

The CFI is happy to announce that the [Seed 2012 Saving Inventory](#) is now available for [download](#). What is seed saving, and why is an inventory important? Here's what CFI's seed savers have to say:

*Have you ever planted a tomato that bore huge, delicious fruits, and the next year when little volunteer tomato plants came up, you expected more of the same, only to get some small, tough skinned tomatoes totally unlike your original plant? That tomato was undoubtedly a hybrid variety, meaning that seed scientists created it by crossing unrelated, inbred parent lines. Its seeds will revert to those parent lines, which generally aren't very useful in a garden. Hybrid seeds and plants usually include the term "F1" somewhere in their description. This means it's a first generation cross. If you try to grow a "second generation" from a hybrid plant by saving its seeds, you'll be disappointed.*

*On the other hand, perhaps someone you know grows wonderful tomatoes year after year from seeds they save. Those tomatoes would be an open-pollinated variety, meaning their seeds will reproduce true to type year after year. And every year, they will become a little better adapted to the climate in their area, and a little more resistant to the insects and diseases found there, mainly because the plants that grow and produce best are the ones that someone will save seeds from.*

*An heirloom is always an open-pollinated plant, but has been around for at least 50 years, often for centuries, and usually not in commercial production. Heirlooms have been passed along by gardeners who have loved them. Now, many thousands of heirlooms and other open-pollinated varieties are being lost because seed companies are consolidating, and don't find it worthwhile to carry the old seed varieties that cannot be patented. So seed-savers all over the world are helping to keep our seed heritage alive.*

*CFI encourages Athens area gardeners to save and trade open-pollinated and heirloom seeds, not only because it saves money, but also because it protects a precious genetic resource for the future. Seed saving isn't rocket science, but a little knowledge will ensure success. Seeds from mature tomatoes, peas, and beans can usually be dried and saved with good results, but many veggies (and flowers) need some distance between varieties to prevent cross-pollination. Fortunately, plenty of good, easy-to-understand information is available, and you can always call or email the CFI office with seed-saving questions, and to find out about seed saving workshops.*