During flowering remove plants which are too early or too late. Once the roots are fully mature and at edible stage, keep the plants growing for another 2 months until flowering and pods development (roots will become very large, bulging from the ground, cracking and not edible). Once the **seed pods** are **fully dried** on the plant, remove the entire plant, be careful of not being too late as pods will open by themselves and seeds will fall on the ground. Dry the plant upside down for a few more days and trash the plant to dislodge seeds, winnow the debris and dry the seeds for another 2 weeks. Store in a **closed container**, glass jar in a **cool dark place**.

### Principle of Seed Saving

Use **local traditional variety** know as OPV (open pollinated variety). **Do not use Hybrid variety** for seed saving, it will not work!

Cultivate plant at **wider spacing** for seed saving as plants need more time and sustained soil fertility for seed saving.

Performing **plant and fruit selection** is most important for seed saving.

**Remove off type**, crooked fruit, too short, off-shaped, twisted, discoloured, too early or too late as well as diseased plant, stunned or having poor growth.

Keep only **best looking, healthy and vigorous plant** for seed saving.

Sow well on time after the raining season (Oct-Nov); flowering and seed setting should happen during the **cool months** (Jan- Feb); harvest seed **before the monsoon** (April- May).

**Dry** properly all seeds for about **2 weeks under shade**, clean from debris and store in a closed container, glass jar and store in a **cool dark place**.