

# VEGETABLE CROP ROTATION and SEED VIABILITY

Barbara J. Bromley, Mercer Co. Horticulturist 2012 (Rev)

## CROP ROTATION BY GROUPS

To reduce the possibility of soil-borne disease transmission, avoid successive planting within each group (especially groups A and B). Ideally, members of the same group should not be grown in the same soil twice in any 3-year period. For example, instead of planting tomatoes in the same area of the garden (soil) that peppers were in the prior year, plant beans instead. In small gardens this may be difficult or impossible. In larger gardens, rotation may serve to reduce damage by confusing insects that attack only a few kinds of plants or plants in the same group.

<b>Group A Cruciferous</b>	<b>Group B (Solanaceous)</b>	<b>Group C (Cucurbits)</b>	<b>Group D (Alliums)</b>
Cabbage	Eggplant	Cucumber	Onion
Cauliflower	Pepper	Muskmelon (cantaloupe)	Garlic
Brussels sprouts	Potato	Squash	Shallots
Broccoli	Tomato	Watermelon	Leeks
Turnip		Pumpkin	
Radish		Gourds	
Collards			
Rutabaga			
Mustard greens			
<b>Group E (Legumes)</b>	<b>Group F (Parsley)</b>	<b>Group G (Grasses)</b>	<b>Group H (Goosefoot)</b>
Beans	Carrots	Sweet corn	Beets
Peas	Parsnips	Popcorn	Swiss chard
	Beets	Field corn	Spinach

## SEED VIABILITY

Occasionally packets of seed are leftover at the end of the season. Some gardeners save “heirloom” and non-hybrid seed from special plants. When seed is saved under cool, dry storage conditions, it is expected to have a projected life span during which it should germinate. Expect that the **germination percentage** (the number of seeds that should grow and develop out of 100 seeds) will drop for each year it is saved. Germination can be tested prior to planting by sprouting a few of the saved seeds in damp paper towels.

The following is the approximate period of time under proper storage conditions that vegetable seed should remain viable:

**Short-lived** (1-2 years): corn, leek, onion, parsley, parsnip, rhubarb, salsify

**Moderate** (3-5 years): asparagus, beans, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, kale, lettuce, okra, peas, peppers, radish, spinach, turnip, watermelon

**Long-lived** (5+ years): beet, cucumber, eggplant, muskmelon, tomato