

SOULFUL TABLE | FIELD GUIDE 01

THE LIVING GRAIN

*Ancient grains, living seeds, and a more abundant way to grow,
cook, and eat*

From a seed in the palm of your hand to a harvest shared around the table.

An illustrated-in-words guide to grain biodiversity, heritage agriculture, seed sovereignty,
responsible sourcing, and everyday whole-grain living.

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A small seed can change a very big story

Imagine choosing grains not simply by the flour on a grocery-store shelf, but by the families who preserved them, the fields they suit, the flavor they bring to a meal, and the seeds we could return to the ground next season. A bowl of warm sorghum, a pot of amber millet, and a small patch of heritage wheat each connect the kitchen to a much larger living story.

This guide is an invitation to make that story practical. It moves from understanding ancient and heritage grains to finding honest sources, learning to cook kernels rather than only flour, cultivating a modest trial plot, saving viable seed, and helping useful varieties remain in circulation. It welcomes curiosity while keeping historical claims, genetic engineering, nutrition, and ecological benefits in their proper context.

The central idea: eat some, plant some, save some, share some.

Find your path

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- 02 The grain family: a practical field guide
- 03 GMO-free choices without confusion
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CHAPTER 01

Understand the living grain

A seed is not merely an ingredient. It is a possibility with a history.

“Ancient grain” is a useful culinary phrase rather than a regulated botanical category. The Whole Grains Council describes grains that have remained relatively unchanged for centuries; the term also commonly includes grains that are traditional staples in one region but only recently popularized elsewhere [1]. “Heirloom” refers to varieties passed along over time, “landrace” to a locally adapted, genetically diverse population shaped by farmers and environments, and “heritage” to an older variety or grain tradition. The labels overlap, but they are not synonyms.

A “whole grain” is about the food form: the bran, germ, and endosperm remain in their natural proportions. Intact kernels are a marvelous starting place, but cracked or milled grain can also be whole grain if those components remain [2]. “Groats” usually means cleaned, dehulled kernels, while “berries” is an everyday name for many intact wheat-family kernels. Pearled barley and pearled farro have had some outer bran removed and are not necessarily fully whole grain.

The botanical distinction is also useful. True cereals—including wheat, barley, rye, rice, millet, sorghum, and teff—are grasses. Buckwheat and amaranth are pseudocereals: not grasses, but their edible seeds can play similar roles in food [2]. Every one of these plants has a different growing season, pollination pattern, processing need, and cultural history.

Why diversity matters

A more diverse grain system offers additional flavors, farming strategies, culinary possibilities, and genetic resources. Different varieties may handle heat, drought, frost, disease, soil, and processing differently. Older is not automatically more nutritious, more climate-resilient, lower-input, or higher-yielding. It becomes meaningful when we connect a specific variety to a real place, an intended use, and documented results [1,3].

Many heritage grains are still grown because growers, seed stewards, millers, and cooks kept choosing them. That human relationship matters as much as the age of a particular seed. Indigenous communities and traditional farmers should be recognized as continuing stewards of living food systems, not as anonymous sources of “rediscovered” ingredients [4].

CHAPTER 02

Meet the grains

Flavor, function, cultural context, and a realistic growing invitation.

This first reference chart is deliberately broader than flour. It starts with the living plant and the intact kernel, then imagines a meal. “Naturally gluten-free” describes the species, not a guarantee against wheat cross-contact during farming, milling, or packaging [5].

Grain or seed	A lovely kitchen use	Growing and seed note	Gluten
Einkorn wheat	Golden, tender wheat berries; rustic pilafs	Hulled wheat; dehulling equipment may be needed	Contains gluten
Emmer / whole farro	Chewy nutty grains, soups, salads	Usually hulled; “farro” can name several wheats	Contains gluten

