

# Module 4

## Seed Saving



**04**

# **Saving Herb Seeds**



# 04

## How to save your own herb seeds





## Module 4

# In This Lesson, You Will Learn

- **The benefits of saving your own herb seed**
- **Precautions you must take to ensure that your seed is vital and pure**
- **How to preserve and store herb seed for increased potency and germination rates.**

Gardeners and herbalists have been preserving herb seed for generations, carrying it with them when they move, and planting it across continents.







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Some seed thrives where it's planted, naturalizes, and sometimes morphs into an identifiable new variety, with specific characteristics.





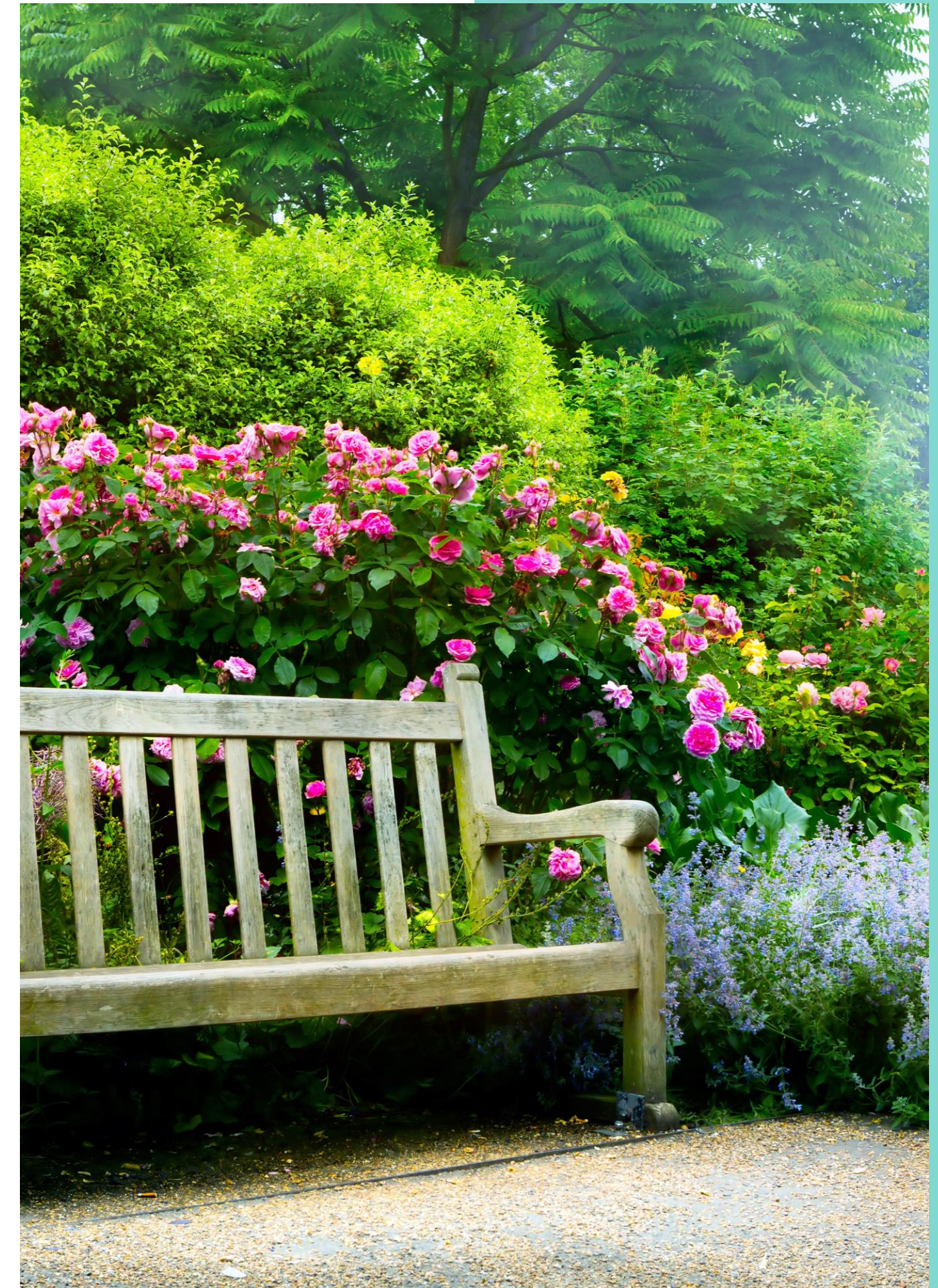
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Other seed dies out and is lost.  
It can't compete in the new  
growing conditions, without  
special care.



