

Native Plant/Seed Libraries

A project from Homegrown National Park®

What to know

You've heard of the popular "Little Free Libraries"; now we're bringing you Seed/Plant Libraries. Native plants can get costly, and often price is a barrier for folks planting native. These Libraries are a great way to promote native plants in a budget-friendly way.

Season

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

For

Communities, Teams, Schools, Families

Event Duration

Ongoing

Instructions

Step 1 | Secure a Location & Consider a Sponsor

Choose a convenient, accessible spot like outside a community center, library, apartment courtyard, farmers market, church, or garden club building. You may need to get permission to use the space prior to beginning your library.

💡 Consider asking whether a local group can co-own or sponsor the event, such as a nursery, garden club, native plant society, or community organization. Sponsors may help with funding, promotion, materials, or management.

Interested in hosting the library inside your public library? [Check out how Texans are implementing these libraries.](#)

Step 2 | Determine the functionality of the library

Who is going to help you build the library?

How will you get the initial seeds for your library?

- Local nurseries

- A community seed collection event

- Local native plant orgs

Who is going to do maintenance on the library (ensure it's stocked, repairs, etc)

How will participants know what to do?

Would you rather provide plants instead of seeds? Check out <https://pinealgarden.com/> to see full native plant libraries!

Step 3 | Build Your Library

Following material list and directions provided by Amanda Green from Texas:

Materials:

- Qty 1 — 2x4, 8-ft length

- Qty 1 — 2x6, 8-ft length

- Qty 1 — 1x4, 4-ft length

- Qty 1 — 1x8, 6-ft length

- Qty 2 — 0.25" square dowel, 36" length

- Qty 1 — sheet of outdoor siding or plywood (optional, for back)

- Qty 1 — screen door handle

- Qty 2 — 4" gate hinges

- 3" deck screws

- 1-5/8" deck screws

- 3/4" brad nails

- Magnetic cabinet latch

- 11" x 15" x 0.08" acrylic sheet

Cut List:

- Qty 2 — 2x4, 18" long (box sides)

- Qty 2 — 2x4, 11" long (box top and bottom)

- Qty 1 — 2x6, 17-5/8" long (door sides), ripped into Qty 2 strips 2-1/16" wide. After ripping to width, cut a 3/4"-deep groove down the center of each piece to hold the acrylic sheet.

- Qty 1 — 2x6, 11" long (door top and bottom), ripped into Qty 2 strips 2-1/16" wide. After ripping to width, cut a 3/4"-deep groove down the center of each piece to hold the acrylic sheet.

- Qty 2 — 1x4, 11" long (shelves)

- Qty 3 — 0.25" square dowel, 11" long (shelf stops)

- Qty 4 — 0.25" square dowel, 3" long (shelf holders)

- Qty 3 — 1x8, 18" long (back and top) — or Qty 1 — 1x8, 18" long, if the back is plywood or siding instead

- Qty 1 — 14" x 18" plywood or siding (optional, for back)

Directions:

1. Sand all wooden pieces with 120-grit sandpaper to remove splinters and rough edges. Go finer if you want a smoother finish.
2. Paint or stain all wooden parts, or leave them natural.
3. Attach two 3"-long dowel shelf holders to each 2x4 x 18" side piece, 6-3/8" and 11-5/8" up from the bottom on the wider face, using 3/4" brad nails.
4. Attach one 11"-long dowel shelf stop to one 2x4 x 11" piece (the box bottom) on the wider face, using 3/4" brad nails.
5. Join the two 2x4 x 11" pieces (top and bottom) between the two 2x4 x 18" side pieces with eight 3" deck screws (two per corner). Drill a pilot hole for each screw, and make sure the shelf stop ends up on the inside of the box.
6. Attach the back — either the two 1x8 x 18" boards or the 14" x 18" plywood/siding panel — with at least four 1-5/8" deck screws (top, bottom, and each side).
7. Join one 2-1/16" x 11" piece (door bottom) between the two 2-1/16" x 17-5/8" pieces (door sides) with two 3" deck screws (one per corner). Drill a pilot hole for each screw, and make sure the grooves face inward and line up before tightening.
8. Slide the acrylic sheet into the grooves, then attach the second 2-1/16" x 11" piece (door top) the same way — two 3" deck screws, one per corner, with pilot holes.
9. Line the door up with the bottom of the box and attach the two 4" gate hinges to whichever side you prefer.
10. Attach the handle to the door's opposite side from the hinges, at your preferred height.
11. Attach the magnetic catch to the inside of the door, on the handle side.
12. Attach one 11"-long dowel shelf stop to each 1x4 x 11" shelf, on the wider face, using 3/4" brad nails. Slide the shelves into the box.
13. Attach the 1x8 x 18" top piece to the box, centering the overhang evenly, with two 1-5/8" deck screws.

