

# THE EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD PROJECT

## HOW TO READ A SEED PACKET

**Summary:** Did you know that seed packets contain a wealth of information on how to grow the seeds they contain? This lesson will introduce you to gardening vocabulary terms that will assist you in reading seed packets. Knowing how to read a seed packet will help you become a great gardener!

**Time:** 40-60 minutes

### Materials:

- Seed packets (optional)
- Pen or Pencil
- Colored pencils or markers (optional)

### Notes for Teachers and Parents

- We intentionally made the questions for the *seed packet scavenger hunt* general so that the questions could apply to many different seed packets.
- For teachers, this is a great lesson to [jigsaw](#).
  - The opening activity on plant vocabulary can easily be broken out across groups or to individual students who can then present their word or words to the class.
  - You can give each student or group of students a different seed packet. Students can share their findings. You can extend with a compare and contrast between different varieties of seeds. Students can create lists of the different types of plants, their spacing, etc.
- You can create math problems looking at maturity dates, spacing, seed viability, etc.
- This lesson pairs well with our [Direct Seeding lesson](#).
- This lesson directs students to use color coding with correlating symbols to understand labeling on a seed packet. The symbols support students who might be colorblind and where the color differentiation is not apparent.
- If students are completing this lesson as part of [Know, Sow, Grow](#) this is lesson five.



# HOW TO: READ A SEED PACKET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**DO:** The following terms and concepts are helpful when gardening. First, read the definition for each term. Next, **draw** an image that represents your understanding of that definition or **write** the meaning in your own words. If you get stuck, feel free to use the image bank below to help you brainstorm what to draw.

## Vocabulary

**Annual plants** complete their entire life cycle from seed to flower to seed within a single growing season.

**Draw or Write:**

**Biennials plants** require two years to complete their life cycle.

**Draw or Write:**

**Perennial plants** are plants that grow for many growing seasons.

**Draw or Write:**



## HOW TO READ A SEED PACKET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Germination** is the process by which an organism grows from a seed.

**Draw or Write:**

**Seed viability** refers to the degree in which a seed is capable of germinating under suitable conditions. Seed viability is often expressed as a percentage. If you planted one hundred seeds at 75 sprouted and grew, your seed viability would be 75%. Seed viability decreases with time and poor storage conditions.

**Draw or Write:**

**Direct seeding** (also called direct sowing) means planting seeds in the garden, rather than buying small plants or starting seeds indoors earlier in the season and transplanting them outside.

**Draw or Write:**



## HOW TO READ A SEED PACKET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Heirloom seeds** come from **open-pollinated** plants that pass on similar characteristics and traits from the parent plant to the child plant. Heirloom seeds are varieties that have been preserved and not altered for many generations.

**Draw or Write:**

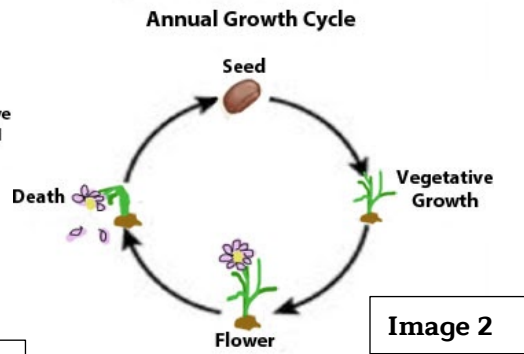
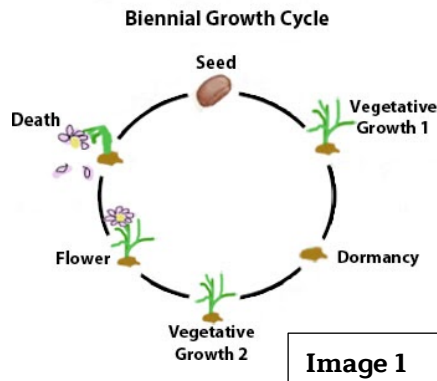
**Open Pollinated seed** comes from varieties that produce seed that can be harvested from the plant, saved, replanted, and the same variety will re-grow year after year. All heirloom seeds are open pollinated.

