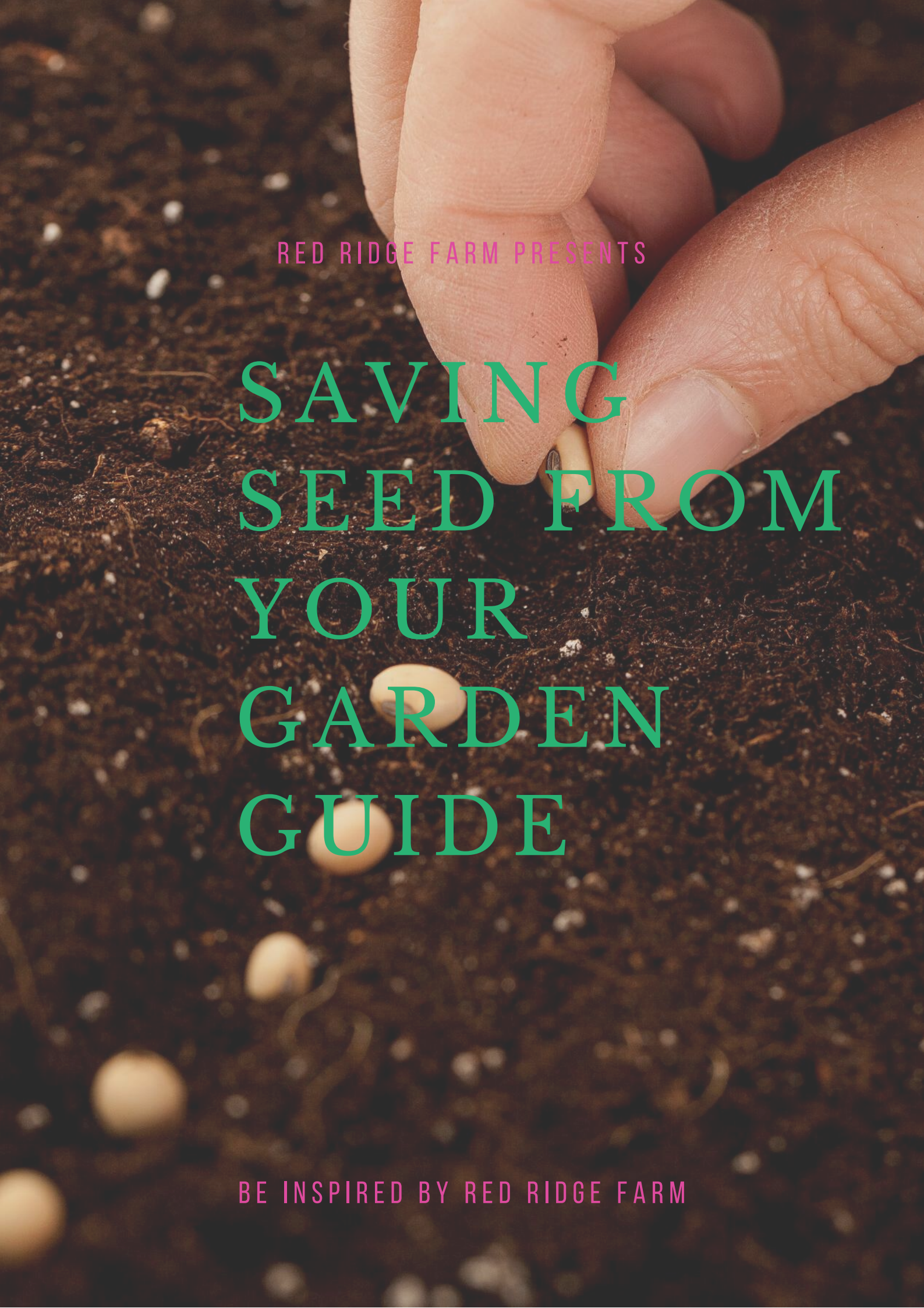


RED RIDGE FARM PRESENTS

SAVING SEED FROM YOUR GARDEN GUIDE

BE INSPIRED BY RED RIDGE FARM

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought of making growing your own food cheaper or better yet more sustainable?

