

# CHRIS' CORNER



Photo credit: Bogdan Wankowicz

## Show the Seeds Some Love!

Gardeners are already gearing up for Spring. I participated in the Seed Swap event last month at Lichterman Nature Center. The venue was inundated with enthusiastic gardeners who were ready and anxious to start sowing seeds for spring. There are many reasons why starting your preferred plants from seed is still popular and worthwhile. There are two reasons that I prefer to grow from seed. Growing from seed saves money and choosing to start from seed offers the gardener a wider variety of plants. After spending the day with seed devotees, I was inspired to do research on successful seed germination.

Seeds are amazing! They come pre-packaged with a supply of food and genetic information needed to become a plant just like its parents. Seeds remain dormant or inactive until conditions are just right for germination. They then absorb carbon dioxide, and produce oxygen. They also use their stored food reserves to grow. Once favorable conditions occur, the seed breaks dormancy and germination occurs.

A seedling develops which then gathers energy through its leaves by the process of photosynthesis and absorbs water and nutrients through the roots. The goal of a gardener is to provide the optimal environment for germination and seedling growth.

In order for seeds to germinate, they require a certain temperature. Each plant has a minimum, an optimum and a maximum temperature for seed germination. The closer the temperature is to optimum the quicker it will germinate. The optimum temperature for germination is usually from 75 to 85°F.

Moisture levels are critical for germinating seeds. They prefer a moist but not soggy environment. Because seeds require oxygen, they should not be kept in a waterlogged state or they may rot. It is equally important to insure the seed does not dry out. The lack of moisture will inhibit germination and cause the seed to die.

Focus on the light. Most seeds need light in order to germinate but many do not. Follow the directions given on the seed package for planting depth, light requirements and other vital information.

Let us love our seeds to ensure that they will germinate and provide beauty to your landscape for years to come. It is no coincidence that February is the month of love!

Until next time, stay warm and get your landscape plans together for spring!



*Christopher Coppe*

