

Considerations when buying seeds

List of suggested suppliers

What do you need to know when buying seeds?

There's some basic research you might want to do before buying plant seed such as:

- Whether it's suitable for our climate
- When to sow, plant out, harvest – this is often written on the pack but not always
- How easy or challenging it might be to grow that plant from seed
- How many seeds are in one packet? Too many is often the case, which is where Chorlton Plant Swap comes in handy 😊

There are other questions you might consider too:

- How long will the seed last? And how should you store it to help it last. Somewhere cool, and most importantly dry, is important.
- How much notice should you take of the 'sow by' dates? Some seeds like tomatoes seem virtually indestructible and even germinate in sewers, whilst other seed like parsnip do not last as long. Sometimes people test the germination of seed in an older pack by sowing a few on some damp kitchen roll. Although it's great not to be wasteful, if you are short of space and time, stick to seed that you know has been stored well and will be a safe bet to grow well.

Here are some questions that you might not previously have considered:

- Is the seed an F1 hybrid or open pollinated? What difference does this make?
- Is the seed organic? Why might it be preferable to grow from organic seed and does it matter anyway if you are an organic gardener who doesn't use chemicals?
- Is the seed biodynamic, and what does this mean?
- What are GMOs and what might you want to steer clear?

*****Let's answer these questions together – the document will be updated *****

Below is a list of reputable independent seeds sellers in the UK. Chorlton Plant Swap members have bought from most, so they are 'tried and tested'. Most are organic and open-pollinated seeds, sold in low-waste recyclable packaging. There are some really good small businesses out there.

Some of these are available to buy locally, at Unicorn, Hulme Community Garden Centre and Bud Garden Centre; this is noted by the seed supplier.

Please give feedback in the group or by email to Danielle at chorltonplantswap@googlemail.com

Company/website	Information
The Seed Cooperative https://seedcooperative.org.uk Available to buy at Unicorn.	100% organic, open-pollinated, biodynamic seed. Vegetables, herbs, flowers, green manure. Community owned.
Real Seeds https://realseeds.co.uk Seed-saving guide https://realseeds.co.uk/seedsavinginfo.html	Specialising in seeds for the kitchen garden, Real Seeds were rated 'Best Buy' by Ethical Consumer Magazine. Open-pollinated (non-hybrid), encourage you to save your own seeds so you don't need to buy new each year.

Tamar Organics https://www.tamarorganics.co.uk/ Available to buy at Unicorn and Hulme Community Garden Centre	Organic vegetable, herb and flowers seeds as well as potato seed, garlic bulbs and fruit trees.
Pennard Plants https://www.pennardplants.com/	Heritage, heirloom and unusual seeds, potatoes, garlic. Online growing guides for some of the unusual plants.
Heritage Seed Library Keeping heritage seeds alive. https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/hsl	Run by Garden Organic, HSL members are sent a catalogue once a year to choose six different packets of seeds that cannot be sold on the open market due to seed laws. Beware of buying from Garden Organic themselves as their shop is run by an outside company; worth reading Trustpilot reviews.
Higgledy Garden https://higgledygarden.com	Flower seeds, growing advice, and entertainment from an independent supplier who has a great way with words. Probably not organic?
Sea Spring seeds https://seaspringseeds.co.uk/	Specialists in chilli peppers, specially bred for British growing conditions. Also tomatoes. 'British ethnic vegetables collected from immigrant communities.
Beans and Herbs at the Herbarium https://www.beansandherbs.co.uk/	Organic, unusual, heirloom, dye herbs https://www.beansandherbs.co.uk/organic-runner-bean-seed/
Grower Organics https://www.growersorganics.com/	Organic seeds, plants and fruit bushes.
Heirloom & Perennial https://www.openpollinated.co.uk/	Huge range of vegetable and flower seed including unusual seeds. Open pollinated, heirloom, organic. Interesting categorisations eg pioneer seeds, seeds for nature.
Rare Seeds	
King Seeds https://www.kingsseeds.com/ Also available at Hulme Community Garden Centre.	Vegetable, herbs, bulbs and plug plants. Range of organic vegetable seeds.
Vital Seeds https://vitalseeds.co.uk/	Organic vegetable, herb and flower seeds. Open-pollinated, no GMOs.

Other interesting seed suppliers that I do not have enough information about to recommend but might be worth investigating. They are possibly neither organic nor open pollinated, but may have other good qualities

More Veg https://moreveg.co.uk/	Aim to keep costs low (500 varieties at 60p a pack) with seeds sold in realistic numbers for the average gardener to reduce waste.
Simply Seed https://www.simplyseed.co.uk/	Vegetable, herbs, green manures and flower seeds (including selection boxes); potatoes, onions, and gardening accessories.
Sow Seeds https://www.sowseeds.co.uk/	Vegetable seeds, micro-greens, green manure, chillies and seed collections. Not organic or open pollinated.
UK Chilli Seeds https://www.ukchilliseeds.co.uk/	
Tomato Revolution	Tomato seeds specialists!

https://www.tomatorevolution.co.uk/	
Robinson's Mammoth Vegetable Seeds https://www.mammothonion.co.uk/	Huge veg! I don't even know if they're meant to be edible or just for 'showing'.
Medwyn's of Anglesey https://www.medwynsofanglesey.co.uk/	Competition veg
Seed Potatoes Direct https://www.seedpotatoesdirect.co.uk/	Based in Yorkshire, UK grown seed potatoes.
Potato House https://potatohouse.co.uk/	

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