

How To Get Free Seeds From The Government



HOW TO GET FREE SEEDS

*From The
Government*

WWW.FRUGALGARDENING.COM

At first glance, seeds seem like a relatively inexpensive purchase. However, when buying several varieties, the cost can really add up quickly. A frugal gardener knows that there are

plenty of ways to find seeds for cheap or [free](#). Here's how to get free seeds from the government.

Getting Free Seeds From the Government

The [U.S. National Plant Germplasm System](#) is a website managed by the USDA. It allows users to search for and order seeds. Type in 'kale,' for example, and you'll see a slew of varieties. Available seed varieties will have a shopping cart icon to the right.

But hold on. There's some important fine print on the website that's worth mentioning:

"Distribution of germplasm from NPGS collections to fulfill requests from individuals seeking free germplasm strictly for home use is generally considered inappropriate use of limited resources and conflicts with U.S. Government policy of not competing with commercial enterprises. Requestors can be asked, in an appropriate manner, to justify the use of specific NPGS germplasm instead of suitable commercially available germplasm."

That said, the USDA encourages educators, scientists, seed savers, and public gardens to use the service. Like the USDA, I encourage home gardeners to find other ways to source seeds. Supporting heirloom seed sellers, for instance, is an important way to encourage seed saving and biodiversity.

Other Ways to Get Free Seeds

Here are a few ways to source seeds for free (or cheap):

- **Online gardening forums and Facebook groups.** Lots of home gardeners are eager to share or trade [seeds](#) with like-minded people. Want to get your hands on a certain variety? Ask the people in a Facebook gardening group. You may be surprised at how many people answer your request.

- **Etsy.** There are many seed sellers on Etsy that offer seeds for a steal. You might have to take some time to browse through tons of listings, but eventually, you'll find something that fits your needs.
- **Promotions.** Many towns offer free plant material around Arbor day or other environment-related holidays or events. Promotional materials may include live plants and seeds.
- **Friends and family.** Ask people that you know whether they have any seeds to spare. I often have a lot of excess seed each year, and I love giving it away to eager gardeners—especially people who are new to the hobby.
- **Ask for them as gifts.** Birthday coming up? Ask people to give you seeds instead of other junk you don't need! It's an inexpensive but very thoughtful gift for a gardener.
- **Seed swaps.** Spring is usually the time when seed swap events are popping up all over the place. Because of the pandemic, it'll be harder to find in-person events where you can source cheap or free seeds, but some organizations are going virtual and carrying on the yearly tradition anyhow.
- **Save your own seeds.** What better way to save money on seeds than to save your own! It's a rewarding process that requires a bit of know-how, but if you can master seed saving, you'll always have stock on hand and ready to go.