Step 4 | Promote Your Library

Some methods for advertising

- Email announcement
- Facebook event
- Social Media posts

Below is our recommended timeline:

Social media

Post 1–2 weeks before opening (include photos, the film trailer, or graphics)

Create a Facebook event and invite your network

Tag local groups, organizations, or influencers

Email

Send a save-the-date, a reminder 1-2 weeks before, and a final reminder the day before

Flyers

Hang them at libraries, cafés, schools, and community centers

Partnerships

Ask local nurseries, conservation groups, or schools to co-host or spread the word

Step 5 | Collect Plants and Seeds for the Library

There are lots of ways to stock your library for opening, below are some ideas.

- A. Encourage neighbors and friends to collect and donate native seeds to help get you started. You just want to create an interest at this point so that when you do open the library, it is used.
- B. Use collected local native seeds: Great if you've saved seeds from your yard or community.
- C. Purchase or source seeds via:

Your Favorite Native Seed Provider - Seed packets are typically \$3-\$5

Native Flora Seeds - All proceeds support Homegrown National Park.

<https://nativefloraseeds.org/>

Optional: Host a pre-opening party to build/paint the library and put together resources and seed packets

Step 6 | Label Seed Packets

While collecting seeds ensure you keep the species separated. You want to label each packet with the following:

- Is the plant a native species?
- Does this plant do okay in a container or does it need to be transplanted?
- Common Name
- Scientific Name
- Light requirements
- Tree, Shrub, Flower, Ground Cover etc.
- Height
- Spread
- Date
- If it's a keystone species

Step 7 | Set up and Open Your Library

Determine any guidelines for lending (i.e. Return 10% of the produced seeds, give and take, etc.).

Post the terms in a printout or QR code so everyone can read the expectations when using the library. The idea is people will take a plant or seed packet, plant them then collect seeds at a later date to return to the library for the following season.

Stock the library with plants, seeds, printed materials, and anything that might be useful for first-time users.

Optional: Host a grand opening

Step 8 | Let the Library Grow

Now that the library is open, you can advertise on social media to encourage more use.

Ensure that the people you selected to manage the library are doing their job and that there are always seeds available.

Consider doing seasonal pushes depending on when it's time to plant, collect seeds, etc.

Step 9 | Report Back and Help Us Improve!

Sharing your attendance numbers and event details is crucial. Your input directly helps us measure our collective impact and improve our resources. Did you do something special? We would love to see your marketing materials, photos, and hear about unique details to feature and incorporate for future events! [Contribute Your Feedback Here](#)

Keep in Mind

- Create a welcoming, inclusive experience for all ages and abilities.
- Encourage participation and conversation around the board and what people are noticing.
- Create an easy entry point for a beginner, it should be easy to understand.

Materials

(Complete supply checklist)

- ☐ Qty. 1) 2x4 8-foot length
- ☐ Qty. 1) 2x6 8-foot length
- ☐ Qty. 1) 1x4 4-foot length
- ☐ Qty. 1) 1x8 6-foot length
- ☐ Qty. 2) 0.25-inch diameter square dowel 36-inch length
- ☐ *Qty. 1) sheet outdoor siding or plywood (back optional)
- ☐ Qty. 1) Screen door handle
- ☐ Qty. 2) 4-inch gate hinges
- ☐ 3" Deck Screws
- ☐ 1 5/8" Deck Screws
- ☐ 3/4" brad nails
- ☐ Magnetic Cabinet Latch
- ☐ 11" X 15" 0.08-inch Acrylic sheet
- ☐ Paint

- ☐ Envelopes
 - ☐ Seeds/Plants
 - ☐ Plant Labels
 - ☐ Markers
 - ☐ [HNP flyers/brochures](#)
 - ☐ Handouts of your favorite resources: Homegrown National Park links, local native plant sellers, your closest Wild Ones chapter, state/local Native Plant Society, conservation groups, any co-hosting organizations
-  Single laminated copy with a QR code or follow-up email instead of printing

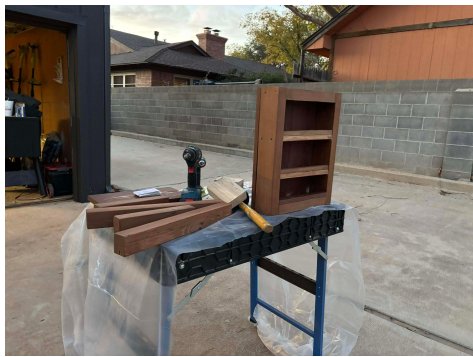
Related HNP Activities

- [Seed/Plant Giveaway or Swap](#) - The library is a great place to get seeds for swaps, advertise your library, or donate extra plants.
- [Winter Sowing Party](#) - This is another great way to advertise the library, folks can get the seeds from the library and donate seeds from the previous season.
- [Native Plant Container Gardening](#) - This is a great use for the plants from the library or a great way to stock the library.

Examples

Interested in hosting the library inside your public library? [Check out how Texans are implementing these libraries.](#)

If you want to include plants and not just seeds, check out <https://pinealgarden.com/> and add your library to their map.



Images Submitted by Amanda Green



Images Submitted by Daniel Maes