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One job for every herbalist is to discover the plants that will thrive in the bioregion where they live. Those are your best herbal allies. These are the ones that don't require heroics to thrive.





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These are also the plants that contain the herbal constituents that you need to thrive.





# **The benefits of saving your own seed**

- Plants adapt to your growing conditions over time.**
- When you save seed your plants mature earlier in the next generation.**
- You can select for characteristics that are beneficial in your bioregion.**
- Plants develop immunity to the fungi and plant diseases in your area.**



## **Keystone:**

Herbs that are growing in your bioregion are challenged by the same bacteria, fungi, and diseases that you yourself are challenged by. If they are thriving, they have what you need to thrive too.

Even more so when your seeds come from your own bioregion.





**Some plant crosses  
do not produce  
viable seed**



**When two varieties of the same species cross or hybridize the seed doesn't grow true to the parent plants.**

**We may keep desirable characteristics through cloning.**

**The seed from the hybrid, if saved for another season might be sterile, or may produce unwanted characteristics.**





# How to Save Viable Seed

- Prevent hybridization by only planting one variety of a plant with several specimens.
- Hand pollinate. Protect plants from insect or wind pollination through physical barriers.
- Save seed from a minimum of 7 to 10 plants to protect genetic diversity. (Commercial seed growers save from Hundreds of plants.)



# How to Save Viable Seed (Part 2)

- Save from plants with desirable characteristics, hardiness, early fruiting, flower size, etc.
- Save seed by cutting off the seed heads after the seed is beginning to dry down. Finish drying in a paper bag.
- Store fully dried seed in paper envelopes.





Over several seasons you might develop a landrace variety that thrives in your growing conditions.



