



SEED CIRCLES

Where we each get lots of different vegetable seed for very little work!

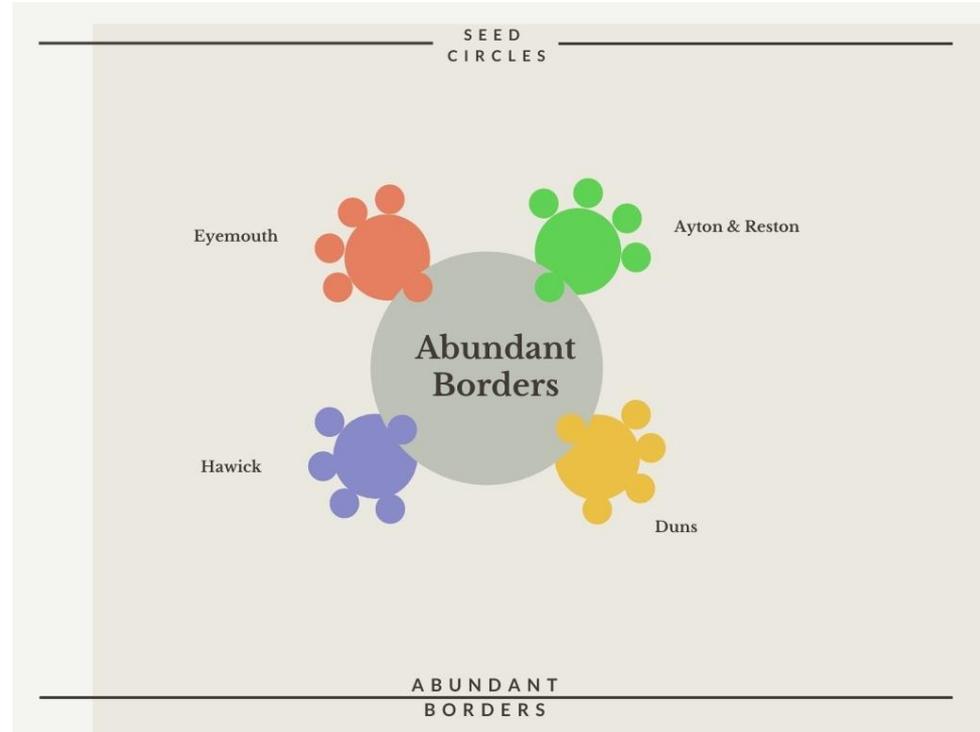
SEED CIRCLES ARE A SIMPLE, SOCIABLE IDEA

- We get together as a group of friends
- We each agree to save seed of one sort of vegetable
- We each get lots of seed and at the end of the year we can swap with each other
- It's a great way to start seed saving. We all get several types of good seed for free, but each person only has to learn how to grow one sort
- And we can help each other learn as we go
- By seed saving together, doing it as a group, we will make friends, be more likely to stick with it and be more likely to get good seed at the end

HOW IT WORKS

- One person organises the seed circle. That's me! Karen from Abundant Borders
- Four more people join each circle and agree to grow and share seed
- We meet up at a community garden to say hello and to decide who wants to grow what
- Abundant Borders supplies real, non-hybrid seeds for everyone, and any other equipment we might need
- We agree to follow the seed saving methods from the seed saving course to make sure we all save good seed
- We agree to share the seeds next harvest
- And we all help each other learn as we go

SEED CIRCLES ARE A SIMPLE, SOCIABLE IDEA



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Save seed from a vegetable that you really like. If you really like carrots, then you're the person to grow carrot seed for your circle
- We each save seed from just **one variety**. This keeps it simple and reduces the work we each need to do to stop things crossing
- We might decide to each save seed from two vegetables. We will get more seed if both work, and it's less of a disaster if one goes wrong
- We might decide to have a central drying and seed store. It's up to all of us to decide how it will work best

REAPING WHAT WE SOW

- The benefit of saving seeds in a group is that we each get lots of seeds!
- Across our four circles we'll have 12 people. If each person saves seeds from two different things, that's 24 different seed types!
- Because seed is good for three years, we can all grow something different in the next season and by the end of the three-year cycle we'll have 72 packets of seed from us each saving seed from just 2 varieties per year!
- Real Seeds say that the average request from them is 15 packets of seed. So in only a couple of years no-one in the seed circle need to buy seed ever again
- Of course, this only works because this is all real, open-pollinated seed. You can't do this with hybrid seed
- Funny how the seed companies are so keen to sell you hybrid seed, isn't it?



