



2016 Project Spotlight

Home Food Production

Cherokee County Seed Library at Hickory Flat Library

Served by Cherokee County Extension and MGEVs

Learn

Serve

Grow

In the fall of 2015, Cherokee County Extension Volunteers (MGEVs) began work on a unique project with Cherokee County Extension and the Sequoyah Library System. In March of 2016, the Cherokee County Seed Library was launched at Hickory Flat Library, with plans to open a second seed library location in 2017.

By establishing a seed library, Cherokee County Extension and MGEVs endeavored to increase the community's interest in home gardening. Seed saving is a time honored tradition that allows for the selection and perpetuation of plants that have particular value to a gardener, whether it is an especially early and tasty tomato or an especially vigorous and drought adapted hollyhock. Saving the seeds of favorite plants for future use contributes to the biodiversity of local communities and connects family generations. Many gardeners enjoy the same beans or okra their parents and grandparents grew.

The seed library is free to the public and allows users to "check out" vegetable, herb, and flower seeds. These seeds can even be shared with others. When seeds are checked out from the library, a membership form is completed. To assist visitors in making their selections, MGEVs prepared customized and informative seed packet labels that provide instructions on how to grow each seed variety found in the library. These seeds are arranged in an antique dresser according to their difficulty of seed saving. The dresser was customized by Cherokee County MGEV, Gerald Phillips.

At the end of the growing season, seed borrowers return seeds from their successful plants to the library. This practice stocks the library's inventory and ensures that the library contains seeds that are hardy in the local growing environment. To start the seed inventory, donations were made from Seed Savers Exchange, local seed representatives from Botanical Interests, Southern Exposure Seed Company, and local gardeners.

In just under one year, the library has had over 80 seed borrowers visit. This seed saving project has been featured in the Cherokee Tribune newspaper as well as Canton and Woodstock Life magazines. Also, the project won the Innovations in Urban Agriculture award at the 2016 GACAA meeting. Cherokee MGEVs look forward to expanding this project and further impacting the community by spreading gardening knowledge through sharing seeds. This project could easily be adopted in all Georgia counties.



2016 Project Contributions:

108 Volunteer Hours

80+ members joined library

Special thanks to MGEVs working hard to make this project successful!



The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program prepares volunteers to support UGA Cooperative Extension in delivering gardening information to Georgia's citizens and communities. Since 1979, Master Gardeners and UGA Extension have helped Georgians become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible.