

How to use the seed library

Saving and sharing your seeds

Graham Public Library



Graham Public Library
211 S. Main Street
Graham, NC 27253
(336) 570-6730

Please be sure to write on the clipboard what seeds you are taking with you so that we can keep track of our inventory and re-stock if necessary. It is not necessary to come to the circulation desk. All the seeds are free. There is no charge to use the seed library.

Take your seeds home and plant them. You don't need a huge garden to grow your own food. You can grow your crops in containers if you don't have the space for a full garden.

Once your plants begin to produce, leave a few of your best plants unharvested so that you will have seeds to save and donate back to the seed library!

when preparing to save seeds the first thing to ask is "Where did the plant come from?" You'll want to save seeds from plants that are grown from heirloom or open-pollinated seeds. If you save seeds from a hybrid variety, the seed from those plants may not grow into anything like the variety for the next borrower.

The next thing to consider is how to collect the seed. The seeds need to be collected when they are mature.

You may need to read up on your plants to know when to harvest your seeds at the proper time.

Once you know the seeds are ready to harvest, it can be as simple as collecting seed pods

or picking fruit and taking out the seeds. For some plants, this means shaking dry seeds into a paper bag, for others, seeds have to be extracted from the pulp and dried.

Once dried, seeds can be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in envelopes or sealed in jars. Don't forget to label your seeds!

To share your seeds, pick up a few blank seed envelopes from the library, place a few seeds in each envelope, and write what it is, the variety if you know, and some brief planting instructions. Bring them to the desk and we will file them in the seed library so they can be shared with the community!

What is a seed library?

The seed library is a free program that encourages residents to plant, share, and save seeds.

The mission of the seed library is to :

- Make free seeds available to anyone in our area to grow their own food.
- Promote gardening and seed saving.
- Promote healthy outdoor activity.
- Provide information, education, and instruction about sustainable organic gardening and seed saving.
- Preserve our agricultural heritage and traditions.
- Build community resilience, self-reliance, and a culture of sharing.

Why a seed library?

For thousands of years, people have cultivated gardens, enjoying the fruits of their labor. Until fairly recent times, saving the previous year's seeds to plant the next crop was an essential part of the process. Today many people are enjoying the return of the seed-saving tradition.

More people have become interested in eating healthy, locally grown food, and as a result, developed an interest in home gardening and in defraying the cost of fresh produce, which is constantly on the rise.

Gardening helps to foster a connection between the gardener and the food they grow and consume.

Growing seeds from the seed library is a great way to teach children about the life cycle of plants while learning new seed-saving skills yourself.

Another benefit of the seed library is that gardening is more affordable to those with limited income because the seeds are free.

All community members are encouraged to donate seeds for the seed library. We accept non-GMO, heirloom, open-pollinated seeds (OP), and commercially packaged seeds. Hybrid varieties marked F1 are not suitable for the seed library.

How to use the seed library

Our seed library is located just inside the library on the left when you enter from the lobby.

You are welcome to browse the seed packets which are filed by type, then by variety. Please try to keep the seed packets in order to avoid confusion.

Select the seeds you are interested in growing. If you are a beginning gardener, we suggest easy-to-grow vegetables such as peas, beans, lettuce, carrots, and radishes.

Please take only one envelope per variety of vegetable so that there is enough for everyone. Only take what you will plant during the season.