Vegetables we might consider

When we meet we can decide what to grow, but here are some things to consider before deciding.

» SQUASH

Equipment needed: Rubber Bands , colander

Restrictions: Don't let different varieties tangle together, you'll not be sure which flower is which variety

Minimum Area: One plant is OK, four would be better

» TOMATOES

Special Equipment needed : Kitchen Sieve , tall jam-jar

Restrictions: None

Minimum Area: One plant



Vegetables we might consider

➤ SWEET PEPPERS or CHILLI PEPPERS

Special Equipment needed: Greenhouse/polytunnel, cheap pair of tights, sewing machine

Restrictions: Either grow just ONE variety, or you'll need to bag individual flowers to stop them crossing. They cross really easily and you really don't want hot bell peppers!

Minimum Area: One plant

➤ LETTUCE

Special Equipment needed: none

Minimum Area: eight plants

Vegetables we might consider

➤ KALE

Special Equipment needed : tall canes for support, string, two buckets

Restrictions: Don't grow more than one variety for seed, they'll cross really easily

Minimum Area: 20 plants minimum, yes this is a big bed but will give you enough seed for several hundred packets and it keeps for years and years

When: You get the seed the next year. Sow in summer, flowers next spring, seed next summer/autumn

➤ CUCUMBER

Special Equipment needed: Large jam-jar, bucket. (Greenhouse/polytunnel helps)

Minimum Area: One plant will give enough seed, three would be better to choose the best plant from



Vegetables we might consider

➤ PEAS

Special Equipment needed: Two buckets

Minimum Area: Set aside two plants for each person in your circle

➤ BEANS

Special Equipment needed: Two buckets

Minimum Area: Set aside three plants for each person in your circle

➤ CARROTS

Restrictions: Only grow one variety. You need to hunt down and pull up any nearby Queen Anne's Lace (= wild carrot)

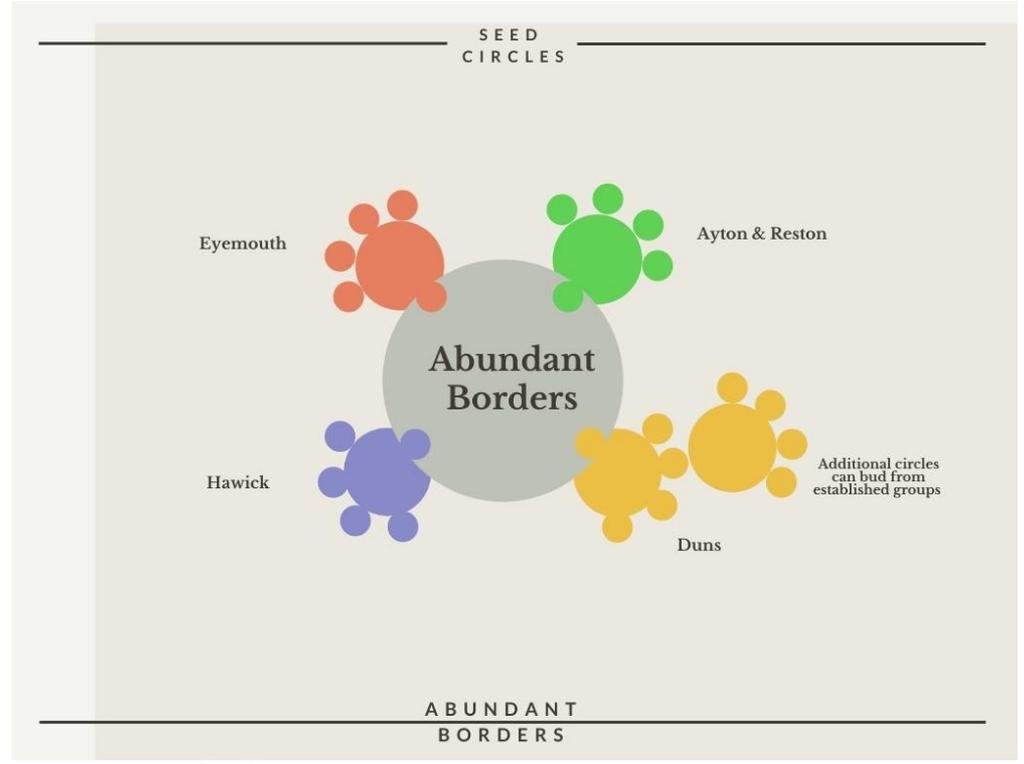
Minimum Area: 30 plants minimum, but will give you lots of seed

When: You get the seed the next year. Sow in summer, flowers next spring, seed next summer/autumn

STORING WHAT WE HARVEST

- We can each dry and store our own seeds but how much more fun if we get together at harvest time and share seed and share our seed saving stories!
- Abundant Borders can process and store the seed – or not – we can decide what works best for everyone in the circle.
- The important thing is that we are learning and sharing!
- And once we are confident in our own circles, we can help start others and the real seed revolution can really start to grow!
- From little acorns mighty oaks can grow!

