

# the hidden gardens

## How to save tomato seeds

Tomato *Solanum lycopersicum*



In tomatoes, fresh seeds are coated with a slimy gel. The gel contains inhibitors, which prevent the seeds from germinating prematurely. When the gel is removed, germination will occur.

Germination inhibitors are gradually eliminated as the mature seed ages or is exposed to the environment.

In the wild, animals eat the fruit and the gel is removed during passage through the digestive system. Seeds are then deposited where ever the animals travel.

**To collect the seeds from your favourite tomato:**

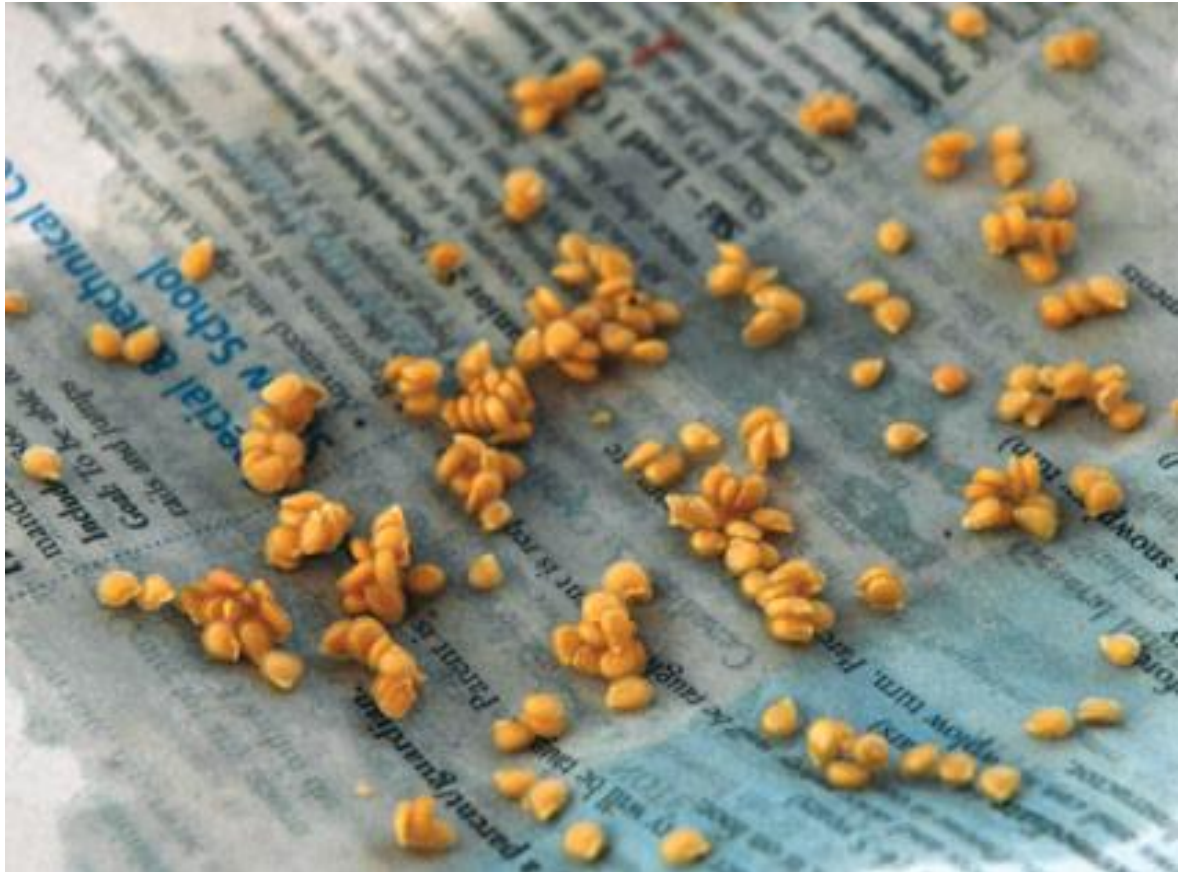


Allow your tomatoes to ripen fully.

Slice them in half across the middle of the fruit, and squeeze the seeds and juice into a jar.

Ferment this mixture for a few days by putting the jar of seeds and juice in a reasonably warm place for 3 days, stirring the mixture twice a day. It should develop a coating of mould, and start to smell really nasty!

This removes the gel on each seed, and also kills off many diseases that can be carried on the seeds



After 3 days, add plenty of water to the jar, and stir well. The good seeds should sink to the bottom of the jar.

Gently pour off the top layer of mould and any seeds that float.

Empty the good seeds into a sieve and wash them thoroughly under running water. Shake off as much water as possible, and tip the sieve out onto newspaper.

Dry somewhere warm but not too hot, and out of direct sunlight.

Once they are completely dry, rub them off the newspaper and store in a cool dry place, where they should keep well for at least 4 years.