

# **BROOM CORN, MULTI-COLOR**

**100 days - (*Sorghum vulgare*)**

A delightful mix of earth-tone shades, including brown, mahogany, deep red and amber on tall, 7 to 9 foot stalks. Lovely in the garden, but equally delightful in dried flower bouquets

Technically a species of sorghum, broom corn has been used for making brooms since the Dark Ages. Historians record that Benjamin Franklin first brought this unusual plant to the United States in the early 1700s. Though various states produced great amounts of this plant for centuries, production has now nearly ceased because of the high amount of labor required for this crop.

**Sowing Seeds:** After the last spring frost, plant the seeds 1" deep. Thin them to 3-6" apart in rows 3' apart.

**Growing:** Though broom corn tolerates drought and poor soil well, the best brooms grow with adequate moisture and fairly high temperatures. For making brooms or other purposes that require straight straws, the stalk will need to be bent 20-24" from the top to allow the brooms to hang straight down.

**Harvesting:** When the entire broom turns from pale yellow to light green, it is ready to harvest. If the broom begins to take on a red color, it is past the optimum stage for harvesting.

**Saving Multi-colored Broom Corn Corn Seeds:** Save seed from as many plants as possible to promote genetic diversity. As soon as the stalks start to dry, the brooms can be cut and the seed removed by running your hands down the stems. Dry the seeds for several weeks out of direct sunlight. A good test to determine whether the seeds have completely dried is to hit one with a hammer. If it shatters, it is ready to store; if it just looks flattened, continue drying. Store in a cool, dark place for up to four years.