Grain or seed	A lovely kitchen use	Growing and seed note	Gluten
Spelt & khorasan	Hearty whole berries, cracked porridges	Ask for exact variety and planting season	Contains gluten
Heritage rye & barley	Robust soups, warm groats, hearty bowls	Rye is more cross-pollinating; barley often self-pollinating	Contains gluten
Oat groats	Creamy savory oats, toasted groat salad	Check hull type, seed purity, local adaptation	Naturally GF; cross-contact common
Millet	Fluffy pilaf, soft breakfast porridge	Warm-season species; choose edible grain type	Naturally GF
Sorghum	Chewy grain bowls, popped kernels	Warm season; distinguish grain from broom sorghum	Naturally GF
Teff	Tiny-grain porridge, fermented batter	Warm-season tiny seed; weed control and harvest finesse	Naturally GF
Buckwheat	Tender groats, toasted kasha	Fast-growing broadleaf; insect pollination and shattering	Naturally GF
Amaranth	Creamy porridge, popped accents	Tiny seeds; harvest at mature dry heads	Naturally GF
Traditional corn	Polenta, nixtamalized whole corn, hominy	Wind-pollinated; preserve population diversity	Naturally GF
Heritage rice / wild rice	Fragrant grain bowls, soups	Special water/ecology needs; wild rice is a distinct aquatic grass	Naturally GF

Cultural context deserves care: teff sustains deeply rooted Ethiopian and Eritrean food traditions; amaranth and corn have long histories within Indigenous foodways; many wheat lineages emerged through farming across Southwest Asia and neighboring regions. These are living traditions. Celebrate the makers, original names, and place-specific practices whenever a particular grain story is told.

Choose a grain by your goal

- For an easy gluten-free weeknight bowl: millet, sorghum, buckwheat groats, teff or amaranth.
- For a first small plot: choose a locally recommended open-pollinated variety suited to the season; buckwheat or amaranth may suit some sites, while winter or spring small grains suit others.
- For historic wheat flavor and baker-gardener experimentation: einkorn, emmer, spelt, or heritage wheat—with a plan to dehull where required.
- For a community-scale seed project: begin with varieties that growers can clean, store, and replant reliably, not merely the rarest packet.

CHAPTER 03

Choose grain and seed confidently

A clear path toward a more diverse, transparent, non-GMO food culture.

When people say they want to “remove GMOs,” the practical goal may be to avoid purchasing genetically engineered seed or food, protect seed identity, reduce dependence on one supplier, and grow varieties that can be lawfully saved again. This is a sourcing and stewardship project. There is no home treatment that reverses genetic engineering already present in a seed.

The words on the packet matter. Certified organic production prohibits the use of genetic engineering under USDA organic rules [6]. “Open-pollinated” means a variety can reproduce through normal pollination; it does not on its own establish organic production or a non-GE test result. “Heirloom,” “heritage,” “hybrid,” and “non-GMO” also describe different things. Hybridization through conventional breeding is not synonymous with genetic engineering. For a seed archive, request the named crop and variety, its origin and generation history, any seed treatment, germination/purity details, and permission to save and share it.

A striking example: the USDA Economic Research Service states that genetically modified wheat is not commercially grown in the United States [7]. If we select a heritage wheat, the strongest reason to do so is its specific culinary and agricultural story, not a claim that commercial U.S. wheat is secretly genetically modified. By contrast, corn seed identity may require particular care because pollen can travel between nearby varieties; isolation and a large enough seed population help preserve the intended line [8,9].

The Soulful Table seed-choice questions

- What is the exact species and variety name? Is it a landrace, stabilized line, hybrid, or open-pollinated population?
- Is this intended for eating, planting, or both? Is it viable, tested, cleaned, untreated, and free of prohibited weed seeds?
- Can you confirm the source farm, harvest year, germination result, organic status if claimed, and suitable planting window?
- Are there patents, plant variety protection, community stewardship protocols, seed-sharing restrictions, or branded crop agreements?
- What is the appropriate isolation approach, the seed population size, and how should the harvested grain be processed?

A useful grain project replaces vague assurances with traceable questions and honest answers. Protecting varieties starts with keeping records and choosing good neighbors as much as with labels.

CHAPTER 04

Find whole grains for the kitchen

Taste the harvest now, even before the first seed goes into your own soil.

Begin with intact, food-grade kernels. They let you understand the grain’s texture, aroma, and behavior without requiring a home mill. Food-grade grain is selected and packaged for eating; it is not automatically suitable as seed. The grain may have been cleaned, heat-treated, polished, aged, or processed in ways that reduce germination, and it may lack the varietal records required for careful seed stewardship.

