

Adopt a House Plant

[Blue Island Public Library](#)

Children

|

Teens

|

Young Adult

|

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Adopt a House Plant

Aug 13, 2021

Free

□□

Byline

Amy Dittmeier, Marketing Coordinator & Programming Librarian, Blue Island (Ill.)
Public Library

Adopt a House Plant was a "plant swap," where people could come and pick up an indoor plant, share cuttings of their own, or drop off a plant they no longer wanted.

Advanced Planning

We started planning three months in advance. The idea for the program started because I had a spider plant that had more than 20 spiderettes (a.k.a. baby spider plants), and I had already given so many to my friends. I started rooting those in preparation for the program and put out a call to library staff for plant donations.

Marketing

We promoted the event on our website, social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), and in local publications (Patch and newspapers). We also had in-house promotion with fliers. Social media ended up being our strongest promotional tool.

We have an active seed library and gardening community, and Facebook was a good way of connecting those people to this event.

Budgeting

We didn't spend any money on this program as we had all the materials on hand. We had enough plastic pots, soil and vessels to transport plant cuttings that we did not need to purchase additional materials.

If you were looking to replicate this at your library and don't have an active gardening community, I would suggest investing in some potting soil and cheap pots.

Day-of-event Activity

We set up a few tables in our meeting room and placed the plants on the table. I made sure to have my laptop on hand to look up information about indoor plants I didn't know much about to help connect people to the right plant for their space.

We only needed one staff member for this event.

Program Execution

We had about 12 people come to the event in an hour time span. I didn't anticipate so many people bringing plants to share! We ended up having just as many plants as we started with.

I got feedback that people wished more people came out, but considering we're still in a pandemic and people are wary of meeting in public, I'm happy with the turnout. The community members who came were all very knowledgeable about plants and enjoyed talking with others about what plants (indoor and outdoor) they were growing at home.

This was the first time we did a program about indoor plants. We have an avid gardening community and seed library, but this program showed we should do more indoor plant programs too!

I was surprised about the turnout, and I think we did it in a way that made everyone feel comfortable. We had lots of feedback after the program about how people enjoyed getting new plants for their homes.

Advice

It's never too early to plan ahead. If you are an avid indoor plant person, start taking cuttings from your plants at least three months ahead of the program. It's nice to offer plants in pots for new plant owners, but some more advanced gardeners may appreciate plant cuttings too.

Make sure to have a device with internet access to look up plant care facts.

Since Programming Librarian published this article, our readers have tried the program at their own libraries! Here's what they have to say:

Feedback

Called ours "Drop-in Houseplant Swap". 80 attendees our 1st year (2025), doing it again on April 29, 2026! We collected cuttings and plants from staff first and collected pots as well to be swap (8 inches diameter or less) to start the program off.

— Chelsea Lord, Adult Programming Librarian, Mount Prospect Public Library

[Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.](#)

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images



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Seed Swap

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)

Aug 2, 2017

Adults (21 and up)+ | \$

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[Hypertufa Pots](#)

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)

Apr 1, 2021

Children (9 and under)+ | \$\$\$

[Image](#)



The Seed Library

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)

Tweens (10-12)

Teens (13-16)

Adults (21 and up)

Intergenerational