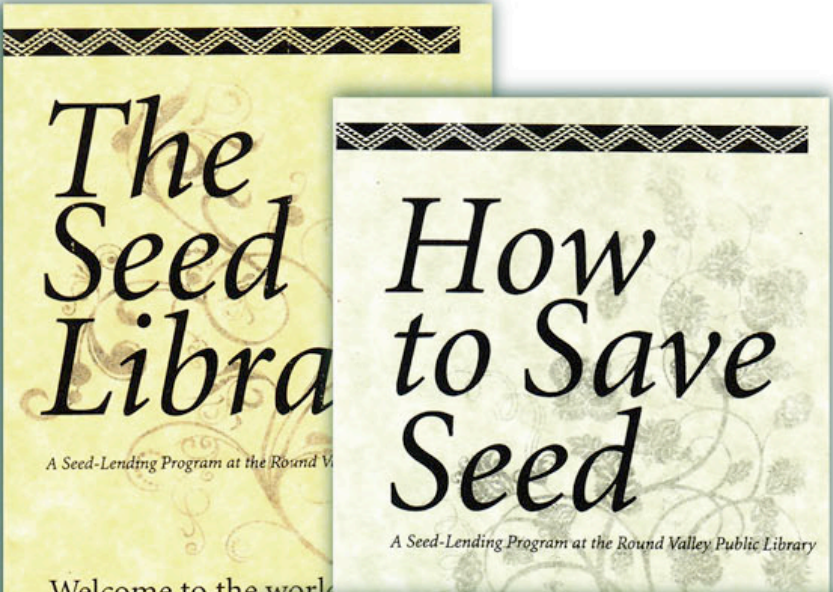


Our Seed Library is happy to share our brochures and information with others wanting to set up a seed-lending program. Check out the Seed Library School Dropbox on the web and don't forget to visit our Facebook Page: facebook.com/TheSeedLibrary. Our goal is to share our rich collection with school and community gardens and home gardeners throughout the valley and beyond!



Welcome to the world of saving and sharing seeds.

The seeds you borrow from are at no financial cost, and yet...

A commitment to growing yourself and your family. We experience the joys of gardening your labor.

At harvest time, please take others. We ask that a portion of the strongest, tastiest, and most to The Seed Library to keep. The more seed we have in our collection, the more people in our community can benefit.

The Seed Library
A Seed-Lending Program at the Round Valley Public Library

Now on Facebook
www.facebook.com/TheSeedLibrary

If you want news on heirloom seeds, seed sovereignty, food justice, growing your own, guerrilla gardening, permaculture, foraging wild food, protecting pollinators, peak soil, food preservation, and the occasional snarky cartoon, then "Like" us and "Share" us!



A new place where open-pollinated seeds are kept and shared with local gardeners. Check out, grow, harvest, and return seeds to share with others. Learn to save seed. Protect heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables. Opening at noon on Friday, June 14th, inside the Round Valley Public Library.



Mendocino County library offers seed lending



Pat Sobrero, a local seed librarian for the seed library at the Round Valley Public Library on Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2013 in Covelo. (BETH SCHLANKER/The Press Democrat)

The Press Democrat

Directly across from the non-fiction aisle in remote Round Valley's small but modern public library sits an old-fashioned card catalogue representing a growing trend: seed lending.

"We're the first in Mendocino County," said Pat Sobrero, the Covelo library technician who initiated the seed-lending library in June.

Seed saving and lending is an old tradition that is enjoying a resurgence that's made its way into public libraries.

Round Valley Seed Library



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The first modern-day seed library in the United States is believed to be the Bay Area Seed Interchange Library, or BASIL, established in about 1999 at the Berkeley Ecology Center.

Now there are at least 170 such libraries in more than 35 states, said Rebecca Newburn, co-founder of the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library, located in the Richmond Library since 2010. At least a dozen countries also are listed online as having seed lending libraries.

About two dozen are in Northern California with more to come. Seed libraries currently are being considered for Healdsburg and Ukiah, library officials confirmed. Both need volunteers, as in Covelo, to step forward to make the endeavor work.

They arise for a variety of reasons that include promoting biodiversity, local food and local independence and the desire to return seed sources to the public realm.

"By reclaiming the tradition of seed saving, we are taking seeds out of the hands of big corporations and putting them back into the hands of backyard gardeners" Sobrero said.

Not to be confused with seed banks, which are dedicated to preserving seeds, libraries freely share germplasm — tissue from which new plants can be grown, typically in the form of seeds — asking only that members collect and return seeds for others to use when they can.

A number of groups, such as Sebastopol-based West County Community Seed Exchange, periodically meet to share seeds but libraries like Covelo's make seeds readily available throughout the week.

"The average person can walk in off the street" and walk out with packets of seeds, Sobrero said.

She's hoping it will encourage more people to grow their own food.

"There are people who can't afford to spend \$100 on seeds. I easily spend \$200 a year on seeds, she said, noting each packet can cost between \$2 and \$5.

Because it's new, the library's seeds have been supplied through donations from seed-producing companies, including Covelo-based Sustainable Seed Company, which specializes in certified organic heirloom seeds.

With time, Sobrero expects the library will rely increasingly on seeds returned to the library by area residents like Emily Ellickson-Brown, one of about 20 seed library members so far.

"I'm going to try to contribute tomato seeds this year," said Ellickson-Brown, a teacher and public radio host who also works at a local restaurant and volunteers at the library.

Sobrero plans to collect and donate seeds from her garden's tomatoes, beans, lettuce, and corn.

Seeds from tomatoes, beans, peas and lettuce are some of the easier to save, Sobrero said.

"Tomatoes, you squeeze out the seeds, add a bit of water, let then ferment for 3 days or so, then wash and dry. Beans and peas you let dry on the plant, then collect them," she said.

Other vegetables are more prone to cross pollination and should not be harvested by beginners because the seeds may not produce the same variety from which they were harvested, she said.

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Sobrero plans to offer classes on seed saving techniques and meanwhile encourages people to read up on the process.

Learning that art is important to the seed library's mission of promoting healthy diets and food independence in Round Valley and the world at large, she said.

"Food you grow at home not only tastes better, it makes the community more resilient."

(You can reach Staff Writer Glenda Anderson at 402-0473 or glenda.anderson@pressdemocrat.com.)

