

# Seed exchange 2012

Here is the information you need for this year's seed exchange. There are a few changes so please read this and make a note of relevant items!



**1** Closing date: The closing date will be, as usual, **30th September**, and all seed received by then in good condition will be included. Late-ripening seed may be sent up until 21st October, and this seed will be included if time allows. No seed sent after this later date can be included, so please do not send any seed to arrive after then. You may send this seed the following year marked with the year of collection if you wish (please store it cool and dry; in a sealed box in the fridge is ideal).

**2** Address: please send seed to me, **Margaret Mason, at Penhyddgan, Boduan, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 8YH.**

**3** Seed will be sent out in the first two weeks of February. Depending on how much comes in, the allocation will be either 12 or 15 packets plus extras; (see the order form with December magazine). We hope to be able to reinstate the random orders of leftover seed this year.

**4** The success of the seed exchange depends on members sending in seed. **Please will as many of you as possible** collect seed and send it in! If you are new to this (or just feel in need of a bit of help), you are very welcome to contact me by phone (01758 721577) or email ([ziggymen22@tesco.net](mailto:ziggymen22@tesco.net)) with specific questions, or send a SAE to my address for a leaflet of tips and guidelines and a sample self-folded, escape-proof packet. You can also find help on the CGS website.

**5** Donors of 5 or more packets of seed (of different varieties) are entitled to an extra allocation. To claim this, you must remember to include your name and address with the seed! Also, seed must be viable and identifiable - donations which can't be included on the list

because they aren't ripe, have rotted or escaped or are unnamed and undescribed will not count towards the 5 varieties.

**6** Packages which are underpaid incur a fine and have to be collected from the sorting office, so please **ensure you put enough postage on**. Please note that even two or three packets of seed can make an envelope too thick to go through the P.O's smaller slit if they collect at one end, so stick them to a piece of paper to keep them spread evenly.

**7** It helps me very much if you send smaller packages of seed as soon as it is ripe rather than keeping it till they are all ready and sending huge parcels at the last minute! Also, an alphabetical list of what's included saves me time, if you have time to make one. And do please spare a thought for the poor receiver with all your packaging - occasionally packets are so difficult to open that some or all of the seed is lost at that stage!

**8** Please send only seed that you (and friends, family etc) have collected, not commercial seed. If it was not collected in the current year, please mark the packet with the year in which it was collected.

**9** What to collect? All seed is welcome, but **we never have enough vegetable seed** and we often have too much *Meconopsis cambrica*, and mixed/unspecified *Aquilegia*, *Digitalis* and *Papaver somniferum*. Separate varieties and colours of these are, however, in demand. As it presents a threat to the native wild bluebell, we have decided not to include Spanish bluebell, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, in the list in future. *Geranium* and *Salvia* can be difficult to collect so donations of these tend to be small; so the more, the better. Trees and shrubs are enjoying a vogue at the moment, and we have been specially asked for *Erodium* (see letters page). And, of course, anything **a bit different or unusual** is always ordered.

**10** **Collecting seed:** Leave on the plant to ripen. Tie a paper bag over the seed heads of plants which shed seed before it is fully ripe, or have explosive seed distribution mechanisms, e.g. geraniums. You may have to check daily to catch seed at exactly the right moment.

**11 Cleaning seed:** Separate seeds from pods and chaff as far as possible. Leaving it for a few days in a warmish place in a closed envelope or paper bag usually releases most seeds. Sieving helps a great deal, and for light chaff ‘winnowing’ by blowing gently across the seed, spread out on a sheet of paper, can be surprisingly successful. There is no need to remove ‘tails’ from e.g. *Clematis*, grasses etc, or other integral parts of seeds, but do try to get rid of the stalks, leaves, detached fluff and bits of seed cases which so often confuse the issue!

**12 Packing seeds:** Please put each variety of seed into a separate small, but not too tightly packed, escape-proof envelope or packet. Most ordinary envelopes are NOT escape-proof, even those intended for seeds, and they leak at the bottom (i.e. where already sealed) as well as the top (where you stick them down), so if attempting to seal these with sticky tape, remember to do all possible escape routes! But by far the easiest way to keep seeds in place is by folding - trap the seeds in the middle of the envelope, where there are no openings, and fold it over as sharply as possible and stick or paper-clip down (no need for yards of tape). This really works, as do ‘origami’-style folded packets and various types you can print off from the internet. Plastic zip-top packets are also excellent, but only if the seed is properly dry. Similarly, use strong paper envelopes for posting rather than bags lined with bubble-wrap if any of the seed is not completely dry - it can rot in the post in a couple of days in warm weather.

**13 Naming seeds:** If you know the full, correct Latin or common name for the plant, put it on the packet. If you aren’t sure, only know the genus name (the first part of the Latin name, e.g. ‘*Nigella*’), or don’t know the name at all, put what you do know plus a few words of description. Flower colour/shape, plant height, leaf shape and anything distinctive about it are the most helpful. A photo, drawing (however rough!) or pressed leaf, if available, can often provide instant identification. One of the biggest problems is with seeds where just the genus name is given, since there are frequently several varieties from any given genus in cultivation (by others if not by you!), not surprisingly their seeds are often similar to each other, and if I can’t tell which sort I’ve got, it has to go in ‘unspecified’ or ‘mixed’, even if I could make a good guess at which one it’s likely to be.  
Thank you - I look forward to the first donations! *Margaret Mason*