

Do Pre-Packaged Seeds Grow Faster Than Fresh Seeds?



NO PRE-PACKAGED SEEDS

*Grow Faster Than
Fresh Seeds?*

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It's that time of year when the seed catalogs start arriving in the mailbox. Getting new packets of seeds from a seed supplier is a real treat. Knowing that those carefully

harvested seeds will eventually grow into food or flowers is so exciting.

It's just as satisfying to sort through personally harvested [seeds](#) from your own garden. Collecting seeds right from your garden is not only environmentally responsible but can also save you money in the long run. Shiny new seed packets can get expensive, after all.

Pre-Packaged Seeds vs. Fresh Seeds: What's the Difference?

Confused about what I mean between [fresh and pre-packaged seeds](#)?

Here's why they're different. When I refer to pre-packaged seeds, these are seeds that you buy from seed suppliers. They arrive in packets, and you can buy them in various quantities.

When I talk about fresh seeds, I'm talking about seeds harvested from your garden. When your cilantro plant bolts and flowers, it eventually produces seeds at the end of the season. To harvest them, you dry the pods and remove the seeds.

Hold on, though, fresh is really just a way to distinguish between the two. Once you store your garden-harvested seeds, they aren't technically fresh anymore.

Both pre-packaged and "fresh" seeds can vary in freshness. When buying seeds, always check the packaging date to make sure you haven't received a super old packet.

Really, the only difference between the two is the source.

Pre-Packaged Seeds vs. Fresh Seeds: Which

Grows Faster?

There's nothing more annoying than receiving a packet of seeds and finding out that most are duds. Unfortunately, it happens. It's also proof that buying pre-packaged seeds doesn't guarantee freshness or quality.

The plant growth rate has nothing to do with whether seeds come from your garden or a seed supplier. The same goes for germination. The rate of growth and germination has more to do with how you store seeds.

Proper storage is *everything*. It's key to keeping your seeds viable for longer. Poor storage can turn quality seeds into duds very quickly. To make sure your seeds (whether from your garden or elsewhere) stay fresh:

- Store in an airtight container.
- Don't expose them to moisture.

Tips for Starting Seeds

When the time comes to start seeds, there are also a few things you can do to speed up germination.

- **Match seed type and temperature.** Some seeds [germinate](#) best when exposed to warm temperatures, while others like it cooler. Keeping things at the right temperature can speed up the germination process.
- **Keep soil moist.** Moisture is key for germination, but make sure not to drown those little seeds.
- **Manage airflow.** If you're starting seeds in a confined space, too much humidity can be a problem. It can promote mold growth and disease. If plants are too close together, it can also prevent adequate airflow.

Want some tips on how to save your own seeds? Here is a [handy guide](#) from Seed Savers Exchange.

5 Easy and Neat Seed Storage Ideas



via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com)

I'm an organization nerd (and a seed storage geek). It's why I'm so attracted to [Square Foot Gardening](#). I like it when things have their place. Without a system, things easily start to become messy and confusing. "Where did I put that again?", "What did I just plant there last week?". I'm more forgetful than I like to be, so keeping everything in order, making notes, and marking planting areas allows me to clear my head

of the details and focus on what's important.

Over the years, I've experimented with a number of seed storage ideas from tiny vials to lab storage equipment. Here are my favorite seed storage options:

Arts & Crafts Storage Box



This is my current seed storage method because, at this point, I have too many seeds for any other option to be viable. The large box contains several small containers, which are labeled by seed variety (carrots, squash, flowers, herbs, etc.). There's also enough room inside the storage case for me to stick two sharpies, a roll of string, and a handful of plant markers.

It's a sizeable box, but with its handle, it's ultra-transportable, and I tote it out to the garden almost every morning at the height of the gardening season.

Tiny Vials



via [flickr](#)

When I started gardening, I had a very small collection of seeds and lots of time on my hands. I purchased a bunch of tiny vials at the dollar store and filled them full of seed from packets I had found at the hardware store. Carefully pouring in the seeds was time-consuming yet relaxing work. When I was done, I had cute little seed-filled bottles on my hands. Seeds were easy to shake out and I could keep them on display and within reach.

Filing Container

I purchased my little black filing container from a local

office supply store for under \$10 and still use it to this day. Because my seed collection has expanded considerably, it's now the spot where I store [empty seed packets](#) since I like to have those on hand for future reference. You can find something similar on [Amazon](#) or most big box office supply stores.

Tiny Lab Sample Containers

When my collection started to outgrow the vials, I decided on a new storage solution: [lab equipment](#). The tiny circular containers were perfect for storing seed (except big ones like squash and cucumber seed). Instead of labeling each container, I coded them with numbers and letters and created a spreadsheet to keep track of the seed type and date purchased. It was a big undertaking, but the system was incredibly useful, and I used this type of storage for years.

Tiny Resealable Bags

I use little [plastic bags](#) to store seeds destined for other people. They're perfect for swapping or sharing seeds. The small packets are lightweight, watertight, and easy to label. I prefer the clear plastic because I and others can easily see what's inside. These little packages are excellent for storing saved seeds, too.

Don't forget to check out my previous post that covers [handy seed storage tips](#).