**What treatments do seeds  
need after harvest?**



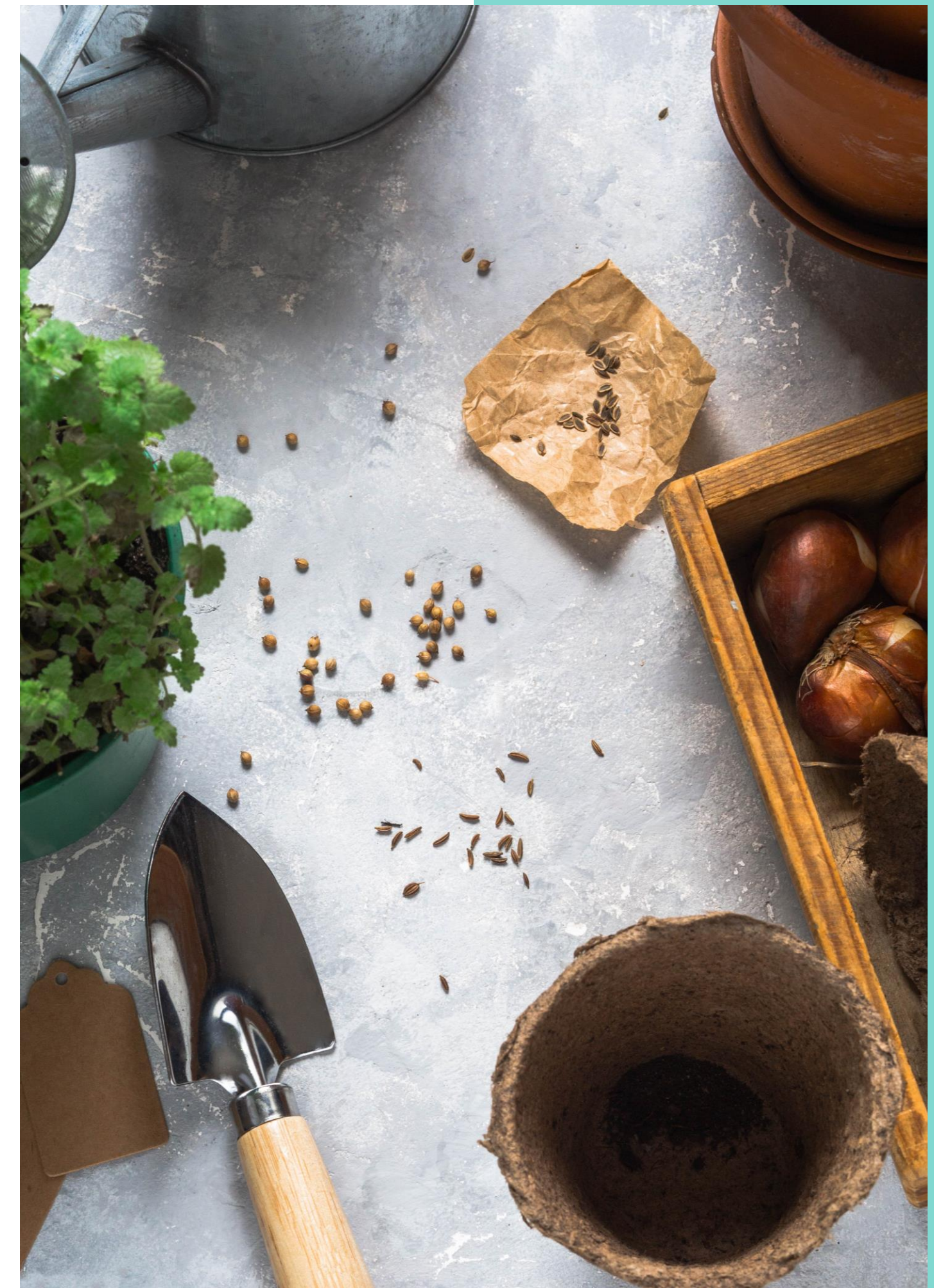




- Dry seeds fully
- Remove from stem
- Separate from chaff
- Store in paper. Label and date.



