

## Seed Purchasing Tips for Homeowners

Happy New Year! January is the time of year to flip through the many pages of your seed catalogs and explore the possibilities of trying new plants in your garden. Seed catalogs are a great resource and packed with all kinds of information. There are a few things I would like you to consider before you make your final decision:

1. Buy seeds that are disease and pest resistant. Be careful when considering the purchase of bargain seeds. You may get what you paid for! You want fresh seeds instead of old seeds. Old seeds may result in poor germination, disease and pest issues as well as low production. It may be worth the extra cost to choose garden-fresh seed varieties that perform well without the headaches of spraying for diseases and pests.
2. Read the key that is provided by the catalog. There are often symbols or codes that will give you information about the seed you are considering purchasing. Some examples are annuals, perennials, heirlooms, organic and natives, as well as herbs and edibles and fragrant.
3. Many catalogs may have terminology that you may not be familiar to you. For example, All-America Selections (AAS) are good because these varieties have been tested in nationwide trials for superior adaptability and vigor. Open-pollinated (OP) refers to plants pollinated by birds, bees, insects, wind or humans.

Before you plant your seeds in the ground please be sure to get your soil tested. Soil test kits are available at the Shelby County Extension office. I would be more than happy to talk you through the process of taking a good soil sample for analysis. A "Plus Soil" test is \$15. Trust me it's worth it!

These guidelines can help you safely select seeds that won't dampen the spirits. To ensure success in your garden this spring make sure to purchase seeds from a good reputable source. I am confident these tips will help you become a savvy shopper and you will be able to navigate the seed catalogs like a pro.

Have fun browsing the catalogs! I hope 2020 is a good gardening year for you as well!

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