Operation Gardeners' Advisory

Tulsa City-County Library

Intergenerational

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Jan 13, 2023

Free

Byline

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Tulsa City-County Library has had a seed library at some locations since 2014 but the pandemic hit just as Tulsa’s spring planting season began. We were completely closed until mid-May 2020. Meanwhile, everybody and their brother had taken up gardening. How could we get as many seeds as possible in Tulsa gardens while offering only curbside service?

Advanced Planning

As soon we were allowed back in the building, we got to work helping the legion of pandemic gardeners find the right seeds for Tulsa’s challenging summers. First, we created annotated Bibliocommons lists of the most reliable seeds for Oklahoma, with specific lists for small gardens, container gardens, big gardens and herb gardens. All of them included some cottage garden flowers, too, because we all needed a little cheering up. We shared these on social media so customers could request the seeds they wanted. Next, we made bundles of three to five packets of seeds for customers who couldn't decide what to pick.

Marketing

We relied on social media while offering curbside only service and displays and signs within the library after reopening.

Budgeting

No expenditures beyond staff time.

Seed purchases were funded by our Trust.

Day-of-event Activity

Our biggest challenge was not having enough bundles! I quickly learned not to post about seeds and then take the next day off.

Program Execution

Our first post about bundles blew up our Facebook page and we ran out within a few hours. We continued making different lists and bundles all summer and fall such as "Container Friendly", "Eat the Rainbow", "Fall Veggie Gardening" and even "Microgreens on the Kitchen Counter" (no, you can't save seeds from microgreens

but they're fun and tasty). Several locations grew microgreens on their windowsills and posted their mini-farm progress on social media.

Now that we're open, we still make these lists and bundles as needed, especially to introduce new varieties and methods.

The recommended seeds flew off the shelves, but not as quickly as the bundles. Customers really enjoyed the "gardeners' advisory," trying new plants and saving their own seeds. Seeds were the only physical collection whose circulation actually increased in 2020, at one point 75% over 2019. Now, more people know about this resource and the seed library won't stop growing. We've even seen a big increase in "returns," i.e. donations of home-saved seeds.

Advice

Be sure to recommend what you have a lot of and what your customers can plant right now.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
seed_bundles_for_fall.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image





More Programs

Jun 8, 2015
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$
Image



Seed Swap

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