Food source	What to explore	Starting point
Bluebird Grain Farms	Organic whole einkorn, whole emmer/farro, spelt and other wheat berries	bluebirdgrainfarms.com/shop
Whole Grains Council directory	Mail-order suppliers of intact grain: teff, sorghum, barley, wheat berries and more	wholegrainscouncil.org/find-whole-grains/mail-order-grain-sources
Independent grain growers & mills	Regional heritage grain, farm-grown lots, freshly cleaned whole kernels	Ask farmers markets, grain guilds, and local millers
International grocers	Teff, millet, sorghum, buckwheat groats, amaranth and regionally traditional grains	Look for whole / intact / groats, not just flour

Buying well means asking which form you are getting: whole, dehulled, pearled, cracked, toasted, rolled, sprouted, or milled. Each is useful; none is identical. Whole emmer needs more cooking than a quick-cooking pearled farro. Some varieties need specialized dehulling before they can be cooked comfortably. For foods that must be gluten-free, use products labeled or certified gluten-free and prevent kitchen cross-contact [5].

A first tasting flight

1. Cook three small pots: one tender grain (millet), one chewy grain (sorghum), and one expressive pseudocereal (buckwheat).
2. Taste each plain, lightly salted, and then with lemon and good olive oil. Note sweetness, earthiness, nuttiness and texture.
3. Try them in three roles: warm breakfast, savory lunch, and chilled salad. Compare how well each absorbs sauce and keeps its shape.
4. Choose a favorite to keep in the pantry, and a different species to trial in the garden. Curiosity is the invitation; diversity is the lasting benefit.

CHAPTER 05

Find real seed for planting

A seed order is the beginning of a relationship, not merely a purchase.

Planting seed requires additional care: varietal identity, viable germination, responsible sourcing, regional fit, a seed-treatment statement, and compliance with applicable seed laws. The following are discovery starting points, not endorsements of any current stock level or guarantee of suitability.

Source / community	Why it belongs in a seed project	Website
Heritage Grain Alliance	Small grow-out packets of einkorn, emmer, heritage wheat, rye and barley; a seed-return/sharing culture	seedsave.org/product-category/anche/
Fedco Seeds: Grains	Garden-scale grain seed, including open-pollinated amaranth, barley and other species	fedcoseeds.com/seeds/grains
Seed Savers Exchange	A seed-saving education center and person-to-person Exchange network for named varieties	seedsavers.org / exchange.seedsavers.org
Native Seeds/SEARCH	Southwestern food-crop conservation, heritage seeds and seed-saving education; respect community-specific access rules	nativeseeds.org

Source / community	Why it belongs in a seed project	Website
Regional seed libraries / grain guilds	Locally adapted lots, grower mentorship, seed swaps, miller connections	Check public libraries, extension offices, food co-ops
USDA NPGS / GRIN	Conservation and research germplasm; not an ordinary home-shopping source	ars-grin.gov

The Heritage Grain Alliance described more than 65 grain varieties in its collection and limited small packets for some of them when checked in October 2026; it asked growers who can do so to return at least twice the amount of seed received so additional growers can participate [10]. This is an inspiring model: the goal is not a rare packet sitting untouched in a drawer, but healthy seed circulating through communities.

Native Seeds/SEARCH offers both conservation and living cultural relationships with traditional crops. Its free or priority Native Access programs have eligibility rules; use its general-public offerings appropriately and credit the communities whose varieties and knowledge are involved [4,11].

Ask before buying planting grain

- “Do you sell this lot specifically as viable seed, or only for food?”
- “What is the exact variety, planting season and approximate days to maturity in my region?”
- “What cleaning, threshing, dehulling, seed treatment, and pollen-isolation steps apply?”
- “May I save, exchange and give away seed from this variety?”
- “Can I obtain a recent germination result and the crop/lot identity?”

CHAPTER 06

Grow a first grain garden

Begin small enough to observe closely, and grow large enough to learn something useful.

A backyard grain plot is wonderful as an educational seed-increase garden. It does not need to promise a pantry full of grain in year one. A healthy stand, a small harvest, and excellent records are genuine successes. Choose a site with adequate sunlight, manageable weeds, and accessible water; start with a soil test and local university extension guidance. Crops and planting dates vary dramatically by region.

