Seed Swap

Frankfort Public Library

Adults

Seed Swap

Jun 8, 2015

$101-250

$$
Byline

Mary Sustar, Adult Services Librarian, Frankfort Public Library District

The Frankfort (Ill.) Public Library Seed Swap was like a potlock, but for seeds. Participants brought one variety of fresh heirloom seeds to share, and they went home with several more varieties. Master gardeners were on hand to share valuable gardening tips to the program attendees.

Advanced Planning

Our goal was to facilitate community awareness, community development and access to information.

Planning began three months in advance. The program was planned and managed by one librarian. Our graphic designer created materials. A second librarian assisted at the event. Below are the steps we took to plan the event.

- The Will County Master Gardeners were contacted. Two gardeners committed to lending their line and expertise to the event.
- The Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library and the Southern Exposure Seed Exchange websites were consulted on information pertaining to how to organize a seed swap.
- The program description was written and our graphic designer created marketing materials and designed our custom stamp for stamping envelopes (see slideshow).
- A Reader's Advisory Brochure was created, highlighting books from our collection and websites for seed swaps, heirloom seeds and historic plant preservation.
- Envelopes were purchased and stamped, table signs were printed (found on the Richmond Grows website), beverages were purchased and other supplies (pens, pencils, plastic spoons and small shallow bowls) were gathered in preparation of the event.

Marketing

We marketed for this event in a variety of ways. We made signs and fliers available in the library to our patrons. We also sent fliers to a local nursery to advertise the event. Various online media outlets were used to advertise for the Seed Swap — we made Facebook posts, put an article in our e-newsletter, and sent an email to our patrons dedicated to the event. We also sent targeted emails and made phone calls to community members we thought would be interested.

Budgeting

We purchased coin envelopes for $25; a custom-designed rubber stamp for $48; ink for $5; and wine, sparkling juice and water refreshments for $50.

To cut down on cost, we used existing cups and napkins. Further expenses can be cut by using blank envelopes instead of stamping them and by not serving beverages.

Day-of-event Activity

An hour before the program started, two staff members set up the event. They arranged tables so that attendees could easily navigate around them. Each table was equipped with a plant family sign, shallow plastic bowls for seeds, stamped envelopes and pens. Staff members also set up tables for the master gardners (who had their own goodies to share). A refreshment table was also set up with beverages and signs. Staff members made tape, rubber bands, Posti-it notes, extra envelopes and pens available to attendees. We displayed relevant books throughout the program.

During the program, we invited guests to put their seeds on the appropriate seed family table, explained how the swap would work and invited participants to jump in! Once most attendees had arrived, the host introduced the master gardeners and reviewed the swapping procedure.

Program Execution

We had 22 attendees participate in the program. The participants provided a mix of purchased heirloom seeds and seeds harvested from their own gardens. We were pleased with the diversity of the crowd. A few curious patrons also joined the event after visiting the library; we had plenty of seeds to share with them.

Overall, we received very positive feedback. Participants enjoyed mingling with one another and our atmosphere was very casual. Attendees were especially pleased with the ideas and expertise of the master gardeners. Our participants expressed interest in future seed swaps and other future gardening programming.

We were quite satisfied with our attendance and achieved our goals for this event. Next year we are planning to have a swap closer to National Seed Swap Day (the last Saturday of January). Our goal for this event is to have more attendees.

Advice

Jump in! This is an easy, low-cost event. The attendance of master gardeners will elevate your event. Serving beverages and other refreshments makes it more fun for attendees. Reach out to local community members and groups who you think will be interested. Offer your program on (or close to) National Seed Swap Day.

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





More Programs

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



Get Started Gardening at Your Library

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational