

GTPulse: Local Seed Swap Tomorrow

February 26, 2021 by Brigid Driscoll

Gardening is up since the pandemic has set in. More than ever people want access to fresh, wholesome food, and what better way to know where your food comes from than growing it yourself?

Whether you're a seasoned gardener, looking for a hobby, or just a proactive way to get some fresh fruit, vegetables, or flowers in your life, check out the seed swap hosted by the Grand Traverse Conservation District this Saturday.



A few months back I wrote about Poesis Farm in Traverse City. The community garden project is run by Jamie Schaub and Brenin Wertz-Roth. While I was visiting Jamie, Brenin and a band of productive volunteers were busy harvesting

the last of what plants were left. The sunflowers were just on the cusp of getting crispy and brown, and Jamie told me that in a few months' time, the seeds from the Poesis Farm garden would be packaged and put out into the community at a seed swapping event. That event is here, and if you have a garden of your own planned for this year you might want to check it out. Bonus points if you have seeds to swap that are native to Northern Michigan.

Seed saving is important because those seeds learn to adapt to the climate that their parent plant has grown in. The hope is that as these seeds continue to be born and raised in the same region, they grow stronger and more fruitful with each new growing season.

Getting your seeds from a local swap or local seed bank is usually more cost-effective than purchasing them through a catalogue or store. Seeds fall into two categories; open-pollinated or hybrid. Hybrids are commonly found at commercial gardening stores. They're made to be resilient and high-yielding, but the seeds can't be saved. Without seed saving, there would be no heirloom crops.



“It’s definitely more economical. We save more than we would ever need so it’s a little bit more of being able to share with people. Seeds swaps are a good place to find seeds from us. People want certain things so we usually have a list put together of what we have and then they can let us know what they would like. It’s really also a way to engage with people and share with them. We’ve been building a seed community for a few years and when you save seed from something you’re excited about it. It has a story,” Jamie said.

At the height of pandemic hysteria, I often daydreamed about having a garden to grow as much produce as I could. Herbs, vegetables, fruits, everything. The idea of having a supply of food of some sort felt comforting. Even if the grocery stores were filled with madness and toilet paper shortages, a garden could be a place of abundance, and zen. Grow with the best seeds to do so this gardening season. The swap will be from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Boardman River Nature Center. The event will be held outdoors and masks are required. Slots are limited and signup is required and can be done [here](#). Feel free to bring seeds of your own to swap. GTCD asks that seeds of invasive plants not be brought. By growing native plants this season and saving their seeds you’re helping preserve the plants native to Northern Michigan.