Match crops to seasons

- Cool-season grains: many wheat, rye, barley and oat types. Some are winter forms planted in fall; others are spring forms. A winter variety may need cold exposure to form grain, so confirm the exact seed type rather than treating all “wheat” the same.
- Warm-season grains: many millet, sorghum, teff and amaranth types. Plant after appropriate soil warming and frost risk; maturity needs and harvesting conditions differ by variety.
- A flexible trial crop: buckwheat can grow rapidly under suitable conditions and supports insect life, but may be sensitive to heat, frost or shattering. Use your regional planting calendar.

- Specialized crops: rice and aquatic wild rice have specific moisture/ecology needs. Do not treat wild rice cultivation as a standard backyard dryland grain trial.

A first-bed method

5. Choose one open-pollinated grain variety and one backup candidate. Label the bed and record source, variety, lot, sowing date, weather and soil notes.
6. Prepare a firm, weed-reduced seedbed according to extension advice. Follow species-specific planting depth, spacing and sowing rate from the seed source; tiny teff and amaranth seed is handled differently from wheat berries.
7. Protect establishment. Keep a simple diary of germination, weed pressure, rainfall, insect activity and differences among plants.
8. Avoid mixing varieties at sowing or harvest. If preserving a named variety, investigate cross-pollination with neighboring plantings well ahead of flowering.
9. Observe maturity across the full stand before harvest. Photograph heads, record plant height and lodging, and note any disease or unusual weather.

Do not assume one garden can perfectly maintain every landrace. Some populations need many parent plants and periodic exchange among cooperating growers to prevent a genetic bottleneck. The species and the goal—stable line or diverse population—determine the appropriate approach [9,11].

A grain garden can also be a beautiful garden

Tall seed heads catch light, buckwheat flowers attract insects, and deep-toned amaranth offers striking color. Leaving appropriate habitat strips, avoiding unnecessary disturbance, rotating crops, and returning clean organic matter to soil can strengthen the wider landscape. These are practical choices to evaluate over time, not guarantees that every traditional variety produces higher yields or healthier soils.

CHAPTER 07

Harvest, clean, and preserve the seed

A harvest is complete when the grain can nourish someone—and the next season remains possible.

Harvest timing depends on the crop. Many small grains are cut when seed heads and kernels are mature and dry, but some crops shatter easily before every plant is ready. Rain, disease, birds, and wind change the window. Make an assessment on the plants, not only the calendar. Keep seed lots separate and labelled throughout cutting, drying, threshing and cleaning.

The five actions after cutting

10. Dry: cure mature harvested seed in a protected, ventilated place away from excess heat, moisture and pests. Avoid sealing incompletely dried seed.

11. Thresh: gently release seeds from heads or panicles by hand-rubbing, clean bag beating, or suitable small equipment. Use crop-specific technique.
12. Winnow and clean: remove chaff and obvious debris by controlled airflow or sieves; inspect for diseased, moldy, damaged or foreign seed.
13. Dehull when necessary: emmer, einkorn and many barley or oat types retain inedible husks after threshing. Distinguish a husk from the nutritious bran; proper dehulling is not the same as refining to white flour.
14. Divide and label: reserve a representative, healthy seed lot first; portion the rest for eating, sharing and future trials. Mark variety, original source, grower, location, crop year and germination result.

Do not eat seed sold as chemically treated planting stock. Conversely, edible grain bought for cooking is not automatically a suitable seed lot. These two uses need their own labels, containers and purchasing standards [12].

The storage principle

Cool, dark, dry, pest-protected storage is the foundation. Moisture is often the quickest route to mold and lost germination; seeds going into a refrigerator or freezer must be adequately dry before airtight storage. Preserve backup packets in separate locations where feasible, and check germination ahead of the next planting [13].

CHAPTER 08

Keep a variety alive across generations

The real treasure is not a jar of seed. It is a seed that will grow again.

For a durable seed line, maintain identity and sufficient diversity. Collect from many healthy parent plants rather than selecting only one spectacular seed head. If preservation rather than breeding is the goal, do not accidentally narrow the entire population to your favorite plant. Native Seeds/SEARCH describes the importance of representative sampling, careful labeling, regeneration and avoiding cross-pollination among similar varieties [4].

A simple four-share harvest

- Replant — keep enough high-quality seed for a realistic next-season sowing, plus a germination cushion.
- Reserve — maintain a separately stored backup to protect against one failed season or storage accident.
- Nourish — use sound, food-safe, untreated kernels to learn the variety's flavor and everyday potential.
- Share — offer only properly identified, lawful, viable seed with growing notes, ideally through a local seed library or grower relationship.

