



# SEED AND PLANTING STOCK

## SEARCH INFORMATION

**All seeds planted on certified organic land MUST be organic unless no equivalent organic seeds are available.**

NOP standards state that non-organically produced, untreated, non-GMO seeds and planting stock may be used when an equivalent organically produced variety is not commercially available meaning; the appropriate form, quantity, or quality cannot be sourced. When looking for an equivalent seed variety, consider comparable growing habits, days to maturity, insect and disease resistance, flavor, milling qualities, etc. Under the NOP standards, cost may not be a factor in this decision.

### USING NON-ORGANIC SEEDS

A good faith effort must be made each time seed is purchased when using non-organic seeds. Contact **at least three (3)** sources that sell organic seed/stock and ask for a variety with the desired characteristics. If none carry the organic version with the qualities or in quantities needed, you may purchase non-organic seed/stock.

**Please request and retain documentation of untreated, non-GMO status from the supplier.**

**Use only certified organic annual seedlings;** there is no option to use non-organic seedlings.

### PLANTING STOCK

Non-organic perennial planting stock must be managed organically for one year before the planting stock itself can be marketed as organic. If fruit or herbs harvested in the first year were not on the plant at the time the non-organic perennial stock was planted on the organic farm, these harvested portions may be marketed as organic.

Keep documentation from the supplier showing that planting stock is untreated. "Untreated" means the planting stock is not treated with prohibited substances, such as sprout inhibitors or fungicides. Potting media must be free of prohibited materials as well. If potting media is completely removed and no other treatments were used, plants may be considered untreated.

### SEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Organic seeds are not required during transition, but new operations need documentation that all seeds used in the 36 months before the date of certification were free of prohibited treatments. Renewing operations should verify all seeds purchased/used since the last inspection are certified organic or free of prohibited substances. Fall cover crops prior to the year of certification should undergo a seed search, as they will be included in the initial Organic System Plan and inspection.

**For verification:** Please keep any receipt, tag, supplier organic certificate, and untreated/non-GMO documentation for all seeds and planting stock used. Some combination of documents must be provided to verify the seed is certified organic or untreated and non-GMO, and show the quantity purchased. Seed documents should be kept with the other primary records at the farm and are verified at the inspection. Non-GMO documentation is not needed for crops that are not commercially available in GM form.

### CONTRACTS WITH BUYERS AND WORKING WITH DEALERS

Seed dealers may conduct the search on behalf of the grower. When this occurs, the grower must have documentation that the search occurred, including the list of at least three (3) sources that were searched prior to supplying non-organic untreated/non-GMO seed. When a farmer contracts a crop with a buyer, the buyer may require a specific seed, which they may also supply. If the buyer supplies the seed, the producer should request a seed search from the supplier, just as they would from a dealer. Documentation must be provided stating untreated and non-GMO status for these seeds.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Seed search is an area where the spirit of continuous improvement matters. An operation that uses some non-organic seeds should strive to use more organic seeds over time. Variety trials, test plots, and metrics such as percentage of organic seed used (by number/weight) are ways to demonstrate to your certifier that you are making a good faith effort to use more organic seed over time.

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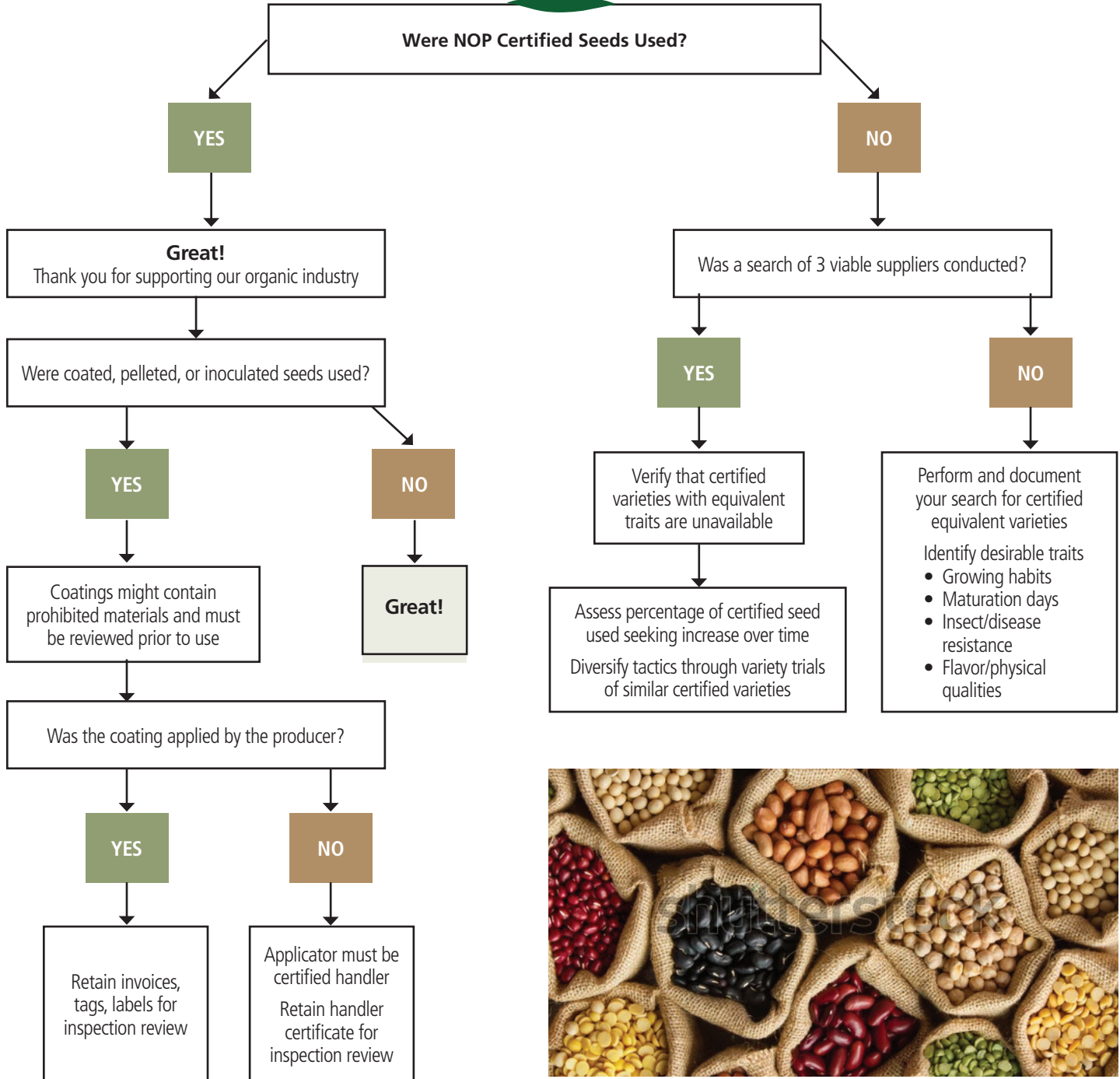


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## SOURCING SEEDS FOR AN ORGANIC FARM



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