With the price of groceries at the grocery store growing your own food can save you money but when you save seeds from your harvest you are not only saving money on growing next year's garden but making growing food for your family more sustainable.

As growers, we grow our own food yes! But we all still purchase seeds to grow that food.

With seed savings you can yet again cut out another middleman on our road to becoming more self-resilient! I have now been growing food for my family for more than 15 years. I can also say that about 75% of the food on my family's plates is from our Farmstead. But when I started saving my own seed it was a game changer!

Before I started saving seeds, I was probably like you, dependent on what I could find for varieties at my local growing center and online to provide my growing needs year after year.

But one advantage to saving your own seeds is the reduction in my seed order and money I spend on seed every year. This has even given me a peace of mind of knowing, one I am saving money and two I have seed stored right now for next year.

INTRODUCTION

This has given me a sense of stability but also a deep connection to my food. Growing your own food from seed has many layers of connection but when you add another layer of keeping seed from what you grow. You find that you are now connected to every level of your food, the harvesting of the seeds, the growing of the seeds, the harvesting of the produce and the eating, my favorite part!

And I think the last benefit that has hit home for me is consistency in my varieties. Have you ever done this?

You grow a new variety of tomato or green bean and find that this variety is perfect for you and your family. You love the taste, how it grows in your soil, and more. Only to go back to order more seed and find out that they are not selling any of that variety this year.

I know that happened to me with our favorite Red La Soda Potatoes. It is hard to find a red potato that grows well in our climate. My mother-in-law loved these potatoes, so she encouraged me to grows some too. Then a few years into growing this variety I was finding it difficult to find more seed potatoes. Thankfully though I had a bumper crop the previous year and had a few potatoes leftover.

Yes, saving seeds is not only about little seeds.

I have truly found that learning to save seeds here on Farmstead has help us grow more and thus bring us more abundance. And I would love to help you save your own seeds too.

INTRODUCTION

And that is why the Saving Seed from the Garden Guide was developed to help you on your own seed saving journey. Inside this guide, you are going to find some basic tips on saving your own seeds. I can't wait for you to get started.

If you have any question, be sure to contact me at crystalmediate@redridgefarm.org

Have a blessed day,

Crystal Mediate (A God Driven Gardener)

AND GOD SAID, “BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERY PLANT YIELDING SEED THAT IS ON THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH, AND EVERY TREE WITH SEED IN ITS FRUIT. YOU SHALL HAVE THEM FOR FOOD.

Genesis 1:29

Step #1

KNOW WHAT TO GROW

Can you collect seed from every plant in your garden?
Well, the answer here is a mixed bag with yes and no.

Yes, you can collect seeds from most to all varieties but not all of them are going to produce a true to type offspring, keeping their distinct traits generation after generation.

This is where Open Pollinators or Op's come in. They will retain their distinct characteristics if they are mated with an individual of the same breed. With a little planning and care in the garden you will have great to chance to collect true to type offspring from the seeds you collect, as long as they do not cross-pollinate with other varieties of the same species.

You will also have to consider that not all plants flower, set seed, and die in a single growing season. Those that do, like lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers, are called annuals. Biennials, such as carrots and onions, don't flower until their second growing season, after they have gone through a cold period. Some long-lived plants, like apple trees and asparagus, are perennial, surviving and flowering for many years.

You will need to take this into consideration too. But once you do the process of saving seeds is simple and straight forward you will be on the straight path to seed self-sufficiency.

I am going to share a few tips in the next step to help you prevent cross-pollination.

Step #1

“FOR TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, IF YOU HAVE FAITH LIKE A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED, YOU WILL SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN, ‘MOVE FROM HERE TO THERE,’ AND IT WILL MOVE, AND NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU.”

