How to Choose Your Starting Seeds

Understand the vital difference between industrial F1 hybrid seeds and reproducible open-pollinated seeds, to start your production on solid and sustainable foundations.



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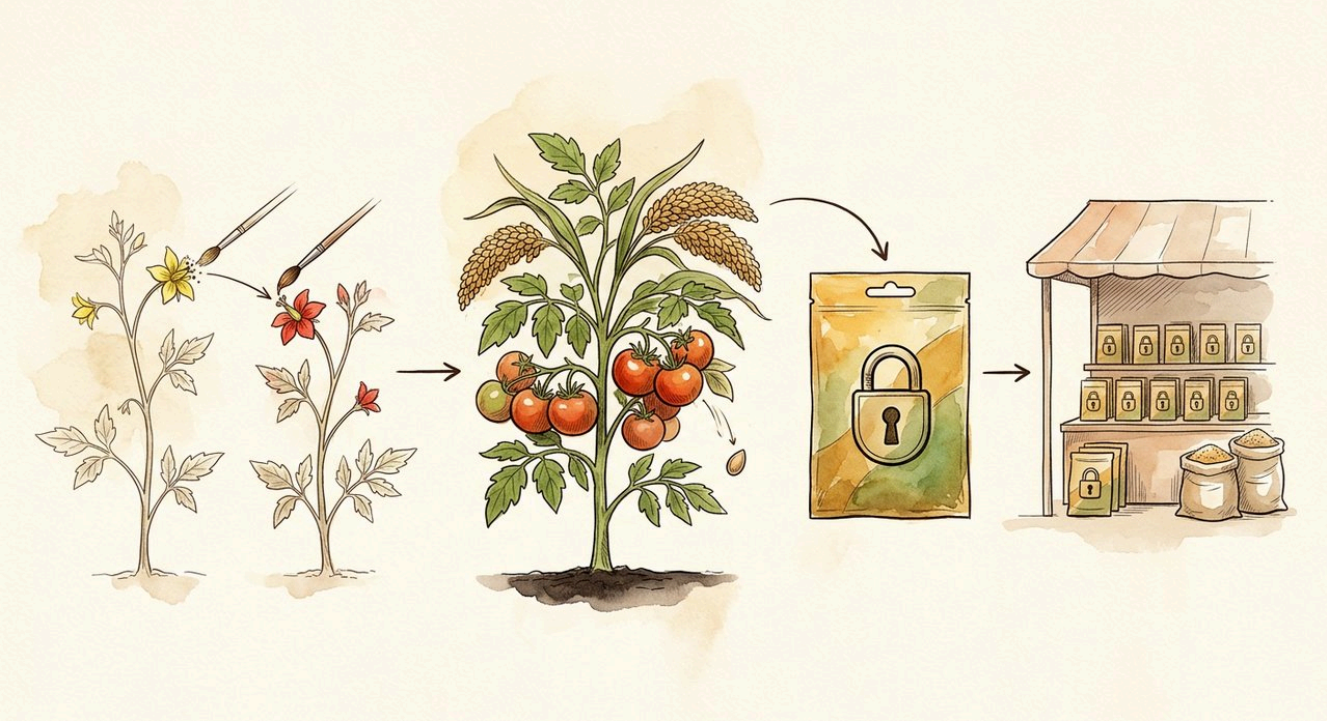
The First Seed Decides Everything

Producing your own seeds requires work and care.

For your efforts to bear fruit, you must start with a seed capable of reproducing faithfully year after year.

In this module, you will discover how to choose your starting seeds without falling into the trap of industrial seeds.

What is an F1 hybrid seed?



What is an F1 hybrid seed?