The percentages will vary. A small first harvest may belong almost entirely to seed multiplication; a successful mature program might send much more to the kitchen. Seed stewardship thrives on patience.

Pollination and population

Self-pollinating grains generally require a different isolation plan from wind-pollinated corn or rye. Even self-pollinating crops can experience some crossing or accidental mixing. Corn requires particular attention to simultaneous flowering, isolation, and a sufficiently large breeding population to maintain diversity. Use species-specific advice from Seed Savers Exchange, Native Seeds/SEARCH and a regional extension expert rather than a universal “safe distance” [8,9].

A simple germination check

Before planting, take a representative sample of 20 seeds from the saved lot. Place them on a moist but not waterlogged towel in a labelled container, keep at a crop-appropriate temperature, and count the seedlings that develop normally by the species-appropriate testing interval. A result of 16 normal seedlings from 20 seeds suggests about 80% germination in this small screening test—not a laboratory certification. Repeat or use a professional seed lab for high-stakes planting; record the date and method. Use seed-vigor and field-emergence judgment in addition to germination percentage.

Keep one “seed passport” per variety. A seed passport records not merely where a packet came from, but what happened as it grew: generation, plot, conditions, flowering neighbors, harvest, selected parents, cleaning, storage, and where descendants went next.

CHAPTER 09

Cook the whole seed beautifully

The movement becomes delicious when the same grain returns to the table in different forms.

Whole grains reward a little technique. Rinse when appropriate, toast lightly for flavor, simmer until the center is pleasant rather than chalky, and season with purpose. Intact sorghum should be satisfying and chewy, millet can be fluffy or soft and creamy, and buckwheat offers a gentle earthy taste. Many hulled grains require preparation before cooking; some wheat berries respond well to soaking or pressure cooking.

A beginning stovetop reference

Whole grain	Usual first check for tenderness	A useful texture goal
Buckwheat groats	About 10–15 minutes	Soft grains, gently separate
Millet	About 15–20 minutes	Fluffy pilaf or creamy porridge
Amaranth	About 20–25 minutes	Soft, cohesive spoonable grain
Teff	About 15–25 minutes	Creamy and tiny-grained
Whole emmer/farro	About 40–60 minutes	Nutty, chewy kernels

Whole grain	Usual first check for tenderness	A useful texture goal
Hull-less barley	About 35–60 minutes	Tender but pleasantly firm
Whole sorghum	About 50–75 minutes	Chewy, intact rounded grains
Wheat berries or spelt berries	About 45–75 minutes	Full kernels with a gentle bite

Times are broad first-check ranges for ordinary dry grain on a stovetop, not universal recipes: cultivar, kernel size, dehulling or pearling, storage age, pre-soaking, altitude, water ratio and cookware can change them. Start with producer-specific instructions and taste as you go. Drain excess water when a grain has reached the texture you want.

Five fresh ways to eat them

- Morning: warm teff or millet with cinnamon, pear, toasted pecans and a little maple syrup.
- Lunch: lemony sorghum with roasted squash, crisp greens, pumpkin seeds and herbed tahini.
- Supper: earthy buckwheat groats with seared mushrooms, slow-cooked onions and thyme.
- A gathering table: a rainbow of cooked heritage corn, beans, tomato, avocado and lime, using a food-safe traditional maize preparation where appropriate.
- A pantry ritual: toast plain buckwheat groats or millet before cooking, then use them as the foundation for seasonal vegetables and deeply flavorful sauces.

For gluten-free tables, prioritize millet, sorghum, teff, buckwheat, amaranth, and verified gluten-free corn or oats. Einkorn, emmer, spelt, khorasan, barley and rye all contain gluten. Ancient wheat is not a gluten-free workaround [5].

Respect the grain's form

Intact whole grain lasts differently from freshly milled flour, which exposes oils in the germ to air. Keep clean dry kernels in pest-resistant containers, mill or crack modest amounts as needed, and use fresher milled flour sooner. For sprouting projects, distinguish seeds meant for sprouts from seeds meant only for field planting, and use established food-safety methods rather than assuming any raw sprout is safe to eat.

CHAPTER 10

Grow a community grain culture

A food revolution becomes real when enough people can participate.