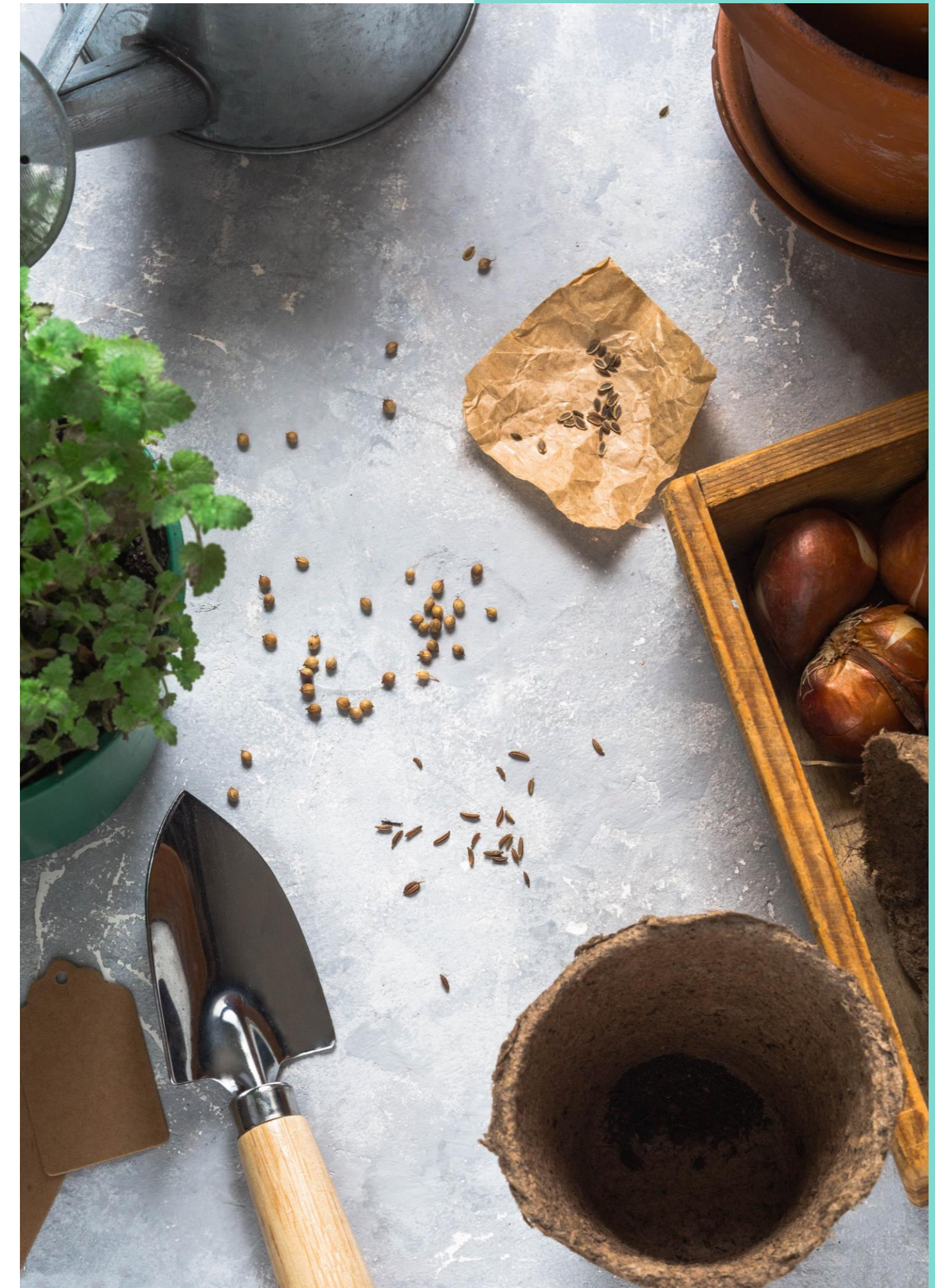
- Keep in mind the stratification needs of individual plants.
- Herbs that require stratification can be planted outside immediately, instead of being packaged.
- Some herb seed should be planted fresh. Learn the requirements of individual herbs.





# How to store seed for increased shelf life

- Keep seed in a cool dry place, protected from light and moisture.
- Seed kept dry and in the freezer may have a longer shelf life.
- Share seed with your neighbors and friends.
- Grow out your seed every 2 to 3 years.





**When you save your own herb  
seed YOU control the  
effectiveness of your own  
apothecary.**



- Those with longer growing seasons will have an easier time with seed saving.
- Those who gain the most benefit from seed saving are those who live in areas with a shorter season or a challenging climate.
- Plants are very adaptable within their individual parameters.





When the flower blooms,  
the bees come uninvited.

**RAMAKRISHNA**



## Module 4

# In This Lesson, You Learned:

- ✓ The benefits of saving your own herb seed each season
- ✓ The steps to take to insure that your seed is vital and has diverse genetics.
- ✓ How to store seed for increased vitality.



# Take Action Now

- ➔ Pick 1 of your herb varieties to save seed from
- ➔ Plan to grow at least 10 individual plants to select seed from
- ➔ Follow the steps to gain experience in saving herb seeds
- ➔ Experience is the best teacher