

SEED LIBRARIES RESOURCE NEWSLETTER PART 2

LOCAL SEED COMPANIES

Nova Scotia Independent Seed Companies:

Buy from them or grow for them



Seed Companies that carry open-pollinated seeds:

Buy from them or grow for them



At our “virtual KTM” (March 2016), Av Singh shared this image.

Many seed companies sell a combination of their own seed, locally grown seed, and seed sourced elsewhere. Some sell OP, hybrid, organic, and non-organic.

Websites/catalogues will usually tell you what you need to know when sourcing seed.

A few additional notes:

MAPPLE FARM. Weldon, NB. A small operation run by Greg Wingate, Mapple Farm only sells the seed he grows locally and specializes in unique varieties of seeds and tubers difficult to find anywhere else.

www.mapplefarm.com.

PEI SEED ALLIANCE. Across PEI. A new farmer-led partnership on PEI, these farmers package up their surplus seeds at the end of the season to sell to home gardeners. They are just 1 season in, but have diverse and regionally adapted (mainly veg) seed. Contact Josie Baker at the Cooper Institute.

PERFECTLY PERENNIAL HERBS & SEEDS. Pouch Cove, NL. This small seed company specializes in varieties that perform well in NL's unforgiving climate. Supplier of The Seed Company. www.perfectlyperennial.ca.

THE SEED COMPANY. St. John's, NL. This company, until recently, had a similar model to Vesey's and Halifax Seed (locally based but selling primarily internationally sourced seed). In the last 2 years they've increased their focus on local and organic. www.theseedcompany.ca.

THE EASTERN CANADIAN ORGANIC SEED GROWERS' NETWORK (ECOSGN). This is not a seed company but a learning network founded by 4 seed companies in NS (Hope Seeds), QC (Tourne-sol), and Ontario (Hawthorn and Greta's Organic Seeds.) Their main activity is a bi-annual conference and they are a body of Seeds of Diversity Canada.

SEEDS OF DIVERSITY CANADA. Not a seed company but keeper of a major public seed collection based in Waterloo. SODC facilitates seed savers' sharing their seed across Canada. Join to learn more!

FINDING GOOD SEED. Have you tried the national database *The Ecological Seed Finder*? Give it a whirl at: www.seedsecurity.ca/en/on-line-seed-services/online-seed-service-finder.

Selling high quality, regionally adapted, locally produced, open-pollinated seeds is not really a lucrative business. Companies may see the value in supporting seed libraries but not have the capacity or stock to accommodate donations, or may have limitations on what they can provide, when. Offering their seed through a public collection may cause concern that the seed won't get distributed in a timely manner, which affects seed quality, and potentially leads to negative experiences in the garden or a negative view of that company, neither of which helps the seed movement. Procuring local seed either by donation (or prioritizing limited funds for their purchase) is a powerful way to support good seed, and educate about it! Cultivating an understanding of your local seed company's capacity, and committing to protect the integrity of their seed is a great way to start what could be a very fruitful relationship!

TRAINING RESOURCES

There is a vast wealth of information to support beginner seed savers. Refer to the March “Follow-up Notes” for recommended training and learning resources. Some were generated by The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, and others by very reputable and longstanding organizations with a vested interest in cultivating good seed.

- ◆ One role of a (seed) library is to engage learners and support them in achieving their own personal learning goals. To this end, you can obtain and make available magazines, journals, books, and manuals on the topic of seed saving. Seeds of Diversity’s [Seed Bibliography](#) outlines many resources, inc. their own, [excellent manual](#). A quick Google or YouTube search will turn up seemingly endless resources like the “[Beginner’s Guide to Seed Saving](#)” by Rodale.
- For some learners, nothing beats a personal touch. Your more advanced growers could be trainers for the wider membership. We have a great [Train the Trainer Toolkit](#) that can help them learn facilitation techniques, and provides them with basic slides and activities to run a workshop. Pairing growers with different expertise can help lessen the pressure and provide a well rounded learning experience. We’d be happy to list them on our [national list of trainers](#).
- * You might be each others’ best training resource! Use your contact list to stay in touch and visit each other, and share resources as often as you can. Setting up a FB group or email listserv might help you share resources, coordinate rideshares to each others’ events and meetings, and lots more.

ACORN’S GOALS FOR SEED LIBRARIES INCLUDE achieving high levels of public “seed literacy” through our network; achieving high quality seed in the system; and developing an engaged, supportive, and self-sustaining network of public seed collections in the region.



FUNDRAISING RESOURCES

Providing an exhaustive list of potential funding partners suitable for each region is far beyond the scope of this document. However, it’s true that gardens, food, and (yes!) seed are increasingly becoming a much bigger presence in our communities, which comes with opportunities.

- If you are operating as part of an existing non-profit or charitable organization (library, community garden, public school, etc.), do your best to ensure that your seed library is represented in grants that are already being generated. Being able to speak to how many people you serve, how many varieties or packets you are distributing/receiving, how many volunteers you’ve engaged, and activities you’ve hosted will help show your impact and importance!
- Seeds are an integral part of food security. They also have an impact on active lifestyles, rural sustainability, urban greening, and lots of other areas of concern for county and municipal bodies, who often have small grants to disburse. It can be relatively easy to secure amounts under \$500 from your local government.
- Your membership - the people who use the resources/services you’re providing - can be part of the financial sustainability effort. Without compromising access, you can pair a training and a fundraising activity to good effect. What about a film screening with a suggested donation at the door?
 - The trilogy of films *Seeds of Freedom*, *Seeds of Sovereignty*, *Seeds of Justice*, created by the [Gaia Foundation](#) and partners, comes complete with a screening toolkit and lots of further info and resources. There is no licensing fee to show and they’ve made it easy. Accessing the films is detailed on their “[Take Action](#)” page.
 - [The Gift](#), a very short film featuring Canadian Dan Jason, Salt Spring Seeds, BC.
- [USC Canada’s I am a Seed Saver website](#) features short films, educational resources, and activities that you can draw on to tailor an event that raises awareness and generates a donation-worthy benefit for participants. Check it out.
- What about Rotary Clubs? 4H Clubs? Local garden supply stores, landscaping service providers or other businesses that may operate on a similar ethic to yours? Even big chains like Sobeys, Loblaws, Canadian Tire, and Staples generally have small “slush funds” set aside for community groups or gatherings. They may need