

## Saving Seeds for Next Year's Blooms

Autumn is the perfect time to do some catch-up work in your garden. Go ahead and pull some weeds, edge the sidewalk, remove dead annuals and deadhead perennials. If you haven't tried saving seeds yet, now is the time to consider saving some for next year.

Many perennials and annuals have already set seed and are ready to harvest. The seed heads or pods should be mostly brown and dry when you pick them. Some easy to collect seeds include marigold, zinnia, black-eyed Susan, and coneflower.

Tear the pods apart over plain white paper to reveal and capture the seeds. Place the seeds in labeled envelopes and store the envelopes in a sealed container which has a couple tablespoons of cornmeal in the bottom. Store the container in a cool, dry place until you are ready to plant them next year. Even the fridge works, if you have room!

Have fun collecting the seeds, sharing them with other gardeners, and saving money in the spring. Keep in mind, however, that some of your seeds might not produce the same flower characteristic as the parent plant, if they were hybrids. If you do get something different, it could be a nice surprise.

As you work outside this fall, try to tame your desire to prune back that plant jungle that grew while you were hiding in air conditioning. Many plants will be stimulated to put on a flush of new growth if pruned now and our eminent cold weather will damage that tender growth. Wait until after a December freeze to prune. More pruning information can be found at [www.solutionsforyourlife.com](http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com)

Spring flowering shrubs such as azalea, spirea, and camellia shouldn't be pruned now because their flower buds are already set and ready to go this spring. Summer flowering shrubs, however, bloom on new growth. They should be pruned in late February or early March so the new growth will be ready for summer buds and blooms. Summer flowering shrubs include crape myrtle, roses, and some hibiscus.

For more information on pruning, contact the UF/IFAS Extension Office at 752-5384 or refer to the UF document 'Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs' at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg087>  
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