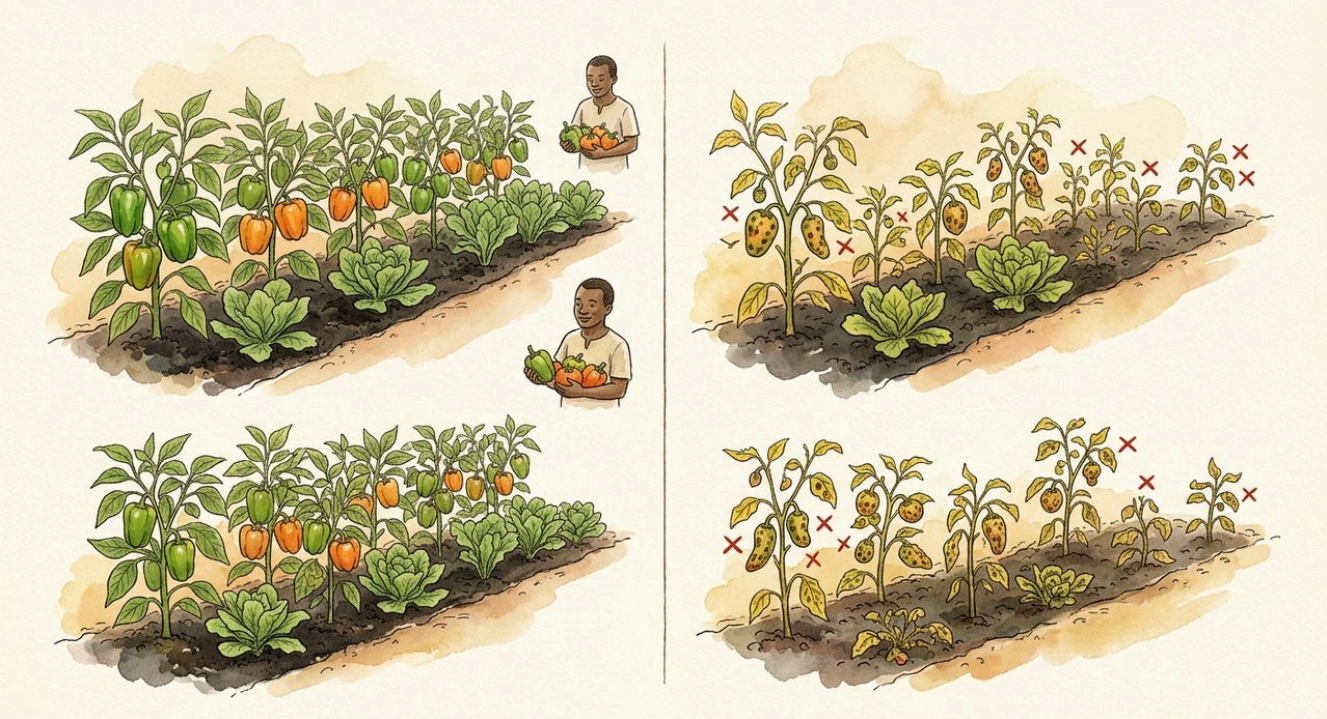
In stores or cooperatives, many seed packets bear the mention **"F1 Hybrid"**.

These seeds are created by industrial producers by forcibly crossing two very inbred lines.

In the first year, the plants grow quickly and produce fruits that are all identical.

But it's a trap for the following year!

The F2 Harvest Trap



The F2 Harvest Trap

If you harvest seeds from an F1 fruit to replant them the following year (what is called the **F2 generation**):

❌ The plants lose their vigor.

❌ Some fruits are small, others tasteless or diseased.

❌ Many seeds are sterile.

The farmer is then forced to buy new seeds every season!

The Farmer's Financial Dependence



The Farmer's Financial Dependence

Buying F1 seeds every year is very expensive.

This makes the producer dependent on stores, transportation, and multinational corporations.

If borders close or prices rise, the farmer can no longer sow their land.

Freedom begins when you don't depend on anyone for your seeds!

