

January 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Duluth Public Library as it works to find an exemption to the seed "selling" laws of the State of Minnesota so that it can continue to provide heirloom seeds to patrons who wish to make use of them. As the director of the Houston Community Garden in Southeast Minnesota for the past six years, and as an avid gardener myself, I ask for a common sense interpretation of the law, one that promotes the freedoms we deserve to grow our own food and empower others to do the same.

At the Houston Community Garden, we save seeds each year and use them to plant the next year. This practice is certainly not new, as the seeds we started with six years ago came from Seed Savers in Deborah, Iowa and represent varieties of plants and flowers that have been thoughtfully saved and shared for centuries.

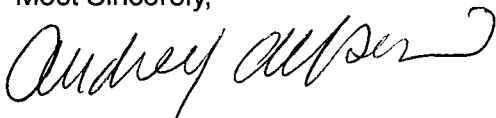
The saving of our seeds also provides a valuable curriculum link with the local school children, whose contributions to the garden from seed planting to seed saving have become an important experience for them during school and is a highlight for the community. Pure joy is the only way I can describe the experiences the children have at the garden as they discover, for instance, where sunflower seeds really come from, and that the peas and beans you eat are the same peas you plant, just dried.

And because Mother Nature is a generous spirit, we always have more seeds than we need, so the children enjoy making hand made seed packets and stuffing them with seeds to share with their families. What the heck kind of message is being sent to kids when saving and sharing seeds this way is considered wrong or illegal? Why can't a library, which already shares "seeds" of knowledge and imagination through the lending of books, share seeds of plants and flowers that promote independence, sustainability and better health?

If some seeds don't come up, oh well! What a great opportunity for conversation about germination and viability and a chance to plant some more, again. There has been no money exchanged, no promises made, just the potential for life and wonder passed on again and again. It's the risk you take when you borrow anything. No one who borrows a book from the library and finds it disappointing or disagreeable demands their wasted time spent reading it to be returned. They simply return it and try a different book.

Seeds and the practice of saving them should not be a commodity owned only by those who can afford to buy them or sell them or have the knowledge to do so. People have a fundamental right to share and save the seeds for personal use. Don't make it a crime to share knowledge and wonder and promote food independence and better health. Rather than inhibiting them, your agency should be encouraging libraries to provide seeds and educate patrons about the art and science of seeds and planting them.

Most Sincerely,



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