

Treats from the garden

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Autumn is a great time to be out in the garden; the cool weather means it's time for the harvest! If you planted pumpkins or sunflowers last spring, you'll need these directions for preparing their seeds to eat.

Here are the supplies you'll need:

- **The seeds from one pumpkin or large sunflower**
- **A strainer**
- **1/2 cup of salt**
- **1 quart of warm water**
- **A really big bowl or container**

If you're preparing pumpkin seeds, scoop them out of the pumpkin into the strainer. Rinse off as much of the slimy membrane as you can and put the seeds in the big bowl. If you're using sunflower seeds, you can rinse them off before you put them in the bowl, too.

Next, mix the salt into the warm water and pour it over the seeds in the bowl. Leave the seeds there to soak overnight. That gets the salt inside the seed instead of just onto the hard outside part. If you don't want salted seeds, just skip the soaking step.

Drain your seeds the next day using your strainer again and spread them evenly on baking sheets. Roast them in a 250 degree oven for about two hours, until they are lightly browned. Let them cool a few minutes and they'll be ready to eat!

If you want to make buttered seeds (yum!) put the still warm seeds back in your big bowl and mix in some melted butter. You can also add more seasonings like onion, garlic, or chili powder, if you'd like. In fact, you can skip the whole soaking part and butter and season your seeds before you roast 'em! Check them after an hour in the oven though, un-soaked seeds roast faster.

This is a great project to do after you carve your Halloween pumpkin, but feel free to experiment with seeds from any squash, like acorn or butternut. Check your library for these great books, *Pumpkin Moonshine* by Tasha Tudor and *Sunflower House* by Eve Bunting