

BLP looking forward to gardening

By Sarah Sobanski

The Bancroft Public Library wants to help North Hastings residents grow gardens this spring.

The library is hosting a seed library with the help of the Harvest the North, North Hastings Community Trust and Gnomes for Justice and Equality.

'Bancroft is an ideal place for that because there's issues around poverty,' said library CEO Chris Stephenson, explaining seed libraries are sprouting up in libraries all over. 'It's empowering how to teach people, myself included, how to have a greener thumb.' Library patrons new and old can attend the library and browse for seeds for their gardens. It's already gathered an assortment of seeds from perennials to foods to herbs.

'Maybe people would like to start a garden with a theme. If you had spaghetti as a theme you might have all the things that go in spaghetti sauce in your garden,' suggested Stephenson.

Once the growing season is over, patrons are asked to save their seeds and contribute them back into the library for others. For those who don't know how, the library is planning seed saving workshops so growers have the knowledge to participate.

Jane Kali of North Hastings Community Trust explained the idea for seed sharing was sparked in 2015 by a woman from Maple Leaf named Laurie Ann Storrington.

'Before Laurie Ann died in the spring of 2015 she pulled me in to help her set up a seed library. The idea is to save seeds locally and share them,' said Kali, explaining seeds are expensive so it makes a lot of sense to share them.

The seed library has been cultivating underneath Kali's desk for the past few years looking for a home as an extension of Harvest the North. She said Storrington would be thrilled to know the seed library is growing and noted that the project would look at seeds native to the area which have adapted to be more resilient to the North Hastings area.

The library is now accepting seeds. Kali gave tips for which seeds the library is looking for.

'Seeds should be non-GMO and preferably a heritage variety. GMO seeds cannot be saved - a clever trick of Monsanto to ensure people have to purchase seeds every year,' said Kali.

Kali gave a shout out to Urpi Pine and Sal Galsanti-Santinolli who have been instrumental in getting the library off the ground.

Stephenson said the library is incorporating programming to work with the seed library and its community gardens out front.

'The beautiful thing about it like DVD collection or the book collection for example there's patron involvement. In fact, it's detrimental to the life of the seed library. The reason it's a great community hub idea is people are not just taking but they're also giving,' said Stephenson.