



Grassroots Grocery to hold River Bend Seed Swap for local gardeners and farmers, March 5

February 18 2016 4:29 PM



ALTON – The public is invited to the second spring **River Bend Seed Swap** on Saturday, March 5th from 11am-2pm at Grassroots Grocery, located at 415 Ridge Street. This free event is a casual open-house style event where farmers & gardeners meet to exchange quality seeds, seedlings, cuttings and bulbs. It's also a rewarding way to build community and share information about gardening, plant varieties, nutrition, and so much more to all residents.

Demonstrations will be given throughout the day on topics such as seed saving and hydroponic gardening, and kids will enjoy a "seed mosaic" art project. Organizers are working with Senior Services Plus, Inc. to offer a variety of sandwiches and wraps for purchase that day made fresh daily at SSP.

For the second year in a row, this Seed Swap is being organized by Sierra Club's local food intern, Dana Wynn. Wynn's SIUE research topic will focus on sustainability and

urban gardening in the Greater Alton Area. Wynn will implement four free events for the general public and for 10 “Green Teams” that will participate in a several month long project. Teams will highlight topics and valuable skills in sustainability, either starting a community garden or a community compost area, making a cookbook using only garden ingredients, or starting an herb garden.

“I am looking at the benefits of implementing sustainable living practices using a food education curriculum to gain qualitative and quantitative research data,” said Wynn. “So, we will be giving demonstrations throughout the Seed Swap on topics such as seed saving and hydroponic gardening.”

The public and future Green Teams are invited to the free workshops: Feb. 27th: Incorporating natives in your garden space to increase biodiversity at The Nature Institute at 2213 Levis Lane, Godfrey (1pm-3pm); Mar. 12th: Lily Transplant Party at the Historic Koenig House at 4th & Oak, Alton (9am-12pm); and May date TBD: Seed Saving Workshop at the Hayner Library Alton Square Mall Branch.

Grassroots Grocery is a full-service grocery store open to the public. Through the grocery’s charitable policy, many residents who face food insecurity qualify for a 10% discount each time they shop.

Qualifications include: households on public assistance, low income households earning up to 125% of the Illinois poverty level, and residents of low-income senior assisted living facilities.

“Anyone on SNAP (formerly food stamps) will get 10% off their entire bill because we believe that everyone has a right to fresh, healthy food no matter their income. With the bulk beans and grains available, along with produce grown in this town, mealtimes can be more nutritious and less expensive for everyone,” said Christine Favilla, Grassroots Grocery co-founder. Grassroots also offers cooperative memberships at \$100 per year, allowing members to enjoy the benefit of a 10% discount on all purchases.

The short term goal of the project is to build a strong outreach component to educate citizens about the importance of fresh foods, how to purchase ingredients, and how to prepare them. The ultimate vision is to foster additional economic growth and job creation in the neighborhood; they already hired three neighbors, bringing their paid staff number up to eight.

The public is invited to exchange seeds and check out the backroom space where Grassroots Grocery is planning to open a commercial kitchen this year. There is no cost to attend the event and bringing seeds is not required. Local food producers can apply to be a vendor at the store during this time.

To stay up-to-date on store news, please visit www.GrassrootsGrocery.org or like Grassroots Grocery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GrassrootsGrocery. For more information, please contact Christine Favilla at 618-401-7870 or christine@grassrootsgrocery.org; or Sara McGibany at sara@grassrootsgrocery.org or 618-463-1016.