



BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY

SIMPSON LIBRARY  
16 NORTH WALNUT STREET  
MECHANICSBURG PA 17055

06-12-14

Dear Sirs,

As the Seed Control Official for PA I would like to inform you about the PA Seed Act and Regulations. It has come to my attention through various avenues (TV, postings, word of mouth, Internet) that you plan to offer your patrons the option to participate in a "Seed Library". My understanding is that patrons will be able to "check out" seeds, take them home and plant them, harvest any resulting fruits, collect seeds, and "return" the collected seed to the "Seed Library" for planting the following season. I whole heartedly support the promoting of gardening, sharing of resources and connecting people through a communal experience, but I believe there are some issues of seed distribution that you may not be aware of:

-The Pennsylvania Seed Act requires all distributors of seed to purchase a seed license. (The PA Seed license cost \$25.00 a year and is good for the calendar year for which it was bought). The distributor would be defined as the person/company/organization that is importing, consigning, offering for sale, selling, bartering or otherwise supplying seed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Such an entity would need to have their name and address appear on the seed label. (If you are dispensing packaged seed, that is already properly labeled, with a licensed wholesaler/guarantor, you would not need a Seed License.)

-All Seed being distributed in Pennsylvania must be labeled according to the PA Seed Act and Regulations. This includes, but not limited to, such things as Germination Test date, Sell by date, lot #, Seed Kind, distributor's name and address.

-Harvested seed being "returned" to the library would need to be tested using the "AOSA Rules for Testing Seed" and labeled with the testing information accordingly before distributing them. (As a general rule, 400 seeds are required for an official germination test)



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-The PA Seed Act... "Require that each person whose name appears on the label or labeling of seeds subject to the provisions of this chapter to keep for a period of two years complete records of each lot of seed handled and to keep for one year a file sample of each lot of seed after final disposition of each lot. All such records and samples pertaining to the shipment or shipments involved shall be accessible for inspection by the Secretary or his agent during regular business hours."

-Heirloom Kinds that are open pollinated will only breed true to variety provided they are not cross pollinated from another variety or closely related species. Cucurbit species; melons, squashes, cucumbers, etc..., planted with other Cucurbits can produce seeds that when grown to fruition will not produce fruit anything like the parent plant. It is a real possibility that someone could plant a seed designated as an Acorn squash and when the fruit develops find a fruit that is whitish gray with green flesh that is almost tasteless.

Enclosed are copies of the PA Seed Act, the Seed Testing, Labeling and Standards (Regulations) and a Seed License application. Please review the documents and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

I'm sure a creative, innovate way can be found to continue to promote healthy gardening while maintaining seed quality and meeting the requirements of the PA Seed Act.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Johnny Zook".

Johnny Zook

**Johnny Zook** | Seed Program Supervisor  
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