Farmer Seeds: A Reproducible Treasure



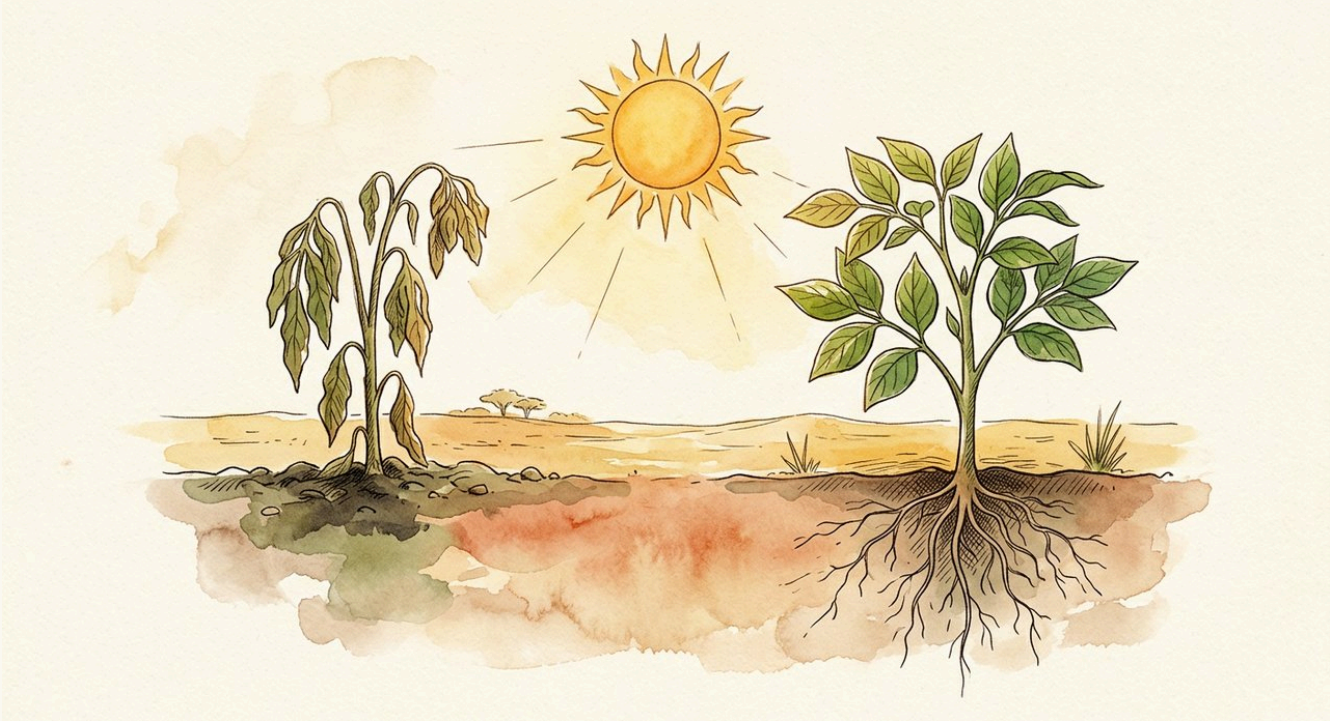
Farmer Seeds: A Reproducible Treasure

In contrast, **farmer seeds** (also known as landraces or local seeds) reproduce faithfully from one generation to the next.

When you sow the seeds you have harvested:

✅ They yield vigorous and flavorful plants.

✅ They belong to everyone, without patents or restrictions on replanting.



A Seed Adapted to Your Real Climate

Industrial seeds were created to grow with chemical fertilizers and abundant water.

Local **heirloom varieties**, on the other hand, have faced the scorching sun, poor soils, and diseases of your region for decades.

They know how to resist **drought** and withstand **heatwaves**!

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Where to find good starter seeds?



Where to find good starter seeds?

To build your initial seed stock:

1. Ask elders and reputable market gardeners in your village or neighboring villages.
2. Participate in farmers' seed fairs and seed exchanges.
3. Get in touch with local farmer seed associations or agroecological farms.