We can imagine a neighborhood grain circle that is part tasting club, part garden project and part biodiversity commons. One grower trials a dryland millet; another explores a cold-adapted barley; a baker records a heritage wheat's dough behavior; a community kitchen turns cleaned grain into affordable meals. Together, they learn more than any one packet can teach.

A practical three-season circle

15. Season one: identify two to four suitable varieties, establish the source records, trial in small plots, save the seed first, and host a tasting meal.
16. Season two: expand the most promising varieties, maintain proper separation, compare germination and agronomic notes, and establish a local cleaning or dehulling solution.
17. Season three: distribute responsibly labelled packets with germination notes, develop local kitchen uses, and partner with a miller, school garden, seed library or food co-op.

Seed sovereignty includes consent, attribution, and access. Some seeds and the knowledge around them have community or Indigenous custodianship. A welcoming public project honors that relationship, does not market seed histories as its own discovery, and follows permissions and stewardship protocols. Commercial distribution introduces obligations for labels, quality, noxious weed controls and varietal claims under state rules and the Federal Seed Act [12].

Measure something meaningful: number of viable varieties multiplied, number of grower partners, germination rates, seed packets exchanged, kilograms of locally cleaned grain shared, soil observations, and meals enjoyed. The harvest can be small and still matter.

CHAPTER 11

Research horizons: ancient knowledge and new questions

Let curiosity lead us toward better questions—not unsupported promises.

Are heritage grains always better for soil and nutrition?

Some traditional varieties perform well with fewer inputs in particular environments. Others may lodge, shatter, need specialized machinery, yield less, or struggle with local pests. Nutrient comparisons can favor one cultivar or grain form, but the larger choice often is between eating a greater variety of whole grains and relying on refined grain products [1,3]. A credible research agenda compares named varieties grown in the same region under comparable management, recording yield, soil outcomes, flavor, nutritional composition, and ease of processing.

A future beyond annual grains

Researchers at The Land Institute and partner institutions are developing perennial grain systems such as Kernza®, a food grain produced from intermediate wheatgrass. It offers intriguing possibilities for persistent roots, reduced erosion and nutrient retention, alongside active challenges in yield, seed size, harvest, and scaling [14]. Kernza is an evolving modern crop-development effort, not an ancient grain to relabel as unchanged for millennia.

Psychedelic research, perception and connection to nature

A separate body of psychological research examines whether experiences involving serotonergic psychedelics can influence felt connection with nature and other people. A 2025 review discusses this

possibility, but the available findings do not establish that such experiences reliably produce enduring ecological behavior, improve agriculture, or alter the genetics of grain [15]. For a food-and-earth project, the constructive question is larger: how do attention, ceremony, direct land experience, community meals, cultural traditions, and meaningful encounters with growing plants influence the choices people make? The seed, the farm, and the shared table offer rich ways to explore those questions without conflating personal experience with agronomic evidence.

Cereal history offers another scientifically important distinction: ergot is a disease-causing fungus that can contaminate grains such as rye and produce toxic alkaloids. It is not a technique for enhancing grain, a safe edible “psychedelic grain,” or something to encourage in a seed-preservation plot. Careful inspection and sound grain handling remain part of responsible stewardship.

Questions worth studying

- Which heritage grains deliver excellent flavor and reliable performance in a given local climate?
- Can a community network preserve more genetic diversity than one small isolated garden?
- Which crops work beautifully as intact kernels, not only in bread or flour?
- How can growers share cleaning, dehulling, testing and storage equipment affordably?
- What stories, rituals, education and lived experiences motivate lasting soil and seed stewardship?
- Where could perennial-grain research complement, rather than replace, heritage grain conservation?

CHAPTER 12

Your first 90 days

Begin with one meal, one variety, one record, and a way to keep going.

Days 1–15 | Discover

- Taste three different intact whole grains and choose two you genuinely enjoy.
- Read the descriptions of two locally suitable crops and confirm your planting season.
- Choose one seed source with a documented variety identity and sharing rights.
- Find a local university extension or seed-saving mentor for regional advice.

Days 16–45 | Prepare

- Order one small packet of genuine untreated planting seed and store it correctly.
- Identify the future plot, test soil as appropriate, and control established weeds.
- Make a seed passport; record source URL, lot, crop, variety and intended season.
- Arrange simple drying, screens, clean labelled envelopes and a cool storage place.

