

# Library Receives Grants for Seed Library and Gardening Initiatives



According to the National Gardening Association, 35% of households in the US grow food either at home or in a community garden, up 200% in the last ten years. In keeping with the trend, the Library recently applied for and received two generous gardening grants.

The Main Library received a grant from the George E. Archer Foundation to support a series of gardening programs for preschool and school-aged children, the purchase of a bench in the Children's Garden, and the start of a seed library. The George E. Archer Foundation strives to help boys and girls learn about gardening in South Central Indiana, providing grants that support gardening education initiatives for youth.

The seed library is a collection of non-invasive, non-GMO food and flower seeds that you can take to plant at home. Some seeds are organic, some are heirloom, and some are pollinator-friendly. Seeds can be found in The Commons on the second floor of the Main Library.

"The Seed Library offers families the opportunity to work together cohesively," said Ginny Hosler, Children's Community Engagement Librarian. "Among other benefits, gardening is a great way for kids to grow social and emotional skills. Gardening with their caregivers also helps develop a family support system, which can empower youth throughout their entire life."

While gardening can increase access to nutritious foods and help save on groceries, purchasing seeds can be expensive and restrictive.

"It's exciting to remove another barrier to families and individuals growing their own food," said Morning Wilder, Adult Community Engagement Librarian. "In addition to offering free seeds, we'll provide educational experiences to support food autonomy, interest in the natural world, and hands-on learning."

The Ellettsville Branch Library also received a grant from the Smithville Charitable Foundation to install raised garden beds and a bench and to provide resources to begin gardening programming. The Smithville Charitable Foundation has supported the needs of central and southern Indiana since 2007.

"The garden will be a space where patrons of all ages can help library staff cultivate vegetables or native plants. Any produce grown will be donated back to the Ellettsville community," said Jane Cronkhite, Associate Director. "The garden will be open for everyone in the Ellettsville community to view, sit and read in, and enjoy."

The seed library is available now. Related programming at both branches will begin in the spring.

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