

Letter

Don't lose important *Geraniaceae* seed

Hardy-plant enthusiasts love growing from seed. We know how important that timing is, especially for plants such as geraniums and erodiums as they eventually eject the seed away from the plant. Not a problem for most of our geraniums because they produce lots of seed, but important if you're growing a rare species or a new cultivar.

To save that valuable seed, snip the tip of the beak on geraniums ahead of time and the awns will curl down when ripe instead of flinging up and tossing the seed. The mericarps with seed inside will remain at the bottom of the beak, usually long enough for you to return and harvest them.

Erodiums are a little different. The awns stay attached and help the seed bury itself in the soil by their corkscrew action as moisture levels change. A small wire bag tie or a thread tied round the beak will ensure the seeds don't go anywhere.



John Beaulieu, Member of the Hardy Geranium Group, Ontario, Canada

Left, the snipped beaks of different geranium; right, a tied erodium beak.



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