Matthew 17:20b

Step #2

PLAN AHEAD TO STORE SEEDS

The most simple way to prevent crosspollination is to plan ahead and use your garden plan to place plants in the ideal locations. Most cross pollination happens when the wrong plants are next to each other or are flowering at the same time and you can fix these problems with a little planning ahead. Here are few tips you can follow well planning your garden. And if you would like more help planning a garden be sure to check out my Basic Garden Planning Master Class on my website.

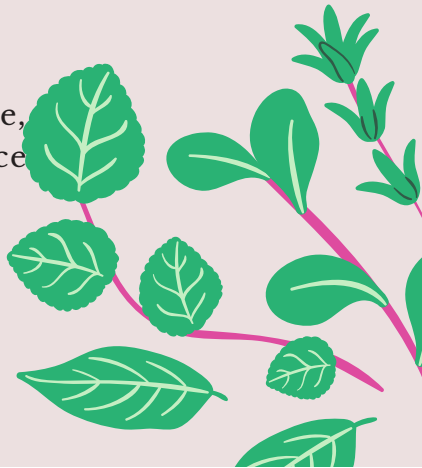
1. Learn about your species of plants- species is a group of individuals that are able to reproduce together.

In the garden, most crops are different species from one another, but not always.

There are several species of squash and two distinct species of kale - meaning some varieties of these crops are not able to cross pollinate with each other. On the other hand, Cucumis melo, commonly categorized as a melon, also contains some varieties that are sold as cucumbers like 'Armenian' because fruits of the variety are unsweet and sometimes pickled.
This is where knowing the scientific names of plants will come in handy. Seed Savers Exchange has a great chart to help with names!

2. Learn more about Isolation Distances- Isolation prevents unwanted cross-pollination and is the primary practice required to keep varieties true to type. Isolation begins with an understanding of the distance required to limit or eliminate chances of cross-pollination between two varieties of the same species.

You can manage isolation through several methods: by distance, by timing of flowering, or by containment. Isolation by distance is the most reliable method, which involves providing enough distance between a variety and any sources of contaminating pollen to ensure that the variety remains true to type.



Step #2

The isolation distance required for effectively preventing cross-pollination depends largely on the mating system of a species and can range from 10 feet for primarily self-pollinating grains, such as oats, to several miles for cross-pollinating crops, such as spinach.

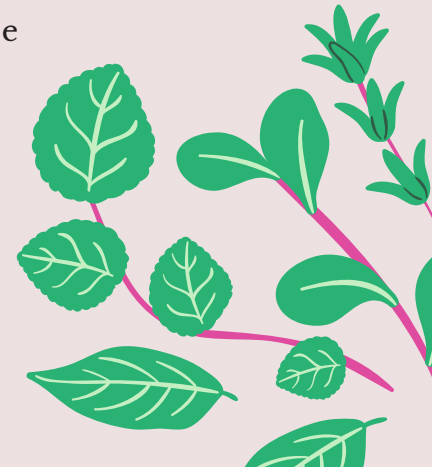
3. Pollination – Plants need pollen to reproduce and sometimes they need specific pollen from themselves or other plants. Cross pollination happens when the pollen is provided by the wrong species of plant.

You will need to learn how the plant you wish to collect seeds from are pollinated. Here are few different types.

• Wind-pollinated crops, such as spinach and beets, have very fine, lightweight pollen that is easily carried a great distance on air currents, often making the isolation distance for a wind-pollinated species quite long. This accounts for 20% of species.
• Insect-pollinated crops may require somewhat less distance between varieties than wind-pollinated crops because insects often gather nectar and pollen within limited areas. This accounts for 80%
• This is why pollinators in your garden is so important!

Now this may seem complicated but truly it is not. But if you are feeling worried try these two simple guidelines.

1. Stager your plantings of the same species of plants. So, they don't flower at the same time. For example, if you are planting hot peppers and sweet peppers and you don't want them to cross pollinate. Don't plant them at the same time give them about 6 to 8 weeks between them and you won't have to worry.



