



Nature & Nurture's Guide to Winnowing Seed

What is Winnowing?

Just as our ancestors did, winnowing uses moving air to separate seeds from the chaff. While our ancestors used baskets, gourds, and natural wind we use plastic containers and a fan to make it easier. Imagine if we had to clean all of the grains that we eat this way!

The Seed Cleaning Process (For Dry Seeds)

The process for cleaning dry-seeded crops includes...

- 1) Drying the seedheads/pods/plants
- 2) Threshing (Separating seed from the pod/stem to which it is attached by rubbing, stomping, or dancing on the seedheads/pods/plants)
- 3) Screening (to separate seeds from chaff/debris) - use large-sized holes to catch debris and let the seeds fall through; use small-sized holes to let small debris fall through. We use more expensive seed cleaning screens but you can use screens and collanders found at hardware stores and re-sale shops



- 4) Winnow
- 5) Screen again
- 6) Winnow again... you get the picture! And besides, home-cleaned seeds don't need to be perfect anyways!

For more info and tips on seed saving, check out our [Seed Saving Guide](#)!

How to Winnow

1. Work outside. Place a box fan onto an object so that it is 1-2' off of the ground
 2. Place a med-large container (dish pan or plastic tote) on the ground in front of the fan
 3. Turn the fan on low
 4. Place seeds into a small plastic container. It's best to start with a small amount of seeds as a test until you get the hang of it. Pour seeds/chaff in front of the fan so that the seeds fall into the container and the chaff blows away. If necessary, adjust the fan speed or adjust the working distance from the fan. If the seeds are really small, turn the fan around and winnow on the back side of the fan.
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Happy Seed Saving!