

Welcome to the unveiling of the **Seeds of Illinois Library (SOIL)**, the first, unique seed library in Northern Illinois. The focus of SOIL is to facilitate open, free distribution of seed and plants

#### Background:

"There is a growing demand among Illinois gardeners to start up and take part in seed libraries," state Sen. Sam McCann, a Republican from Plainview, said in June (2016) when the legislature sent the bill to the governor for approval. "This legislation will give gardeners reassurance that state government won't move to make it hard to operate those libraries," McCann said. Gov. Bruce Rauner signed Public Act 099-0827 into law on Aug. 16, 2016.

Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/opinion/ct-sta-slowik-seed-library-st-0125-20170124-story.html>

The bottom line is that this bill changes the Illinois state seed law, allowing the free exchange of seed and plant material among Illinois citizens without a lot of red tape and expense.

The stipulations are that the seeds and plants must be provided free without any incumbrance, such as an expectation of something in return, however we can ask for voluntary contributions.

Not having known that there was a law allowing or disallowing this practice, I'm afraid that I have been breaking the law as I have been giving away seeds and plant materials for many years, especially for Mother's Day Gifts.

Anyway, let's proceed:

#### **What's a Seed Library?**

"A seed library is a place where community members can get seeds for free ~~or for a nominal fee~~ and is run for the public benefit. Many seed libraries are open in public libraries and community centers. For some communities, getting folks to garden and grow some of their own food is the focus. For other communities, seed libraries may be created as an important step to develop a network of seed savers, to create locally adapted varieties, to respond proactively to climate change or loss of gene integrity due to GMOs or to preserve genetic diversity. Seed saving is something humans have done for over 10,000 years. Rejoin the ritual and start to save seed and share the abundance in your community."

<http://seedlibraries.weebly.com/>

#### **Main Article:**

### **What is a Seed and why should I care?**

Wikipedia explains that: "A **seed** is an embryonic plant enclosed in a protective outer covering. Many structures commonly referred to as "seeds" are actually dry fruits."

A seed is a living, baby plant in its embryonic state, ready to be nurtured back to life to fulfill its mission.

In the third day of the creation of the Earth, God placed seeds upon it. I guess that seeds belong to God, and thus all man. If this is so, then why are men trying to patent and hybridize seed to take it out of the reach of man? THEY want to own the seed.

Now that we have the capability to grow, save and share seeds freely, we have the ability to help everyone grow their own food.

To secure a large supply of seeds to start the seed library, I have applied to a well-known seed company donation department to try to secure older seeds for this startup project. They have sent me a 4# box containing 310 seed packets of 60 varieties, including of vegetables, herbs and flowers. I specifically asked for flowers to help feed our pollinators and beautify our property too.

I also have many seed and plant varieties from my own garden to contribute to the mix including red, black and champagne currents, gooseberries, my newest additions of serviceberry, honeyberry and soon, goji berry bushes. I have a several different mint plants and some leftover Basil plants for indoor growing. I also have seed from the famous Bystrom Cherry Tomato, given to me by the late Melvin Lee Bystrom (1926-2000) in 1994, which I have been growing out ever since. I have also a source for Fuji, Candy Crisp and Jonathan Apple scion wood for grafting.

An example of the bounty of seed production, I recently counted the seeds in one cherry tomato and found 105. That's a potential of 105 plants for next year. If I only get 10 tomatoes per plant, that's 1050 seeds. If I only plant 10 tomato plants, that's 10500 seeds. WOW!  
Other seed producing plants are just as prolific.

Many seeds can be collected from your garden and saved for use next year. That's how the pioneers did it. (Caveat, the seeds must be open-pollinated, non-gmo, and non-hybrid, because only they will reproduce true to variety.)

Now for the Nuts and Bolts of a Seed Library,.(more will be discussed in a future meeting)

Benefits of a Seed Library:

- A good place for first-time gardeners to get their seed.

- New people can get the experience of growing a garden and providing food for their family

- Source of seed that is adapted to the local area

- Provides a secure source of seed from year to year

- New varieties are available for people to try

SOIL will be offering open-pollinated and heirloom (also open-pollinated) seed and plants to the community free of charge or obligation. If you can reproduce them and donate some back to the library, it will help us to develop some sustainability. Also, if you have plants you want to donate, they would be welcome. Some hybrids seed will be received by the commercial donors, but I don't want them back.

What is needed now is for people to participate by saving seed from their own garden today, help with the organization of the seed library and participate in its operation.

We also need people with an ear to the news to be aware of and alert to people and especially large corporations, who might try to restrict our ability to save and share seeds.

"Also remember to buy (or store) a year's supply of garden seeds so that, **in case of a shortage**, you will have them for the following spring." (Featherstone, Vaughn J., *Food Storage*, Ensign April 1976).

This is seed saving, whether from your own crops or from a store.

## **Summary:**

If you are interested in increasing your knowledge and skills or sharing on these subjects of gardening, seed saving, etc., please contact me. Let's get started now so we can be confidently prepared for an unpredictable future. Heavenly Father loves us and will help us to be self-reliant

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## **Self-Reliance Club Information:**

The next October Tuesday SRC meeting will be on the second Tuesday of the month, 10 October at 6 PM at the Goodwin Home. The topic will be apple processing using the whole apple producing apple juice/cider, apple sauce, apple butter and apple cider vinegar. Please RSVP if you intend to attend so we can plan with supplies, etc. Bring your children.

The first October Saturday SRC meeting will be on 28 October at 10 AM at the Goodwin Home, 610 N. Alpine Road, Rockford, 2nd house South of Alpine Building. The topic will be how to save seeds of tomato, pepper and cucumber fruits, also stratification of shrubs and seeds. Please RSVP if you intend to attend so we can plan with supplies, etc. We will provide lunch for this meeting, probably whole wheat chili or something else scrumptious. Bring your children.

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If you wish to opt out of this email list, please send me an email of such request. Also, if you know of anyone else who might be interested, let me know.

Sincerely,  
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