Step #2

2. Only collect seeds from one species at a time. Seed will last a long time. So maybe this year you only grow one type of squash and collect seed from it and next year you grow a different.

Remember seed gathering doesn't need to be complicated it just need to be done so that you can gain that sustainability you are looking for!

Step #2

“AND OTHER SEEDS FELL INTO GOOD SOIL AND PRODUCED GRAIN, GROWING UP AND INCREASING AND YIELDING THIRTYFOLD AND SIXTYFOLD AND A HUNDREDFOLD.”

Mark 4:8

Step #3

COLLECTING YOUR SEEDS

You have planted your varieties that you plan to gather seeds from and know you are just waiting to collect those glorious seeds. Before you can begin to gather, it is important that you consider two things:

·When your seeds are mature- Seed maturity is not always the same time that the fruit ready to eat or the seeds have formed
·How your seeds are collected- they two distinct ways to gather seed depending on if they are wet or dry seeds.

For crops that produce wet fruits, the seeds are not always mature when the fruits are ready to eat. Eggplant, cucumber, and summer squash fruit are eaten when the fruits are immature and still edible, but before the seeds are actually mature. This means that seed savers need to leave a few fruits to fully mature in the garden when they want to save seeds.
Dry fruited crops, like grains, lettuce, and beans, can be removed from the plant once seeds are dry and hard. Do remember that this can take multiple years in some varieties so me sure to consider this if your plants are not forming seeds right away.

Garden crops can be classified as either dry fruited or wet fruited. Collecting seeds from dry fruited crops, can be as simple as going out to the garden, handpicking a few mature seedpods, and bringing them into the house for further drying and cleaning.

Fruits from wet fruited crops must be picked when their seeds are mature. The harvested fruits are either crushed or cut open, and the seeds are extracted from the flesh and pulp before the seeds are dried.

I have a great video that is part of this guide showing you my favorite way to clean and dry squash seeds. Be sure to check it out in the Saving Seeds Bootcamp email series that is part of thi guide.

Step #3

"SOW FOR YOURSELVES RIGHTEOUSNESS; REAP STEADFAST LOVE; BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND, FOR IT IS THE TIME TO SEEK THE LORD, THAT HE MAY COME AND RAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON YOU."

Hosea 10:12

Step #4

STORING YOUR SEEDS

The last step once your seeds are dry is to store them for later.

Seeds are happiest when they are stored in a cool, dark, and dry place. A dark closet in a cooler part of the house or a dry, cool basement are both good spaces to store seeds for a year or two. Once properly dried, seeds can also be sealed in airtight containers and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for several years.

The seeds of some crops are naturally longer lived. Tomato seeds and beans can be left for many years in adequate storage conditions, while onion and carrot seeds are notoriously short lived.

Don't forget to label your seeds with the crop type, variety name, and any useful notes about your seed source, when you harvested the seeds, and how many plants you harvested from.

This information will help you in years to come. You are not going to remember all these details so write them down. I have a wonderful video about how I store my seeds that will surely help you with this step. Be sure to check it out in the Saving Seeds Bootcamp email series!

Step #4

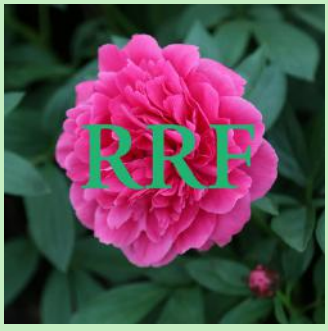
CONCLUSION

Do you see it?

Packet after packet of seeds that you have saved from your garden just waiting to be sown in next year's garden! Your heart wells with the knowledge that you now have at your fingertips more and more abundance straight from you soil. Every single seed holds the potential and hope of the future. A future where your family sits down to eat a homegrown meal that you provided from the very beginning, the seed!

