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## This is how we grow a library . . . a seed library.

Associate Elise Carey, St Clare Library

Of course, a garden is built one plant at a time, and each plant, one seed at a time. Seeds and fertile soil make up the foundation of our garden, of our families and neighborhoods being fed. Seeds tell the stories of generations before us, stories of distant lands and new beginnings. Well, at least heirloom seeds do.

These are the seeds that comprise the St. Clare Seed Library. Many of our seeds hold the stories of immigrant families who came from Germany or Norway. Some of our seeds have stories from centuries ago found in archeological digs that miraculously germinated. Still some hold humble stories of being purchased from an heirloom seed company and were generously donated only a few years ago.

No matter the story, these seeds are valuable! Just as a seed will lie dormant during the winter months, so has the St. Clare Seed Library during the pandemic. Just as a seed waits for warming temperatures and spring rains to grow, so

*"Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to garden and the whole neighborhood has tomatoes."*

—Unknown

the St. Clare Seed Library waits for the opportunity to grow. You see, over these years of the pandemic, there has been little to no access to the seeds we've had and therefore, few to no donations. The older a seed gets, the rate of germination lessens, so we are left with seeds that may or may not meet success in the planting. So, we're looking for folks who would like to donate heirloom seeds (non-GMO seeds that can be planted, seeds saved, planted once again, for generations to come). Vegetable seeds are welcome as are flower seeds.

Checking out seeds at the St. Clare Seed Library is free to anyone who would like to plant a garden. The idea is you "check out" seeds, plant them, and when they grow you keep the seeds from the fruit and "return" some seeds to the seed library to replenish our current stock. This is how we grow a library . . . a seed library.

Who knows, you might be in a neighborhood where everyone will have tomatoes.

## Victory gardens are back!

Elise Carey, St. Clare Library

Do any of you remember, or remember hearing about, Victory Gardens? Well, they've made a bit of a comeback in this last year with the pandemic. This time last year seed companies were all but sold out of most seeds. Greenhouses were sold out of many fruit and vegetable plants. Many people had nowhere to go and all the time in the world to get there. So, people gardened to supplement their food supplies, to have a purpose and boost morale—much like the Victory Gardens after WWI and WWII.



Just over a month ago, two master gardeners from Stearns County Master Gardeners borrowed seeds from our Seed Library to plant in a Victory Garden that will be open to the public to visit and share in the harvest. Beans, peas and tomatoes were among the seeds checked out.

I'll keep you posted on the details up to and including the harvest. What a blessing to be a part of this. I'm grateful they looked to the St. Clare Seed Library for heirloom seeds. Who knows...we might have some great, great, great "grandseeds" of those planted in the wartime Victory Gardens.