

Seed Sharing Is the New Anarchy

Pop-up seed sharing stalls let urban homesteaders stage their own personal protest against Big Ag.



Simple stands like these provide a free seed sharing for urban homesteaders. (Photo: Eating in Public)

YOUR REACH



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Bio  

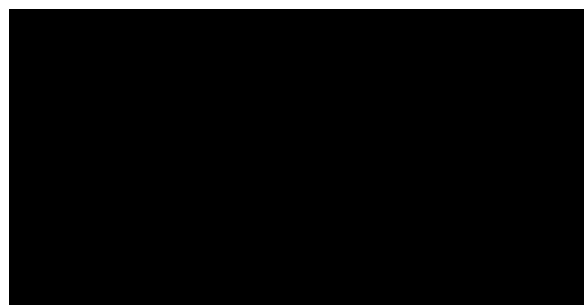
Of all the methods of anarchist revolution, sharing fruit and vegetable seeds may be its most humble and seemingly innocuous. But as corporations like [Monsanto](#) seek to monopolize agriculture with its own patented brand of genetically modified crops, some are fighting back by reviving the ancient practice of seed sharing. It's a grassroots attempt to keep agriculture diversified and a dependence on biotech companies at bay.

[Eating in Public](#) is radical organization that prides itself on promoting open access to autonomous agriculture through seed sharing. Led by two professors at the University of Hawaii, EiP sets up free, pop-up seed sharing stalls in heavily trafficked urban areas like libraries, galleries and coffee shops.

Erecting stands made from repurposed materials, [EiP provides an assortment of free seeds](#) that are prepackaged in recycled envelopes. Passers-by can take whatever packets they choose and leave their own for others to share. Information pamphlets are also provided, allowing urban farmers of all levels access to sunlight and watering information to ensure their micro-harvests are plentiful.

Though seed sharing is not a new idea, pop-up stands make the practice more easily accessible, especially for homesteading novices.

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While EiP will build and deliver the wood stalls within Hawaii, for those on the mainland, it provides free downloadable instructions on building your own—an ecologically sound idea considering the waste that would be created from shipping repurposed wood. Nonetheless, seeds and signage are always given free of charge and the DIY building aspect hasn't stopped those outside of Hawaii from participating in the program. EiP's [Seed Sharing Stalls](#) have already emerged in California, New York and Canada.

The idea of subverting biotech companies like Monsanto has become a global cause, as [farmers in the U.S. and abroad battle litigation](#) and financial collapse at the hands of their agricultural monopolies.

In Mexico just last month, [farmers staged a hunger strike](#) to protest the presence of the industry on its soil, demanding the protection of its vibrant native maize from becoming a genetically modified shell of its former self.

And in India, a large-scale seed sharing operation has been in effect for two decades in the hopes of shielding the country's small farmers from biotech dependence and monoculture. Run by [Dr. Vandana Shiva and her colleague Bija Devi](#), the Navdanya's seed sovereignty program has served more than four million of the country's homesteaders, preserving thousands of varieties of indigenous rice and wheat.

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Though EiP's program is obviously much smaller, its principles are similar. Total corporate dependence, especially on our food supplies, isn't just destructive to our environment, but it's an infringement on our personal autonomy.

Does that mean picking up a pack of heirloom tomato seeds will bring down Monsanto? Not as a singular act, but collectively, seed sharing sends the message that despite the industry's best attempts to legislate otherwise, we insist on remaining free.

Are you an urban homesteader? Tell us about in the Comments.

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