



Seed Libraries: And Other Means of Keeping Seeds in the Hands of the People

Cindy Conner

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Historically, seed companies were generally small, often family-run businesses. Because they were regionally based, they could focus on varieties well-suited to the local environment. A Pacific Northwest company, for example, would specialize in different cultivars than a company based in the Southeast. However the absorption of these small, independent seed businesses into large multinationals, combined with the advancement of biotechnology resulting in hybrids and GMO seeds, has led to a serious loss of genetic diversity. The public is now at the mercy of the corporations that control the seeds.

In the past few years, gardeners have realized the inherent danger in this situation. A growing movement is striving to preserve and expand our stock of heritage and heirloom varieties through seed saving and sharing opportunities. *Seed Libraries* is a practical guide to saving seeds through community programs, including:

Step-by-step instructions for setting up a seed library

A wealth of ideas to help attract patrons and keep the momentum going

Profiles of existing libraries and other types of seed saving partnerships

Whoever controls the seeds controls the food supply. By empowering communities to preserve and protect the genetic diversity of their harvest, *Seed Libraries* is the first step towards reclaiming our self-reliance while enhancing food security and ensuring that the future of food is healthy, vibrant, tasty, and nutritious.

Cindy Conner is a permaculture educator, founder of Homeplace Earth and producer of two popular instructional gardening DVDs. She is also the author of *Grow a Sustainable Diet*.

Seed Libraries: And Other Means of Keeping Seeds in the Hands of the People Details

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From Reader Review Seed Libraries: And Other Means of Keeping Seeds in the Hands of the People for online ebook

Heidi The Hippie Reader says

Seed Libraries gives readers the tools and know-how to set up their own seed distributing communities. The community could be through a public library, informal seed swap, or other location.

Cindy goes into enough detail about the specifics so that first timers or inexperienced gardeners can get an overview of what will be required, but not so much information so that the reader feels overwhelmed.

Even though I knew a bit about seed because I have an uncle who has owned his own seed company since the early 80's, I found this book useful and informative.

Through his experience, I learned how seed producing mega-companies introduced hybrids into the supply that will only grow one season. This hurt the smaller, local seed companies (like my uncle's) that processed seed for the farmers who grew it and then used it to plant the next crop.

He was forced to expand his company away from seed processing, which was once a major part of his enterprise, in order to stay in business.

The farmers, who only purchased seed every couple of years and grew out their own plants to save money, were forced to buy seed every year. It was a huge shift in how planting and seeds were handled.

It also changed who controlled the food supply.

If there is a way that I can help get seed back into the hands of local people, I'm all for it.

The afterword to this book discusses a legal challenge presented by the state of Pennsylvania to a public library that wanted to start a seed library there. I was wondering what Illinois has to say about seed libraries.

Maybe I should look into it.

I'm very excited about the possibilities that *Seed Libraries and Other Means of Keeping Seeds in the Hands of the People* has sown in my mind. If you're interested in starting one of these in your town, this text is definitely required reading.

I received a free copy of this book through Goodreads First Reads. FTC guidelines: check!

Lynne says

Seed libraries are relatively new, yet come in all sorts of configurations. This is a how-to book of ideas to establish and sustain a library for seeds. It includes many examples of libraries housed and maintained by all sorts of community organizations and institutions. Setting goals is a first step, and determines how to proceed, from engaging help that is cheap or free, seed donors and sponsors, and achieving sustainability through continued participation for those who grow the seed.

If you have already started a seed library or are just about to start one, this book gives some concrete ideas and realities that need to be addressed on obtaining, organizing, storing and circulating seed. Most importantly, the author encourages keeping an open mind with the flexibility to make constructive changes along the way.

Kris says

I liked this book. It has lots of historical information about the seed saving movement in the U.S., provides information on "Big Agra" and how they have systematically changed our seeds and control our seeds, and, finally, how there is a grass roots movement to save seeds and make them available through seeding lending arrangements with local libraries.

Excellent information>

Janet says

I have heard about seed libraries through one of my ALA magazines. It is interesting idea that has gained notice in recent years. Conner talks about how corporations have control over, not just the food supply, but also the seeds used by farmers and home gardeners. I was aware that GMO foods are already in supermarkets but I didn't realize that seed companies are selling GMO seeds as well. I agree with the author that people need to do more to save seeds and crops for future generations. I do some container gardening in my back yard but I don't usually let the plants to go to seed. I am not aware of any seed swaps in my area but my public library has a garden tool lending program.

Conner's book provides information on the importance of saving seeds and how to set up a seed exchange or seed library. She doesn't explain how to save seeds (this varies depending on the plant) but lists numerous resources.

Sweetpea says

I received a free copy of this book from the Goodreads First Reads program in exchange for an honest review. To be honest, I didn't realize that there such things as seed libraries. After reading *Seed Libraries: And Other Means of Keeping Seeds in the Hands of the People*, I completely understand the importance and need for them and was impressed with the wealth of information contained in the book.

Denise Johnson says

I entered the Goodreads giveaway for this title and won. The subject interested me because I had seen a TV story concerning the "Doomsday Vault," a global repository for all known/available seeds to be saved to re-seed the world. This book is so much more than maintaining a locked safe. You will find the information you need to start, run, and manage a seed library.

The idea I found compelling is that saving seeds is a necessity and we have relinquished that responsibility.

We are at the mercy of large seed suppliers, many of them connected in some way to pesticide companies. If I'd thought about it, I would have known my grandparents and great-grandparents saved seeds. You need to know how to save seeds and this book does not cover that aspect (it provides a list of books that do cover seed saving).

The book was most enjoyable when the author was anecdotal. I thoroughly enjoyed learning what some of the people who began seed libraries are doing now.

Because I live in an apartment building in an inner city, I would have liked more than a brief mention of roof gardens. But that was not the intent of the author. (Maybe Cindy Conner will take my shameless hint and write another book.)

This book is exactly what it says it is and does a great job of helping anyone start and manage a seed library?

Suzanne says

I received this book free from Goodreads for an honest review. I truly enjoyed Seed Libraries.

This book is a must read for anyone concerned with our food supply.

PWRL says

SM

Jane says

Not what I'd call riveting, but I had no trouble finishing it. Lots of information about starting a seed library, some information on the importance of heirloom seeds.

My Food for Thought book club is discussing this book next Thursday. I'd like to figure out a way to host a seed swap at the library.

Dan Meier says

A wonderful book on how to start and maintain a seed library. Kind of wish I could have read it before we started the Cedar Falls Seed Library. I'm happy to see that much of what is recommended in the book we have done for the CFSL and there is a lot great advice I plan to implement.

Daniel says

In this age of global capitalism, when large, international corporations are becoming such bad actors, it is good that some people are saving the seeds of regional and heirloom plants. The author covers the basics of setting up a seed sharing library.

The best part of the book is a list of resources and an index at the end.
