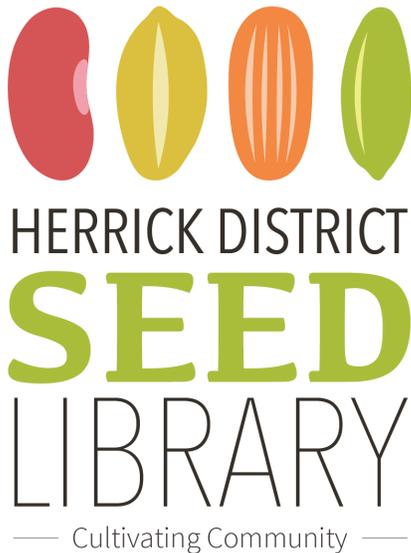


# HDL Seed Library

Location: Herrick District Library - 300 S River Ave., Holland, MI 49423

Contact: [seeds@herrickdl.org](mailto:seeds@herrickdl.org)

Website: <https://herrickdl.org/hdlseedlibrary>



## **Motto: Select, Learn, Grow, Return!**

**WHAT?** Our Seed Library is made up of our primary catalog with free seed packets, a quarterly newsletter with opportunities, events and planting information, a website with resources, an email contact for questions and a series of programming to foster learning.

**WHERE?** The Seed Library is housed in an upcycled card catalog in the lobby of the main library. In 2019, seeds will also be available at our Northside Branch. Events are held at both locations and seeds often go on the road with the book bike, Herrickfest and as giveaways at local parades and events.

**WHO?** Our Collection & Digital Resources Department coordinates packaging, stocking and inventory and handles the website resources. A cross-departmental team answers email questions and creates programming.

**WHY?** The local community borrows free, open-pollinated seeds to plant, grow, save and return. We are supporting local food diversity, independence, self-reliance, and preservation of our unique local heritage through locally acclimated seeds and seed stories.

**HOW?** Cardholders select and self-check packets.

- Limit of 5 packets per visit.
- Seeds are free to keep.
- Return saved seeds, along with a Seed Donation Form.

**For libraries starting a seed library:**

### **About us**

The HDL Seed Library was launched in March 2018. We began with 78 varieties and 800 packs of seeds, anticipating moderate interest. Our inaugural program with Ben Cohen drew 142 community members and wildly exceeded our expectations. By the end of the first month, we had handed out over 2500 packets of seeds, and we finished out the growing year in mid summer, having circulated around 6,000 packs of seeds (35,000 actual seeds).

### **How we planned**

We created a service proposal within our library's strategic framework, and presented it to the Administration and Library Board. By showing that the creation of a seed library was consistent with our mission of "Empowering Community to Connect, Discover and Create," we were able to gain the support for this initiative.

### **How we budgeted**

First year- \$800 for seeds and packaging (not including our card catalog restoration). Our catalog was created in-house from a former card catalog we had in storage.

Second year- \$1500 budgeted for packaging, seeds, marketing and programming supplies

### **Where we got seeds:**

Starter and second year seeds were solicited from heirloom seed companies like Baker Creek Seeds, Seed Savers and High Mowing Seeds. The library often had to pay shipping, but the seeds were free.

### **How we package our seeds:**

First year - we created a barcode for each variety and printed them on each packet. We used white coin envelopes with labels. Mid year we switched to stapling small clear baggies to card stock.

Second year - We are still using small 3"x2" baggies and labels stapled to cardstock, but instead of barcoding each pack, we are barcoding small merchandise bags. Patrons will fill their bag with up to five packs and just scan the bag barcode. We chose to barcode our packs so that patrons would retain the association with their library and check out seeds like they check out other materials.

### **Things to Consider**

Will you limit your collection to certain varieties or offer everything?

How will you track and circulate seeds?

Will you have information on the web?

What resources will you provide for learning to seed save?

Will you let community members sign up for an email list and provide a newsletter?

How will you harness the power of volunteers?

How can you keep your packaging costs as low as possible?

Returns will be slow to come in, so you'll need a plan to sustain your library until they do.

### **About our Seed Catalog**

Our catalog is an upcycled card catalog we had in storage. We added wheels to make it mobile within the building and a staff member painted a mural on the back. We added grow lights underneath so we can grow items in house and have them on display. We use cardboard dividers within the drawers to label types.

### **Our Launch**

We provided press releases and social media postings for our opening event with Ben Cohen. News spread around the community and we had 142 people at our first event. Our marketing team outsourced an amazing launch video for the seed library! ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogPFQj5H2\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogPFQj5H2_M))

### **Our Resources**

We created a page on our website dedicated to the Seed Library (<https://herrickdl.org/hdlseedlibrary>). We keep it populated with the latest seed and gardening resources at the library. All of our documents are also available there. We have planting guides, a seed saving brochure, donation form, tips and links to website. Ben's talk was taped and is available there as well (<https://vimeo.com/259000546>). We also have an email address and a seed team to make contact with people ([seeds@herrickdl.org](mailto:seeds@herrickdl.org)).

### **Moving Forward**

In our second year we will be focusing on a core collection so we can create programming around them. We'll be staging our launch of each type, rather than putting everything out at the beginning of the growing season.