Doesn't that sound amazing! Isn't that why you worked so hard in the garden to bring your harvest to your family's plates.

Growing food for your family can be full of ups and downs but that is why I am here to help.



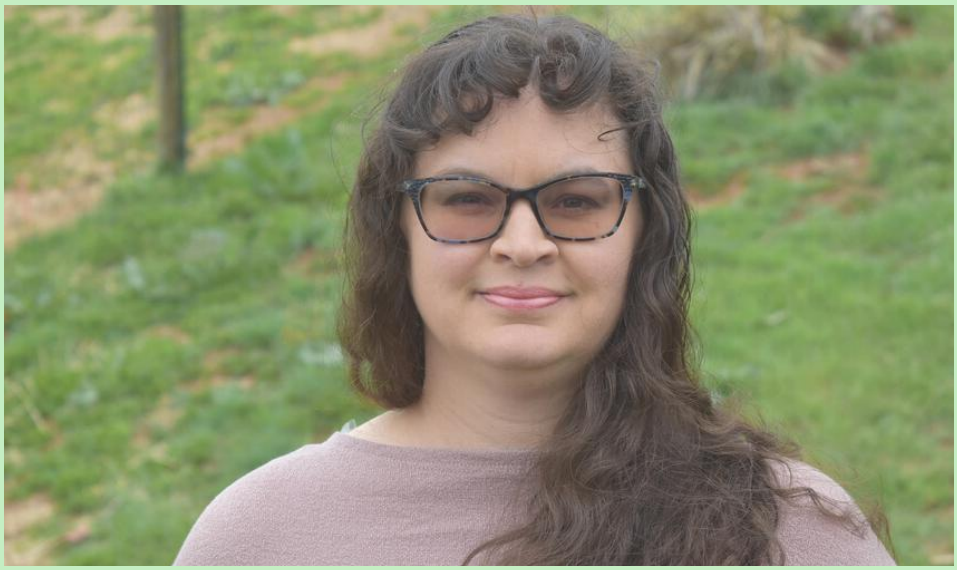
Our mission here at the Red Ridge Farmstead is to help you grow! Grow a garden, a homestead, a healthy family, and closer to our Lord and Savior.

If you would like me to join you in your growing journey, be sure to check out our amazing School of Growing, where you can learn the skills, you need to grow surrounded by others who want to help you with every step!

If you have any questions or if I can help you in any way on your growing journey, be sure to email me or visit my website at www.redridgefarm.org

Have a Blessed Day,

Crystal Mediate (A God Driven Gardener)



AUTHOR

My Name is Crystal Mediate and I am a co-owner of Red Ridge Farm. I am also the author and founder of the Red Ridge Farm Blog and Online Courses. Here at Red Ridge Farm, our mission is to offer timeless education to all who want it. Yes, I know what it is like to try to build a garden and homestead on my own. I truly feel it is my calling to help others build not only a garden but food security, and to help put healthy food on every plate I can!

So Why am I doing this?

I feel God has called me to be a teacher. Gardening and homesteading are what I know! Growing food for my family has helped us in many ways, we have food security, we have healthy options for our plate, and we have saved money on our monthly grocery bill. I started growing food out of necessity. My husband and I always planned for me to be a stay at home mom, but that meant we would be a single income family. I felt that even though I was home I was not destined to be a Day Time Tv-aholic. I wanted to contribute! I found the best thing I could do was to reduce our monthly bills. Most of our bills were fixed but groceries were not. I thought if I could reduce this monthly bill, I could help. I also knew the answer was not in eating less. I researched coupons, meal planning, and so much more. What I found is that if we could grow our own food and grow it in a healthier manner, while also teaching our boys a good work ethic, I could save twice as much as any coupon could give us. That is when our first garden was born. Since then I have learned to grow our own chicken, turkey, pork, and how to preserve our harvest to last the whole year. I even raise dairy goats and Layer chickens, so we have access to fresh milk and eggs, daily. Now I want to help others do the same.