

News at IUPUI

CAMPUS LIFE

Good dill: University Library offers free herb seeds to patrons

BY TIM BROUK <../../../../MEDIA-SPECIALISTS/BROUK-TIM.HTML>

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Members of the University Library "green team," from left, access librarian Paul Moffett, administrative assistant Alicia Añino and liaison librarian Justin Kani, show off the new seed library, which offers seven different herb seeds for free. *Photo by Tim Brouk, Indiana University*

The latest University Library <<http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/>> initiative will bring flavor to gardens, office window planters and tables citywide.

The library debuted its new seed library June 17 to an enthusiastic reception, with dozens of patrons taking advantage of free seed packets in the first few days. Through a Greening Grant <<https://sustainability.iupui.edu/resources/greening-grant.asp>> from the IUPUI Office of Sustainability <<https://sustainability.iupui.edu/>> , the library's "green team" acquired seven herb varieties from Baker Creek <<https://www.rareseeds.com/>> and made them available to students, staff, faculty and the community. Patrons simply fill out a survey before taking the small envelopes of seeds home or back to the office.

Each envelope contains three to five non-GMO seeds of Bouquet dill, broadleaf sage, common chives, Emily basil, Giant of Italy parsley, Rosy rosemary or vulgare oregano. Patrons can take one of each herb from the main desk.

Show us your herbs

Follow @IUPULibrary on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Use the #HerbinUL and #ULseedlibrary hashtags to show how your garden grows.

"We want students to not only check out these seeds as an exploratory venture," explained Paul Moffett, access services librarian. "We want them to also learn about the process of growing plants, explore cooking with these things or just expose themselves to different tastes."

The first year of the grant will concentrate on the easy-to-grow herbs, but vegetables, flowers and other native noninvasive plant species are expected to be added in 2020. The eastern prickly pear <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/opuntia_humifusa.shtml> -- a cactus species native to Indiana and much of the eastern United States -- is a choice the green team may offer later due to its ease of growth indoors.

As expected, the fragrant basil variety is the most popular so far among the available herbs.

"It's one of those plants that thrives by being picked," said Justin Kani, a member of the green team and liaison librarian for the Kelley School of Business and the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. "The more you take off of it and let it grow, the thicker it gets."

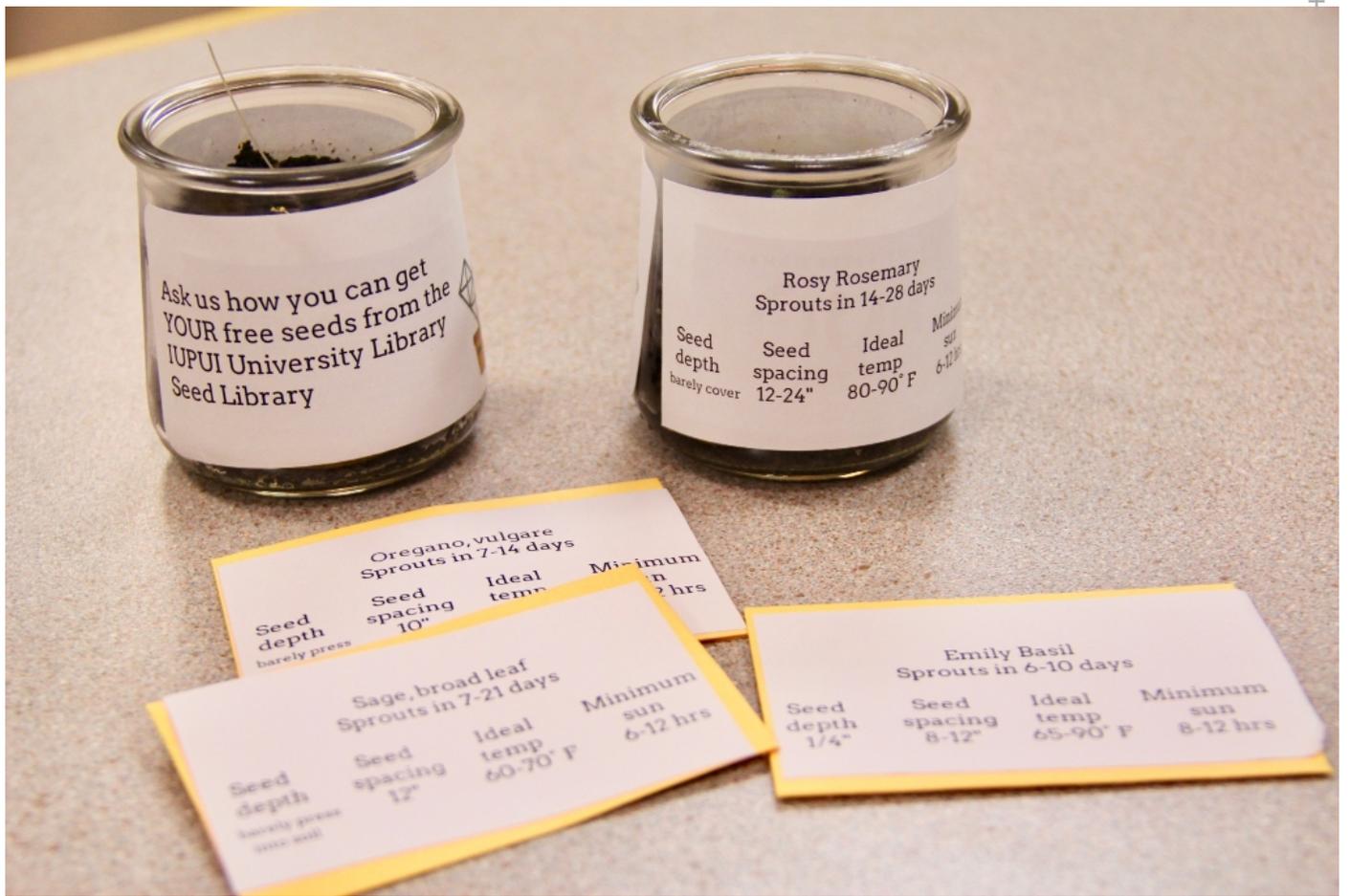
The grant will fuel the seed library through at least 2024. By then, the green team hopes to accept seeds from users and the IUPUI urban gardens <<https://sustainability.iupui.edu/topics/food.asp>> , organically expanding its selection in the process. An information exchange of recipes, gardening tips and showcasing of patrons' harvests on social media are on the way as well.

"A lot of this will be driven by the community of users," Moffett said. "We would be seeking input about what new kinds of seeds and plants they might want to try to grow."

Alicia Añino, green team gardening guru and administrative assistant to library dean Kristi L. Palmer, said a major win for the seed library would be to have users donate their harvests back to them for distribution to Paw's Pantry <<https://studentaffairs.iupui.edu/advocacy-resources/food-and-clothing-services.html>> and the Ronald McDonald House <<https://www.rmhccin.org/>> .

The seed library is another program that enforces the fact that University Library has more than books.

"We're sort of disconnected from our food," Kani said. "I think there is a lot of interest, and this allows us to be a library of things, to facilitate something unique, educational and important."



University Library's own planted herb seeds are starting to sprout. *Photo by Tim Brouk, Indiana University*

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