

# The Southampton Press

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## *Nonprofit Will Bring Seed Library To Hampton Bays: The Good Ground Seed Library*



*Produce harvested by Rachel Stephens: Agro-Ecology Director of the Ecological Culture Initiative*

Environmentalists in Hampton Bays are making it easier for their neighbors to eat local and grow their own vegetables. The Ecological Culture Initiative, a new nonprofit led by Marc Fasanella of Hampton Bays, is working on one of its first projects: creating a seed library at the Hampton Bays Library.

The seed library will have more than 1,000 heirloom seeds available for patrons to pick and choose from, to take home and grow lettuce, tomatoes, squash and other vegetables. All of the seeds will be prepackaged with directions on how to grow the plants. Down the line Dr. Fasanella and Rachel Stephens, the agro-ecology director for the Ecological Culture Initiative, plan to hold organic gardening classes at the library *as well*.

*When you grow your own food* “It takes minutes to get from the farm to the table,” Dr. Fasanella said. “We want to create a culture where kids grow up in a community and people are growing *their own* food. They should see where carrots and lettuce come from.”

Ms. Stephens, who also owns the Sweet Woodland Farm in Hampton Bays, explained, “Here you can get a grasp and control over what’s really going on with the food that you’re eating.”

The seed library will be housed in an old card catalog donated by the library of Long Island University’s Post Campus in Greenvale. After Ms. Stephens sets up the card catalog... cardholders at the Hampton Bays Library will be able to select seeds and sign a log book, marking down what seeds they are bringing home. Because they are heirloom seeds—rather than hybrid seeds—when the plants grow, the gardeners can save the new generation of seeds to give to the library for someone else to use, or plant the seeds themselves the following year.

The nonprofit is raising money to create and maintain the seed library through a GoFundMe fundraiser, which can be found at [www.gofundme.com/good-ground-seed-library-startup](http://www.gofundme.com/good-ground-seed-library-startup). As of earlier this week, more than \$800 was raised out of its \$1,000 goal.

Susan LaVista, the director of the Hampton Bays Library, said she welcomes the seed library—pointing out that she also enjoys gardening at home. “I think it’s a good thing,” Ms. LaVista said in a recent interview. “I think the library is a good place to host it on behalf of the community. We have a broad community of people who visit on a regular basis ... As libraries are changing we are not just about books anymore—even though books are still important, we are... trying to reinvent ourselves. I think *the Seed Library* is very exciting.”

The seed library will be unveiled on March 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hampton Bays Library on Ponquogue Avenue.

*Written by Amanda Bernocco • December 12, 2016 • the corrections in grey italics were added by the ecological culture initiative.*

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