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Seed Identification

Identifying seeds is an important part of the 4-H Seed Judging and Identification Contest. There are 50 seeds to learn, and you will be given 10 or 20 seeds to identify during the contest. These photos and seed descriptions will help you prepare for the contest. The ruler helps you relate the size of the seeds.

This publication is to be used in conjunction with Extension Publication 464 *4-H Seed Judging*.



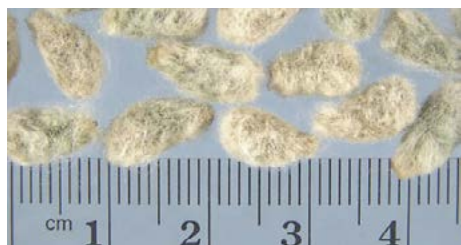
Field corn (smooth)



Sweet corn (wrinkled)



Popcorn
pearl-shaped



Gin run cottonseed
linters (short fibers)



Acid-delinted cottonseed
linters removed; treated seeds can be various colors



Rice
light brown color; rectangular shape



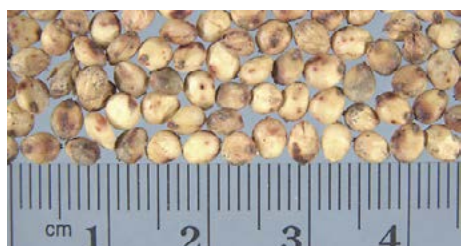
Wheat
has a "brush" on one end; a deep groove on the ventral side



Oats
may vary in color from reddish to white



Rye
brown to metallic green; cylindrical; pointed



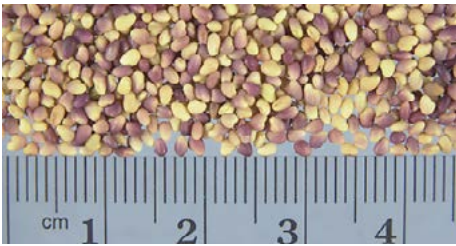
Sorghum
oval-shaped; smooth surface; white, red, or black



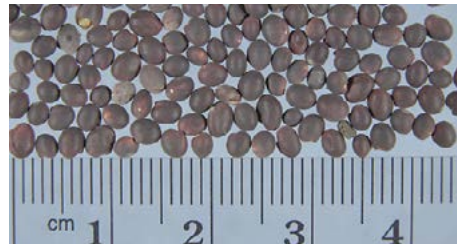
Soybeans
variable in size and color; usually yellow, can be brown or black; smooth; hilum color will vary



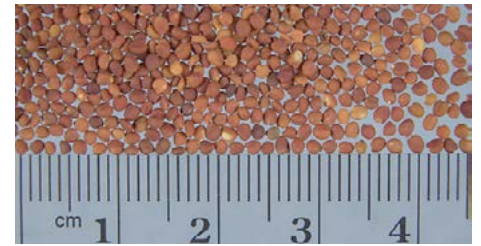
Crimson clover
large compared to other clovers; light tan color; oval-shaped; smooth to smooth-glossy



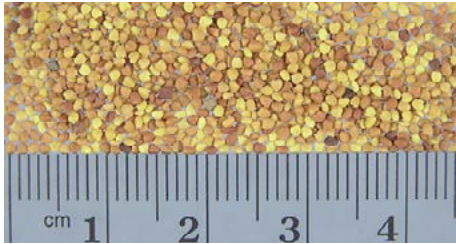
Red clover
mitten-shaped; color varies from yellow to brown to purple



Subterranean clover
large for clover seed; round; purple-black



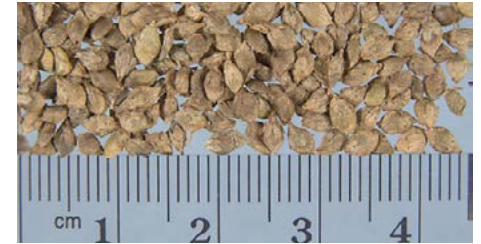
Arrowleaf clover
heart-shaped; color varies from red to burnt orange to black; rough



White clover
small, heart-shaped; color ranges from yellow to dark brown



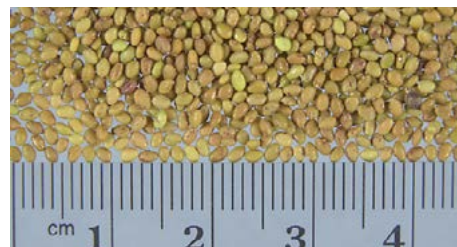
Alfalfa
kidney-shaped; yellowish-brown, sometimes with a green tinge



Kobe lespedeza
usually unhulled, hairy, brown pods; hulled seed is purplish



Korean lespedeza
larger than Kobe; little or no hairs on pods; veins in pod darker; hulled seed, purplish



Sericea lespedeza
seed usually hulled; light brown to green flecked with purple; dark reddish pod



Wild winter peas
rounded, rough seed coat; gray to black color



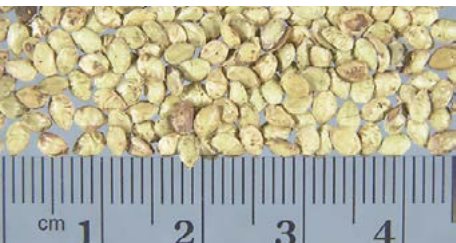
Hairy vetch
seed size variable; smooth; dull black color



