

Edinburgh Seed Library (ESL) – hosted by St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral



As part of Creation Tide this year, Jonathan Baxter, our artist in residence, has suggested that members of the Cathedral and the wider community might like to contribute to establishing a seed library for the city. The working title is Edinburgh Seed Library.

A seed library is a resource for collecting, storing and sharing seeds. Different seed libraries have different foci: some focus on native seeds, others on edible plants. But at this stage the Edinburgh Seed Library welcomes all types of seed.

Whether you're a novice seed collector or an active harvester of seeds the process is simple. It also offers ample opportunity to learn more about seeds and where they come from.

Some seeds (including tree seedlings) are best planted immediately. Others can be stored until early spring. Rather than provide an exhaustive list of seeds to be collected now, donators to the library are encouraged to experiment; to step into a greenspace and see which seeds are ready to harvest. A rule of thumb is that when seed heads have turned brown and the seeds are hard they're ready to harvest.

In addition to gathering seeds there's also the learning process of knowing what you're harvesting! If you don't have a detailed knowledge of plants then the best place to check these details is online. Taking a moment to type a description of the plant (or tree) into a search engine and then searching for an image should see you right. Once you've identified the plant a more detailed search will give you all the information you need. At this point

you'll also discover whether the seeds need planting now or whether they can be donated to the library to be distributed in spring.

To donate seeds to the library all you need to do is collect them, dry them, put them in an envelope, identify them by name, add the date you gathered them, and give a brief description of the conditions in which they grew i.e. in light or shade, moist or dry soil etc.

It's important to note that seeds should be gathered on dry days – preferably after a day of sunshine. You should also gather your seeds from the healthiest of stock. Once you've collected your seeds you'll need to scatter them on an appropriate surface and leave them to dry for a few more days. Damp seeds when stored are likely to rot.

Seeds can be sent by mail to the Cathedral or dropped off in person. The drop off point is to the left of the main doors – in front of the verger's office and noticeboard.

If sending by mail please address envelopes to Edinburgh Seed Library, St Mary's Cathedral, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AW. If you'd like to find out more about Edinburgh Seed Library or if you'd like to get more involved please email or ring Jonathan at jb4change@gmail.com or tel. 07954123543.

What you need: seed heads, secateurs (or strong scissors), a place to dry the seeds, envelopes, a pen.

Simple online encouragement:

Please [click here](#) for some further tips on how to collect seed, and which varieties are particularly good to collect at this time of year, in a paper written by a member of the Cathedral's Eco-congregation group

<https://www.countryliving.com/uk/homes-interiors/gardens/how-to/a2367/how-to-collect-seeds/#sidepanel>

<https://www.growwilduk.com/wildflowers/how-grow-wildflowers/seed-saving> (includes a 'how to' video)

For more information about Seed Libraries and why the Cathedral might wish to host one see:

<http://seedlibraries.weebly.com/>

<https://www.seedthemovie.com/trailer> (if people are interested in this trailer Jonathan would be happy to explore the possibilities of organising an online film screening)