

Making Sense of Seed Catalogs

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Looking through seed catalogs, my mind leaps ahead to the growing season. I see lush green foliage and ripe, colorful fruits and
course, seed catalogs are for more than daydreaming, they re about planning this

garden history. Were there some varieties that you
want to grow again, for their good yields, flavor, or disease resistance? Were some varieties poor
performers,

Hybrids are crosses between genetically distinct parents; F1 hybrid refers to first-generation offspring. Hybridization is often used to improve flavor, disease resistance and/or yield. Seeds saved from hybrids won't produce the same type of plants.

Open Pollinated varieties are not hybrids. They have stable traits from one generation to the next. Seeds saved from these varieties produce plants similar to their parents.

Organic seeds or plants are produced using methods allowed by the USDA organic certification program. Organic farms are required to use organic seeds unless they are not commercially available in an appropriate form, quality, or quantity.

Parthenocarpic cucumber and summer squash varieties have female flowers that can set fruit without pollination. They are often grown in greenhouses, under insect netting, or early in the season when pollination may be limited. Gynoecious cucurbits have mostly female flowers so they can set more fruit than regular (monoecious) varieties, which have both female and male flowers. A few monoecious seeds are included in gynoecious seed packets for pollination.

Pelleted seeds are coated with clay or other inert materials to make them uniform in size, shape, and weight so they are e