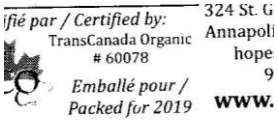
How long will my seeds last?

Seed viability depends on the variety and type of seed, the quality of the seed and how you store it. Generally, higher quality seeds have a longer shelf life (the higher the initial germination rate, the longer your seed should last). **Remember, seeds are living things!** Just like an animal hibernating for the winter, you can imagine seeds with little pockets of food or energy stored inside. The longer you keep a seed, the more it will nibble away at that food or use up (metabolize) that energy to survive. Some types of seeds just store longer than others. Parsnip seeds for example, don't have a very long shelf-life. Many varieties of beans, on the other hand, are pretty good and sticking around and still preforming well. If you are in doubt, we suggest seeding thicker than you usually would to ensure a good crop.



Check the "Packed for" sticker on the back of your seed pack. Typically, seeds will have been grown in the season previous to the "Packed for" year, but this is not always the case (especially for seeds of brassicas or cucurbits or seeds that take longer to cure or were stored in a freezer). You can be sure, however, that your seed has passed germination standards for the year it was packed for.

Store your seeds in a **cool, dry** place to encourage dormancy. The most important thing to remember is to **keep moisture away from your seeds**. Storing your seeds at a constant, cooler temperature also increases their lifespan. Try to store seeds in a place where the temperature does not fluctuate drastically. Similarly, make sure to use humidity-proof and air-tight containers such as glass jars with sealable lids for long-term (2+ years) storage. If storing seeds for more than a year or two, you may consider putting them in the freezer. Make sure you "double-seal" seeds by placing them in two containers or bags (this also provides protection from accidents when you're fishing through the freezer! When you remove seeds from the freezer, do not open containers (and especially not, individual packets) until they've had a chance to gradually come to room temperature.

Seed	Days to Germination (may increase, depending on how old your seeds are)	General Guidelines for Seed Longevity
Amaranth	10-14 days	1-4 years
Basil	5-10 days	2-5 years
Beans	5-10 days	3-5 years
Beets	7-10 days	4-6 years
Borage	7-14 days	4-5 years
Broccoli	7-10 days	3-5 years
Brussel Sprouts	7-10 days	3-5 years
Cabbage	7-10 days	3-5 years
Calendula	7-21 days	3-5 years
Carrot	14-21 days	3-4 years
Cauliflower	7-10 days	3-5 years

Celery & Celeriac	10-20 days	1-2 years
Chives	14 days	1-2 years
Chard	4-10 days	4-6 years
Coriander/Cilantro	7-14 days	2-3 years
Corn	4-10 days	3-10 years
Cosmos	14-21 days	3-4 years
Cucumbers	4-10 days	4-10 years
Dill	7-21 days	3-5 years
Eggplant	7-14 days	4-6 years
Ground Cherry	7-21 days	3-8 years
Greens	3-7 days	3-5 years
Kale	3-19 days	3-5 years
Kohlrabi	3-10 days	3-4 years
Lettuce	7-10 days	2-5 years
Melon	4-15 days	5-8 years
Onion & Leeks	7-14 days (leeks) 7-20 days (onions)	1-3 years
Parsley	10-21 days	2-4 years
Parsnip	14-28 days	1-2 years
Peas	7-10 days	3-5 years
Peppers	14-20 days	2-4 years
Pumpkins	7-12 days	5-6 years
Radish	3-7 days	4-5 years
Spinach	8-20 days	3-5 years
Squash & Zucchini	5-12 days	4-6 years
Sunflowers	5 days	7 years
Tomato	6-14 days	4-10 years
Turnip & Rutabaga	5-10 days	4-5 years

*Compiled with information from Seeds of Diversity Canada, the Canadian Seed Act, and our own observations.