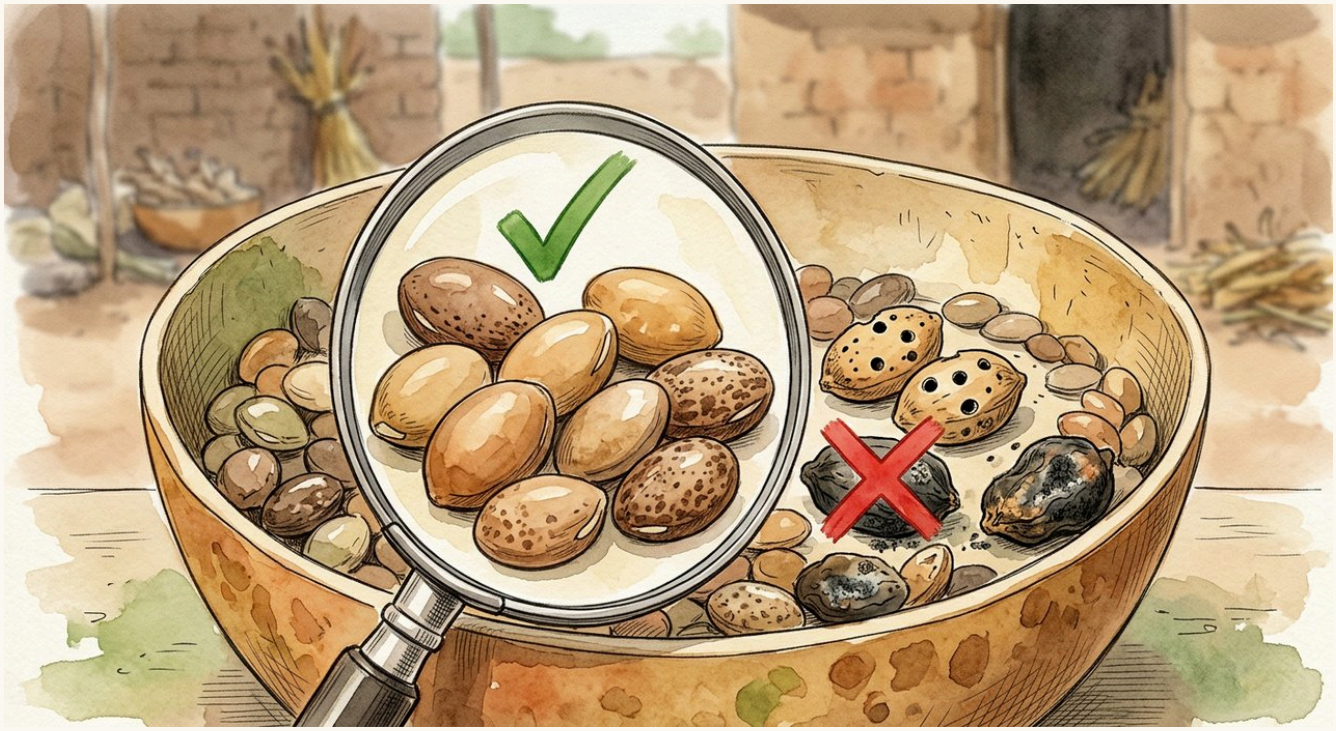


Choosing Seeds from Agroecology

Always prioritize seeds multiplied without chemical fertilizers or synthetic pesticides.

A plant accustomed to the crutch of chemical products becomes lazy.

A seed born in living soil (with compost and mulching) will produce autonomous and vibrant plants.



Observe the health of the seed lot before adopting

When you are given or sold a seed lot, inspect it carefully:

- The seeds must be whole, without small weevil holes ⚠️.
- No traces of gray or white mold or rancid odor ❌.
- No excessive dirt (pieces of stones, leaf debris, wild grass seeds).

Learn about the variety's history



Learn about the variety's history

Always ask a few questions to the person giving you the seeds:

- "How long does it take from sowing to the first harvest?"
- "How does it perform during the dry season or heavy rains?"
- "What is the taste, texture when cooked, and storage life of the vegetable?"

Note these valuable answers in your notebook!



Start Small and Test First

Don't change all your plots at once with a variety you don't know yet!

The first season:

- Sow a small test bed (a few dozen plants).
- Observe its behavior on your own land.
- If the result is good, harvest the seeds to expand the crop the following season.

Share to Multiply



Share to Multiply

Nature is generous: a single fruit often yields dozens, even hundreds of seeds!

You will quickly have far more seeds than you need for your own consumption.

Give and exchange your surplus with your neighbors:

- The more a variety is grown in the region, the less likely it is to disappear!

