



AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center

Fact Sheet

Saving Seeds of Eggplant

Production

Eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) is a warm season crop. It requires a long and warm growing season for successful production. It is more susceptible to lower temperatures than tomato and pepper. A day temperature of 25–32 °C and a night temperature of 21–27 °C are ideal for seed production.

Isolation

Eggplants produce perfect flowers, which may be cross-pollinated, but self-pollination is more common. The extent of natural crossing depends upon insect activity. To avoid this, isolate each variety by 20 m or with another tall, flowering crop. Another way is to bag a few flowers from each plant to exclude insects. Tie the paper bag onto the flowers before they open and remove as soon as the fruits are set. If there is only one variety of eggplant being grown, isolation is not needed.

Selection

Select the most vigorous and healthy plants, mark fruits on the second branch, and leave them until they are fully mature. Keep one or two fruits from one plant and several fruits from different plants of the same variety to maintain crop vigor.

Harvesting

Harvesting is done when fruits are fully ripe (the skin of fruit turns

brownish-yellow in green varieties or brownish in purple varieties) (Fig. 1). Harvest and store the fruits in a shed for a week until the fruits get soft.



Fig. 1. Fruits at harvest

Processing

The outer covering is peeled off and the flesh with the seeds is cut into thin slices (Fig. 2). These are then softened by soaking until the seeds are separated from the pulp. If the material is allowed to stand overnight in this condition, the separation of seeds from the pulp becomes easier. After separation, the seeds are dipped into water. The plump



Fig. 2. Mature eggplant cut into small pieces for fermentation and seed extraction

seeds will sink to the bottom. The seeds should then be dried on a mesh for a couple of weeks in a cool, dry place before storage.

Storage

Dried seeds can be safely stored for at least three years. Place seeds in jars, manila envelopes, cloth or mesh bags, plastic containers, or foil envelopes. The best containers are air-tight, such as a sealed glass jar, metal can, or foil envelope. Protect seed from sunlight.

Store seeds in a cool (below 15 °C is ideal), dry location. Place the seeds in a refrigerator for long-term storage. For short-term storage, keep the seeds in a cool, shady and dry place.

References

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