

THE GLASGOW SEED LIBRARY

Welcome to the Glasgow Seed Library. This pamphlet lets you know how you can use the library: how you can borrow, contribute and save your own seeds.

The Glasgow Seed Library is produced and activated by you. You may leave seeds and take seeds. The library is focused on distributing seeds for food, and on sharing knowledge about how to grow food locally. There are very few rules for the Glasgow Seed Library, but the library only hosts seeds that have not been grown with the use of pesticides.

CCA hosts this library but does not own it. Throughout the year CCA will organise talks and events about seed sharing, food politics and seed autonomy. Library users are encouraged to contribute their knowledge and ideas to this programme.

You will find several varieties of seeds in the library. We focus on heirloom and open-pollinated seeds that are ideal for growing your own food. We would like to encourage all growers to choose as many varieties of seeds available in the library, no matter your growing experience.

What is a Seed Library?

A seed library is a depository of seeds held in trust for the public. Anyone may come to the library and borrow seeds to grow. The idea is to let a few plants 'go to seed' at the end of the growing season. It is suggested that from those plants, you collect the seeds and return the same amount of seed (or more) as you borrowed at the

beginning of the growing season. Seeds are free to take, and it is not a requirement to leave seeds, though it is encouraged for the following year.

The library is both a collection of seeds and a community of growers. Since seed is a living thing, it must be renewed each year somewhere by someone or unique varieties can become extinct. Even growing one variety and returning one seed to the library is a valuable contribution.

Saving seeds counteracts economic, political and cultural threats to our food chain. Leading to healthier soils, genetically diverse agricultural ecosystems and ultimately healthy people and communities.

Seed libraries, unlike seed banks, are dedicated to getting seeds to as many growers as possible each year allowing the varieties to be preserved, while at the same time adapting as needed to local climate and conditions. It also allows us to preserve genetic diversity through non-genetically modified means, preserve cultural heritage and develop strains unique to our own microclimates.

How you can be involved

Most of the seeds that you will find in our library are from open-pollinated or heirloom varieties, that means when the seeds of successive generations are planted they will reliably produce plants just like their parent plants. Be aware that if you deposit or borrow hybrid seeds, the crop yield is likely to be less vigorous and unstable. However, experienced gardeners can, over a number of years, stabilise hybrids as open-pollinators, but this can be a complex task. Our seeds are labelled accordingly.

Open-pollinated seeds

Open-pollination is when pollination occurs by insects, birds, wind, humans, or other natural mechanisms.

Because there are no restrictions on the flow of pollen between individuals, open-pollinated plants are more genetically diverse. This can cause a greater amount of variation within plant populations, which allows plants to slowly adapt to local growing conditions and climate year-to-year. As long as pollen is not shared between different varieties within the same species, then the seed produced will remain true-to-type year after year.

Heirloom seeds

An heirloom variety is a plant variety that has a history of being passed down within a family or community, similar to the generational sharing of heirloom jewellery or furniture.

An heirloom variety must be open-pollinated, but not all open-pollinated plants are heirlooms. While some companies create heirloom labels based on dates (such as a variety that is more than 50 years old), other seed producers identify heirlooms by verifying and documenting the generational history of preserving and passing on the seed.

Glasgow Seed Library seeds are labelled by how difficult they are to save, and how easy they are to grow. Please feel free to try growing any seeds that interest you. When growing to save seed, please try to match the seed-saving difficulty with your gardening expertise. If you are a beginning seed saver, it might be worth choosing to save and return seeds from the easy seed category the first year.

If you are sharing your own seeds, please fill out a blank label for your seeds, so other users can learn how to grow and save them, and know a little about the unique characteristics of your variety

Seed Labelling

Easy - Seeds that are generally easy to grow and save seed from, great for beginners, they are mostly plants that are less likely to cross-pollinate.

Medium - Seeds that are relatively easy to grow but may be difficult to save seed from, these plants may be insect pollinated and are more likely to cross-pollinate.

Advanced - These seeds grow plants that are insect or wind pollinated and are very likely to cross-pollinate with other plant varieties and produce seeds that will grow into a "mystery" plant, potentially making seed saving very difficult.

Taking Seeds

Borrow - Help yourself to a selection of seeds from the library. These are free to anyone. They are contained inside the blue boxes and kilner jars. We recommend taking around 25 seeds per small seed variety and 10 for larger seeds. Please use the sign out sheet when taking seeds so we can keep track.

Sow - Sow your seeds accordingly, follow the notes on the seed envelope as this gives you information on what time of year to sow and conditions for planting. Another key thing to remember, if you are using your own seeds to make a future deposit into the CCA's library, it is not possible to save seeds from F1 hybrids. Your original seed packaging should say if it is an F1 hybrid variety. Seeds from F1 hybrids don't produce crop yields after the first year. The Glasgow Seed Library does not store F1 Hybrid seeds.

Grow & Mature - Allow your seeds to grow and mature into adulthood, please make sure that you do not use any pesticides or plant feed on the seeds you've sown, as the library only accepts organic seeds.

Extract - Once your plant has gone to seed (fully matured) extract the seeds from some of your healthiest and best looking plant for saving and depositing (see below) enjoy your yield and share any excess produce with others.

Sharing / Depositing Seeds

Share - We welcome new deposits of seeds all year round. If you would like to share seeds for others to grow, there are a few simple steps to make a deposit.

Clean & Dry - Do remember to clean and dry your seeds properly. If your seeds are not properly cleaned and dried they will not survive storage, also please be mindful that storing uncleaned/undried seeds could potentially destroy other seeds in the library.

Storage - Add your seed to the catalogue list which lives inside the cabinet, and create a label with the sticker template provided. Kilner jars and envelopes for storing are provided. Please deposit 10-15 large seeds or 20-30 small seeds inside an envelope, and add a completed sticker. If you are sharing a larger number of seeds, please deposit inside a Kilner jar, and attach a completed sticker.

Books and literature

Please feel free to peruse the selection of books contained in the library. These books give further information on seed libraries and growing. There are also books exploring ecology, food and environmental politics, as well as fiction books and poetry. The books are reference only but if you would like to borrow or buy a copy please let our box office staff know.