What to absolutely avoid



What to absolutely avoid

To preserve your autonomy:

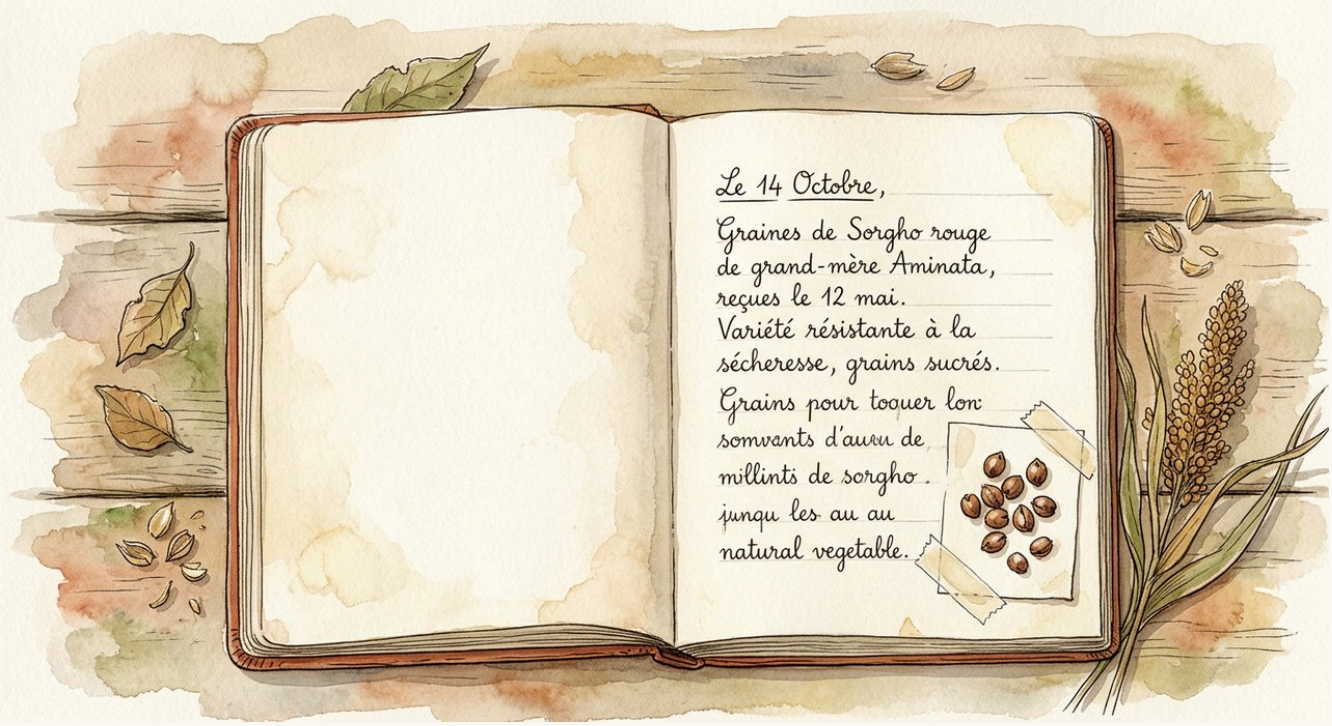
❌ Never harvest seeds from market-bought vegetables without knowing their origin (often from treated F1 hybrids).

❌ Do not start with seeds treated with toxic colored chemical powders.

❌ Do not save seeds from plots where a severe viral disease was present.

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Your Seed Grower's Notebook



Your Seed Grower's Notebook

From your very first day of seed harvesting, keep a small notebook.

Write down:

- The name of the person who gave you the initial seed
- The date of receipt
- Remarkable qualities observed during the season

This is the living memory of your farm!



Congratulations! You hold the keys to independence

Bravo! You've taken the step towards food sovereignty:

✅ You know how to avoid the trap of F1 hybrid seeds

✅ You prioritize local and reproducible varieties

✅ You know how to check the health of your starting seeds

Next module: understanding pollination and fertilization of flowers in the vegetable garden!