Days 46–90 | Grow or plan the planting window

- Sow only when the species and regional season are appropriate; otherwise keep the seed safely stored until the correct window.

- Record germination and weather, and check for neighboring pollen sources.
- Plan a harvest lesson with a neighbor or friend, and choose the meal you will make from the eventual food-safe harvest.
- Identify the person, library or grower who could receive a properly documented share next year.

The seed passport: a reusable page

Duplicate this record for every variety and every harvest generation. A paper notebook is perfectly good; consistent records make the seeds useful to other growers.

Field	Record
Crop / scientific name	_____
Variety / landrace / population	_____
Seed source, lot, acquisition date	_____
Original steward / cultural context	_____
Seed type, treatment, rights	_____
Site, soil, previous crop	_____
Sowing / emergence / flowering	_____
Nearby cross-pollination sources	_____
Harvest date and total volume	_____
Parents sampled / observed traits	_____
Cleaning, dehulling, moisture notes	_____
Storage location / backup packet	_____
Germination check and date	_____
Reserved / cooked / shared quantities	_____
Recipient, generation, follow-up	_____

Sources and further discovery

These public research and supplier links were reviewed for this October 2026 guide. Supplier inventory, eligibility and terms may change. The sources are deliberately mixed: technical authorities, conservation organizations, education networks and places to explore grain or seed availability.

[1] Whole Grains Council — Ancient Grains <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain/ancient-grains>

[2] Whole Grains Council — Definition of a Whole Grain <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/definition-whole-grain>

[3] Cereals & Grains Association — Rediscovering Ancient Wheats
<https://www.cerealsgrains.org/publications/cfw/2020/March-April/Pages/CFW-65-2-0013.aspx>

[4] Native Seeds/SEARCH — The Seed Bank and Seed Diversity <https://www.nativeseeds.org/pages/seed-bank>

[5] Whole Grains Council — Gluten-Free Whole Grains <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain-refined-grain/gluten-free-whole-grains>

[6] USDA — Can GMOs Be Used in Organic Products? <https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/can-gmos-be-used-organic-products>

[7] USDA ERS — Wheat Sector at a Glance <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/crops/wheat/wheat-sector-at-a-glance>

[8] Seed Savers Exchange — Seed Saving and Isolation <https://seedsavers.org/learn/seed-saving/>

[9] Organic Seed Alliance — A Seed Saving Guide for Gardeners and Farmers (revised 2026)

<https://seedalliance.org/publications/seed-saving-guide/>

[10] Heritage Grain Alliance — Ancient and Heritage Grain Seeds

<https://www.seedsave.org/product-category/anche/>

[11] Native Seeds/SEARCH — Seed Saving Instructions <https://www.nativeseeds.org/pages/seed-saving-instructions>

[12] USDA AMS — Federal Seed Act <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/fsa>

[13] Seed Savers Exchange — How to Store Seeds <https://seedsavers.org/storing-seeds/>

[14] The Land Institute — Kernza® Perennial Grain <https://landinstitute.org/our-work/perennial-crops/kernza/>

[15] Forstmann & Sagioglou (2025) — Psychedelics and connectedness, PubMed

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39862684/>

Supplier — Fedco Grain Seeds <https://fedcoseeds.com/seeds/grains>

Supplier — Bluebird Grain Farms, Whole-Grain Shop <https://bluebirdgrainfarms.com/shop/>

Supplier directory — Mail-Order Whole Grains <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/find-whole-grains/mail-order-grain-sources>

Exchange — Seed Savers Exchange <https://exchange.seedsavers.org/about>

Conservation — Native Seeds/SEARCH <https://www.nativeseeds.org/pages/seeds>

One closing disclaimer

This guide is for education, exploration, and responsible food and seed stewardship. Grain varieties, nutrition, allergen exposure, growing performance, germination, legality of seed saving and sharing, organic claims, and supplier availability vary by location and product; verify current labels, local extension advice, seed permissions, and applicable regulations before planting, purchasing or distributing. Ancient wheat and other gluten-containing cereals are not suitable for people who must avoid gluten, and naturally gluten-free grains can have cross-contact. The discussion of psychedelic research describes an emerging area of study only; it does not recommend obtaining or using psychoactive substances or suggest they alter genetics, improve crops, or replace sound agricultural methods. Use only food-safe, untreated grain for eating, and never consume suspect or moldy grain.