**Draw or Write:**

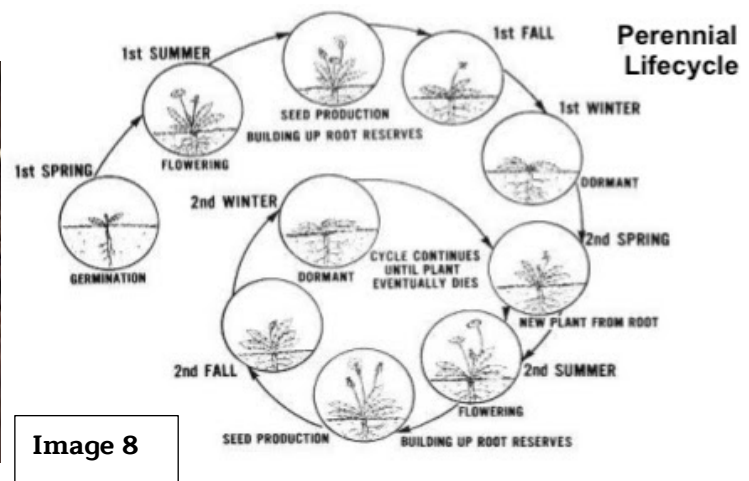
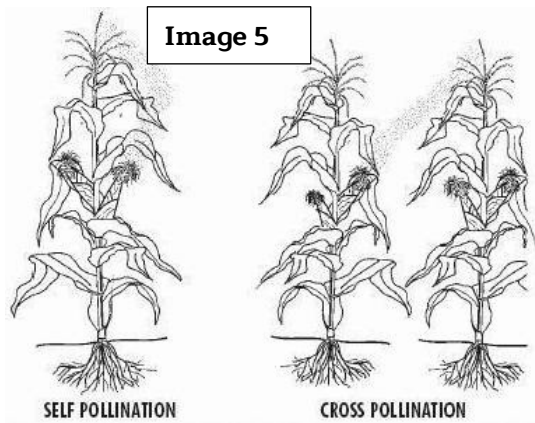
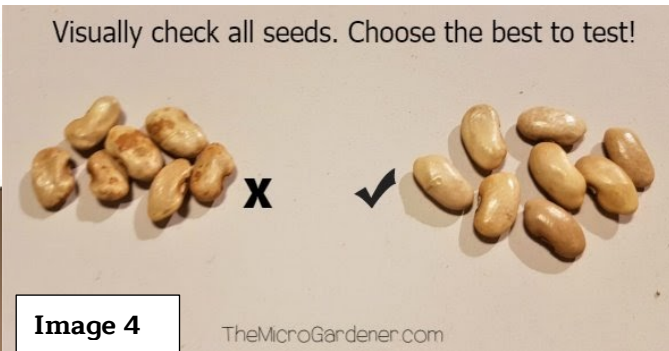
**A hybrid seed** is produced by **cross pollinating** two genetically different plants of the same species, such as two different tomatoes or two varieties of corn. Seeds saved from hybrid plantings will not reproduce the same variety the next year.

**Draw or Write:**





# Image Bank



How a plant grows from a seed



**READ:** Look at the image of a [seed packet](#) and read what the different terms on a seed packet mean. The seed packet you are reading is from Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply, an organic seed company. Use the color coding below to find the information on the seed packet.

- **Planting Depth** (circled in red  with heart symbol) helps you determine how much of a dent you should make in the soil when planting.
- **Spacing** (circled in yellow  with sun symbol) refers to how far you should space out your seeds for optimal growth. You can also try planting seeds closer, dropping a seed every inch or two, and then thinning to the suggested spacing once they have germinated.
- **Germination** (circled in Green  with square symbol) refers to the number of days it takes a plant to germinate. This information helps you determine your planting dates. If your seeds do not germinate by the end of the range of days indicated, you may want to plant them again.
- **Maturity** (circled in blue  with half moon symbol) tells you how many days it will take for the plant to reach its full maturity for **harvest**.
- **Packed for** (circled in **white** with triangle symbol) refers to the year when the seeds were packed. This will help you keep track of the age of your seeds. Different seeds have different years of viability. For example, under optimal conditions, parsley seeds are viable for two years.

**DO:** Complete the seed packet scavenger hunt worksheet. Look at the image of the [seed packet](#) or use one you have on hand to find the answers to the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.



# SEED PACKET SCAVENGER HUNT

## [STUDENT WORKSHEET]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**DO:** Look at the image of the [seed packet](#) or use one you have on hand to find the answers to the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. On the seed packet, find where it references the plant's life cycle. Clue: you just learned about three different terms that describe a plant's life cycle, look for one of those terms. **What is the plant's life cycle?**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What type of seeds are these? What is the **plant variety**? Clue: look at your vocabulary list to understand what plant variety means.

The variety of seeds is \_\_\_\_\_

3. You just read about planting depth, how deep should you plant?

Plant \_\_\_\_\_ deep.

4. When is \_\_\_\_\_ (add what type of seeds) ready to be harvested? Clue: you just read about it. The term **harvest** is mentioned in the description.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How far should you space out your seeds? Clue: The measurement is in inches.

Seeds should be spaced \_\_\_\_\_ apart.

6. List two other facts or information from the seed packet

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Notes:

- Interested in learning more about seed viability? You can google "seed viability chart" to help you determine how long certain seeds are viable.
- Use the [Building Your Garden Vocabulary](#) worksheet to help you learn the key terms and related terms in this lesson.
- Want to take all that you have learned about seed packets and to start planting? See our [Direct Seeding lesson](#) and plant some seeds!
- Try [building a planter box](#) to plant in!

## References:

Jigsaw Method Teaching Strategy. *Teachhub.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.teachhub.com/jigsaw-method-teaching-strategy>

Scott, S., (n.d). What are Heirloom Seeds? *Terroir Seeds*. Retrieved from <https://underwoodgardens.com/what-are-heirloom-seeds/>

What is an Annual, Perennial, Biennial? *Aggie Horticulture Texas University*. Retrieved from <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/info/1.2.html>

Image 1 and 2: Retrieved from [https://www.psu.edu/dept/agosciences/agsci/elearning/Ocourse-samples/TURF\\_425\\_Sample/Ln\\_8/L8\\_3.htm](https://www.psu.edu/dept/agosciences/agsci/elearning/Ocourse-samples/TURF_425_Sample/Ln_8/L8_3.htm)

Image 3: Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/science/seed-plant-reproductive-part/Germination>

Image 4: Retrieved from <https://themicrogardener.com/can-you-sow-out-of-date-seeds/>

Image 5: Retrieved from <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-direct-sow-garden-seeds-2539874>

Image 6: Retrieved from <https://www.gettystewart.com/onion-varieties-dont-right-type/>

Image 7 Retrieved from <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-direct-sow-garden-seeds-2539874>

Image 8 Retrieved from

<http://induced.info/?s=Plant+Life+Cycles+Annuals+Perennials+Biennials+and+Beyond>

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