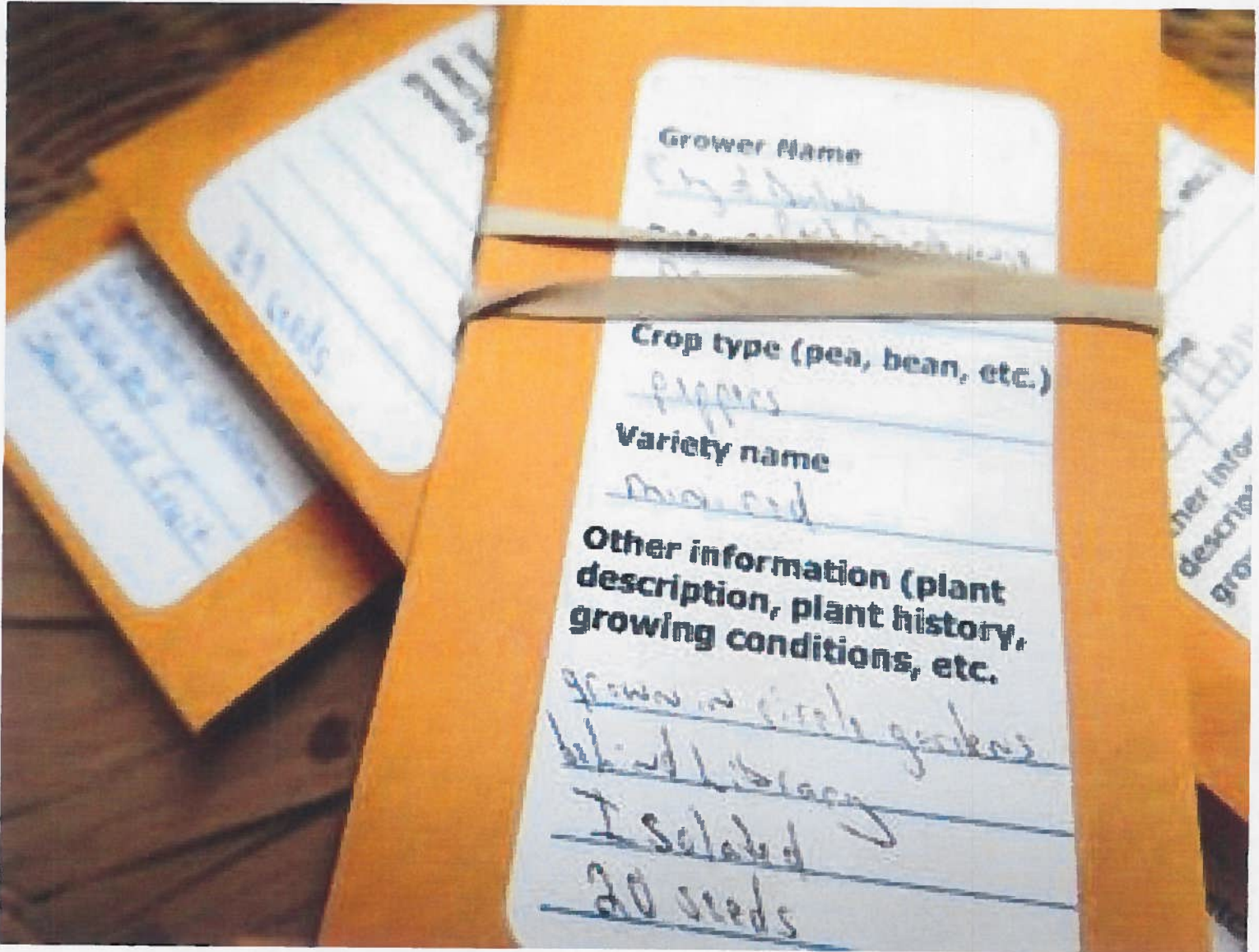


Duluth council calls for free seed exchanges

Dan Kraker · Duluth, Minn. · Dec 16, 2014

Politics



Seed packet at the library Dan Kraker / MPR News, file

The Duluth City Council has passed a resolution asking the Legislature to change Minnesota's "seed law" to allow for the free exchange of seeds.

This fall, the state Department of Agriculture told the Duluth Public Library its seed sharing program violates the law, which requires seeds to be tested and labeled before they are sold or given away.

When the Legislature convenes in January, State Sen. Roger Reinert, DFL-Duluth, plans to propose an amendment to the law that would exempt seed libraries and seed sharing from its requirements for testing and labeling if there is no exchange of money.

"When money changes hands," Reinert said, "then the seed law will apply in full force."

• **Previous: [Library's seed sharing program hits a hurdle](#)**

(<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/11/30/duluth-librarys-seed-sharing-program-hits-a-hurdle>)

The library allows members to borrow vegetable seeds in the spring and later return seeds they collect from their gardens. One of about 300 seed libraries nationwide. It attracted 200 members who borrowed 800 packets of seeds in its first year.

Duluth biology teacher Michael Gabler told the City Council that sharing seeds is especially important in Duluth's climate.

"You keep the ones that produce really well, and you end up with plants that are hardy to our region," Gabler said. "This is just what people have been doing for thousands and thousands of years."

The council unanimously passed the resolution, co-sponsored by council members Joel Sipress, Emily Larson and Sharla Gardner.

"I don't think anybody ever could have imagined that this law was written in such a way to treat the voluntary exchange of seeds with your neighbor, just like you're a big agribusiness concern selling seeds commercially to farmers," Sipress said.

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