Common type vetch
seed size very variable; reddish-brown to greenish-brown, mottled



Pensacola bahiagrass
light to straw-green; slightly longer than wide; smooth



Argentine bahiagrass
larger than Pensacola; more wrinkled; similar color



Dallisgrass
hairy; color and size similar to Pensacola bahiagrass



Ryegrass
has an awn; awn end tapers; other end wide, rounded, flared



Fescue
resembles ryegrass; no awn; broadest at middle; long; pointed at apex



Common bermudagrass
very small; unhulled is light tan; hulled is brown



Brown top millet
usually in a hull; light brown



Pearl millet
resemble pearls



Johnsongrass
light brown to black with gradations; smooth and shiny



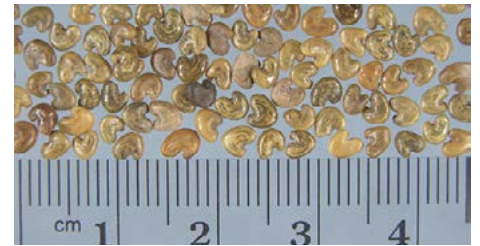
Sudangrass
similar to johnsongrass; usually larger and lighter color; smooth



Cocklebur
brown with hooked spines



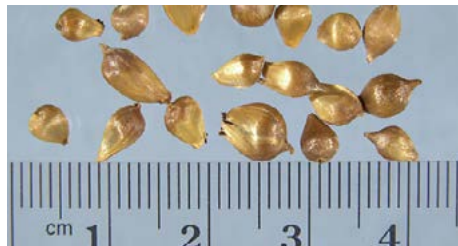
Dock
triangular; light to dark brown



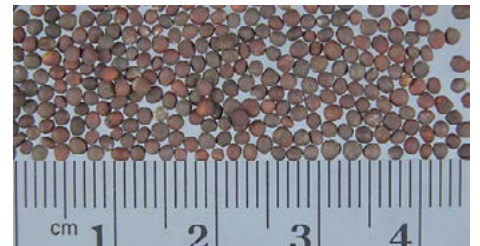
Crotalaria
flat; kidney-shaped



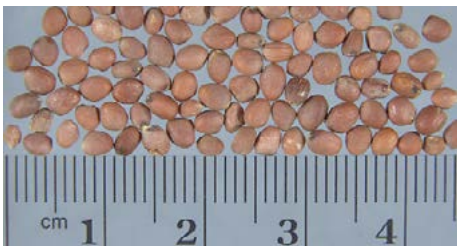
Cheat
elliptic, long; smooth; brown; short awn



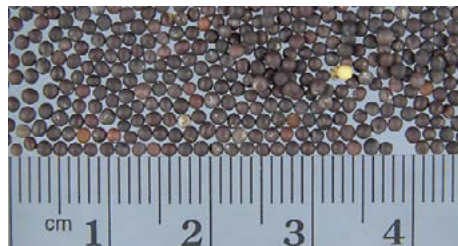
Wild garlic
bulblets; not true seed



Wild turnip
resembles cultivated varieties



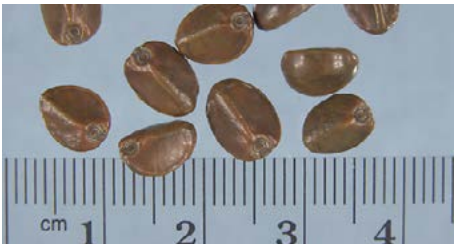
Wild radish
resembles cultivated varieties



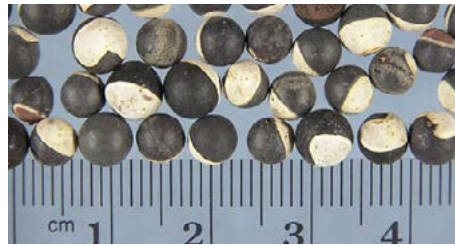
Wild mustard
resembles cultivated varieties



Common morningglory
black to brown; shaped like segments of an orange



Purple moonflower
large; dark brown; smooth; two flat sides



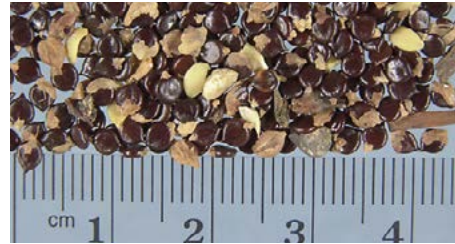
Balloonvine
black and white on same seed; smooth



Hempsesbania or sesbania
dark brown; oblong or rounded



Sicklepod
smooth; brown; ends appear "chopped off"



Smartweed
shiny, dark brown to purple to black; flat or rounded; triangular; pointed at one end



Teaweed
dull brown; two spikes at one end



Wild barley
straw-colored; very chaffy; several spikelike projections



Red rice
rice-shaped; straw-colored to blackish-gray; with or without awns; hulled seed, red to blackish-red

You are encouraged to make your own seed collection. This will help you to identify the plant from which the seed comes. You could use your collection as an exhibit at 4-H events. To make a collection:

1. Thoroughly dry the seeds;
2. Place them in small glass or plastic bottle
3. Put a few moth crystals in the container for insect control.
4. Label container with the name of the seed or number each bottle and make a key.

This method will allow you to quiz yourself without having names displayed.

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