

January 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Duluth Public Library Board, the Duluth Public Library's advisory board.

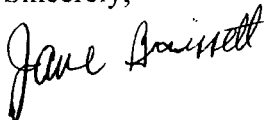
The Board is concerned about the future of the Duluth Public Library's Seed Library, which is a free service that facilitates sharing of locally grown and saved seed. Recently the Minnesota Department of Agriculture informed the DPL that its Seed Library violates the Minnesota Seed Law (Minn. Stat 21.80 et. seq.), which includes requirements for sellers to test seeds for germination percentage, adhere to complex label requirements, and apply for a seed permit. The law was designed to protect consumers from inadequately or illegally labeled seed and to promote fair competition.

Although money is not exchanged at the Seed Library – the seeds are shared among individuals on a voluntary, noncommercial basis – the Minnesota Seed Law definition of selling includes giving seeds away and exchanging them. Strict compliance with the law as written could result in shutting down the Duluth Seed Library and preventing citizen gardeners, schools, and community organizations from interpersonal seed sharing.

The Duluth Public Library Board advocates changes to the Minnesota Seed Law that support seed sharing through the Duluth Seed Library, other seed libraries, and among individuals. Those proposed changes include removing non-commercial, free seed exchange from any requirements for labeling, testing, and permitting under the law.

The Board supports the long legacy of unregulated interpersonal saving and sharing of seeds in Minnesota. We believe that seeds, like books, should be valued, preserved, and freely shared among community members as they also contain a record of the past and the wisdom of previous generations.

Sincerely,



Jane Brissett, President
Duluth Public Library Board