

Seed Saving Class: Coming Soon

***** When: September 1st, 1:00-3:00 pm**

***** Where: Boundary County Extension Office**

***** Cost: \$5**

If you want to know more about the basics of seed saving this is the class for you. The class will cover basic botany, pollination, keeping seed pure, seed adaption, and seed best suited to our microclimates. There will be a hands-on demonstration of how to process both wet and dry plant seed. Bring your questions, we'll supply the answers. Seed saving should be a tool in every gardener's tool belt.

Community Seed Library News & Updates

If you're not familiar with the seed library yet, let me acquaint you with how it works. The Seed Library is the brain child of Jody McClintock, long time gardener and seed saver. She had an over abundance of seed and wanted to share the crop, so she started the seed library. It's not a new idea, there are numerous seed libraries sprouting up all over the United States, 800 and growing.

The concept of a seed library is, you take what you need then at the end of the season return some seed. That's the short version. It is not required of you to return seed, however without returning seed the library can't be maintained. In our first year of 2025 we offered 1571 packets of seed, 115 were donated from private gardeners. Of those totals, 1071 packets were dispersed and planted out into gardens in the county. Last year for 2026, we offered close to 3000 pkts. of over 70 different varieties of vegetables, flowers and herbs. We won't know the total number of donated seed this year until the end of seed harvest this Fall, but to date there have been 48 packets of seed donated from local gardens, plus miscellaneous partially used commercial seed packets. Every seed counts. When we do the year-end inventory we will also be able to tell how many seeds were dispersed and planted (hopefully) into private gardens.

We encourage you to sample any and all of the varieties offered. We realize that returning seed from each variety you sample might be an overwhelming task, so we suggest you **Adopt a Seed** and pick **"One"** variety to grow out from seed to seed. Grow enough for food and plant a little extra for seed saving. The packets we offer are generous and have more than enough seed for you to do both. Do your homework, read what you can about seed saving for your chosen crop. See references listed in the brochure "How to Donate Seed". When it comes time to return the seed, fill out the **seed donation form** and include it in your bag of seeds. There is a handout "How to Donate Seed" that would be useful for you to read. Following these guidelines gives other seed savers confidence in the seed offered at this Community based Seed Library.

You will find that the seed offered at the seed library puts a strong emphasis on "keeper" crops, or crops that can be stored in the root cellar, as well as crops that can be frozen, canned or dried. Dried beans, corn, fava and soy beans, as well as onions, beets, celery, tomatoes, cabbage, carrots, parsnips and winter squash, to name a few. This is a natural off-shoot of Jody's interest in self sufficiency and food security. Donating seed back to the library doesn't have to only be from seed offered from the library. If you have a favorite food or family heirloom from which you would like to save seed and donate to the library, it would only enhance the community's choices.

We are moving into our 3rd season of collecting seed for this Community based Seed Library. Crops are maturing and drying down. Seed cleaning, packaging and labeling will take place this fall. Look for updated inventory into the winter months (Jan.-Feb.), this is when we have time to do germination tests and update the current inventory. Be patient, it's a huge job.

A word about this Community based Seed Library. The benefits of having a locally based seed source are immense. By contributing seed you are insuring a gene pool of locally adapted hardy seed from a wide array of local microclimates. Rather than seed purchased from a commercial seed company in the nether reaches of who knows where, usually with climate conditions vastly different from our own back yard, and quite commonly with inferior flavor, instead you have seed that's gone "native". A local seed source gives you not only adaptability and resilience but it also ensures food security. When you save seed and give back, you have "seed" security. Very often large seed companies rely on one grower for a certain variety. This means they are one crop failure away from losing that particular seed. When you participate in a Community based Seed Library you can pool your resources. If I should have a crop failure of a treasured seed, someone else's garden may have a bumper crop of the same seed, thus insuring seed security and resilience. In addition to a secure seed source you have the benefits of selection. Usually when a gardener grows food and goes to the extra work of saving the seed, they are going to save seed from the vegetables that have the best flavor. In addition to that, because our seasons are so short and harvesting seed can be a race against the weather, they will be harvesting seed from plants that mature the earliest. Thus selecting for flavor and early ripening dates, over time this insures a unique seed adapted specifically to our climate in North Idaho. Of course a Community Based Seed Library only works if the community learns how to save seed and donates back. It doesn't work without participants. At this point of our emerging Community Seed Library, we are hoping to build a "community-wide" base of seed savers.

There has never been a more important time to learn how to save a seed.