



Seeds: Exchange Sunday at ASU

by Marilyn Loser

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The “Seed to Seed Community Seed Exchange” at Nielsen Library on the Adams State University campus starts at noon, SUNDAY, January 31 – I mistakenly reported the wrong day in a previous column. My apologies. Bring seeds, if you have them, and a dish to share for the potluck. Serving ware and dessert will be provided.

Librarian Mary Walsh said the event will be on the main floor and will give folks a chance to share seeds and food and just hang out. Also, Mary will demonstrate how to make pots out of newspapers. I’d like to give that a try!

The focus of the seed exchange and the seed library is to share non-hybrid and non-GMO seeds that were valley-grown and harvested. Last February, the library held a kickoff party for its seed library that is housed in a traditional wooden library card catalogue from days of yore. In addition to opening the seed library, the event included a seed exchange much like the upcoming one.

Since last February 370 seed packets were checked out. There were 118 varieties, both donated and commercial in three categories – fruit and vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The goal is to have all local seeds, but since it was the first year, the library purchased some packets. The hope is that those who checked out packets will bring harvested seed back to the library. However, there is no penalty if you can’t return any seeds – thank goodness. I checked out a couple of packets of greens. I left a few plants hoping they would produce seeds, but sadly they languished and died before producing any seeds.

I will be donating quite a few varieties of flower seeds this year. Mary says the seed library will probably open again in March for seed checkout. The timing is largely dependent on donations. Please donate if you can! The seed library is a great community asset.

Meanwhile, bring your seeds to the exchange Sunday. I’ll be bringing flower seeds. I harvested more than usual this year with the seed exchange and seed library in mind.

I grow lots of poppies. Annual varieties include golden California Poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and Shirley poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*). Both of these cheerful flowers do best from seed and reseed nicely. I find they don’t transplant well. I love pink Giant Peony Poppies (*Poppy paeoniflorum*), but they are not as prolific. I pay more attention to where I plant the peony variety – seems it prefers sunny, moist, and loamy soil. I also have some lavender-colored annual larkspur (*Consolida regalis*) that reseeds very well. When I first bought a seed packet of the larkspur, the instructions said to place them in the freezer for at least two weeks before planting. My Alamosa garden makes a great freezer!

The poppies somehow find their way all around the yard, but the larkspur stay close to where I first planted them. The seeds of all four of these varieties winter-over well in the garden. They tend to germinate when the light, soil temperature, and soil moisture conditions are right for them.

In the past, I haven't harvested perennial seeds very much. I'm not sure why. Perhaps I always thought they needed more careful planting and nurturing while the annual seed I just fling around and tamp in a bit. Also, perennials don't tend to produce as much seed. Anyway, I harvested perennial Delphinium (*Delphinium*), native Purple Monk's Hood (*Aconitum napellus*), golden Trollius (*Trollius*), and red Maltese Cross (*Lychnis chalcedonica*). All of these have done well in my garden for many years.

Native gold/red Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia*) and golden Gloriosa Daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta*) do well from seeds and transplants. I'll bring some seed along. Mostly, the seeds are still in there pods. If I strew them in the winter, I think they are less likely to blow away when distributed this way.

I might find a few other seed varieties in the shed where I store seed. I like to keep it in a cool, dark, and dry environment.

Visit AlamosaFlowers.net and take a look at the Flower List for images from our Alamosa garden of the above mentioned flowers. On a final note, the Peony Poppies and Gloriosa Daisies were given to me many years ago by Alamosa gardeners.

Do you have some flower species that reseed well in your garden? I'd love to hear about it. Please email me at Marilyn@AlamosaFlowers.net.

For more information on the seed exchange and library, visit the website (<http://libguides.adams.edu/seedtoseed>) or contact Mary Walsh at mwalsh@adams.edu, 719-597-7174.

"The wise gardener anticipates June in January." Anonymous