GROWING THE NETWORK



WHAT NEXT?

- Thanks to support from Berwickshire Housing Association, we will be launching the first **THREE SEED CIRCLES in SEPTEMBER** and we would love to have you join us!
- If you would like to be part of the seed saving revolution, please do get in touch through the Facebook page.

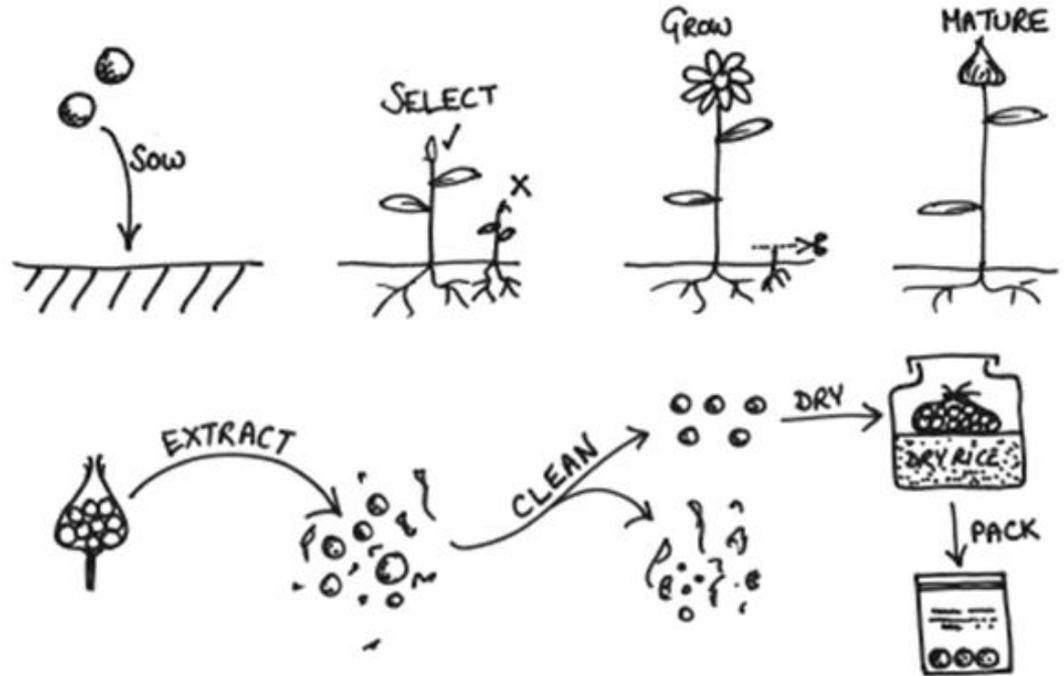
Abundant
Borders
On-Line
Learning



www.facebook.com/groups/virtualcommunitygarden

- Or via email to robin@abundantborders.org.uk
- We will only have 12 spaces to begin with so please do get in touch quickly.

SEED SAVING IS EASY and WE CAN LEARN TOGETHER



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Much of the information we have used to put together these information sheets is courtesy of ...

Realseeds.co.uk

The website has lots of great information on how to grow, save and store seeds. They also sell seed to get started!

We owe them special thanks for allowing us to use a lot of their information in these pages and for coming up with the brilliant idea for seed circles!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Back Garden Seed Saving – Sue Stickland

A fascinating book with lots of detail about saving seeds and it has easy to follow crop-by-crop guidelines.

Abundant Borders

There is lots of great information on our website at abundantborders.org.uk
We are happy to answer your questions through our Facebook Group
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/virtualcommunitygarden/>)

Videos

A great selection of videos from DIY seeds
(<https://www.diyseeds.org/en/films/>)

On-line

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.
(<http://brahmsonline.kew.org/Content/Projects/msbp/resources/Training/08-Small-scale-drying-methods.pdf>)





Don't forget, if you have enjoyed reading about seed saving, why not join a SEED-CIRCLE and share your interest, enthusiasm, and of course your seeds, with others in your area.

Contact robin@abundantborders.org.uk