



image by Jonas Frei @j.d.frei

## BISHOP'S CASTLE COMMUNITY SEED BANK: November Newsletter

The growing season has slowed and the season has shifted towards darker nights - this is the perfect time to clean and sort your saved seed!

We're looking forward to seeing seed savers at the **November 16th** Farmer's Market! You can view our list of seeds on the [Light Foot Website](#).

If you are considering donating seed, please see below in the newsletter for details of how to bring these in to the seed bank.

Thanks to everyone who has been borrowing, growing, saving and sharing back to the Seed Bank! We're especially grateful to the volunteers who keep the seed bank running - Please consider joining this, or any community projects - volunteers are what makes community.

Read on for Seed Bank news and info!



@[food\\_forwardbc](#)

### OUR MISSION



**BORROW**



**GROW**



**SAVE &  
SHARE**

**The Bishop's Castle  
Community Seed Bank is a  
community resource for  
local food resilience and  
skill sharing.**



## **SEED SECURITY IS FOOD SECURITY**

The Seed Bank is an initiative of Food Forward BC, which is the Action Group driving our Community Food Resilience Strategy. Yes, we have a Food Resilience Strategy - the only one in all of Shropshire, in fact.

The Food Strategy is due for an update this coming year, so keep an eye out for an upcoming gathering in January where you can get involved and have your say.

More than ever, we need to look at how to adapt and become resilient in the face of 'shocks' - political, economic, climate and more. Saving seed and sharing our skills and knowledge is the first step, because as individuals and communities, the small things we do really matter.

**Food security begins with seed security.**

But... at a time when things feel unsteady, we need to be reminded that there are so many great things going on, and that we can - and must - keep building on these.

The Shropshire Good Food Partnership is linking with Shropshire Climate Action and the Middle Marches Community Land Trust (did you know that it is the biggest community land trust in the UK?). We know that Food, Climate and Nature Recovery groups must all work as a unified voice leading on actions for a resilient transition. SGFP is meeting with three of our MPs at Westminster on November 13th to tell them that resilience-building must be a focus.

Going Wild in BC is busy doing its part locally, inspiring youth and developing a model of working to share with other communities, and the Bishop's Castle Climate Action Group meets regularly to drive the Climate Action Plan in BC.

Community - passionate individuals - are what is driving these initiatives. People are at the core of building community resilience. We're grateful to all of our members for supporting and contributing to our work.



## SEEDS FOR A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

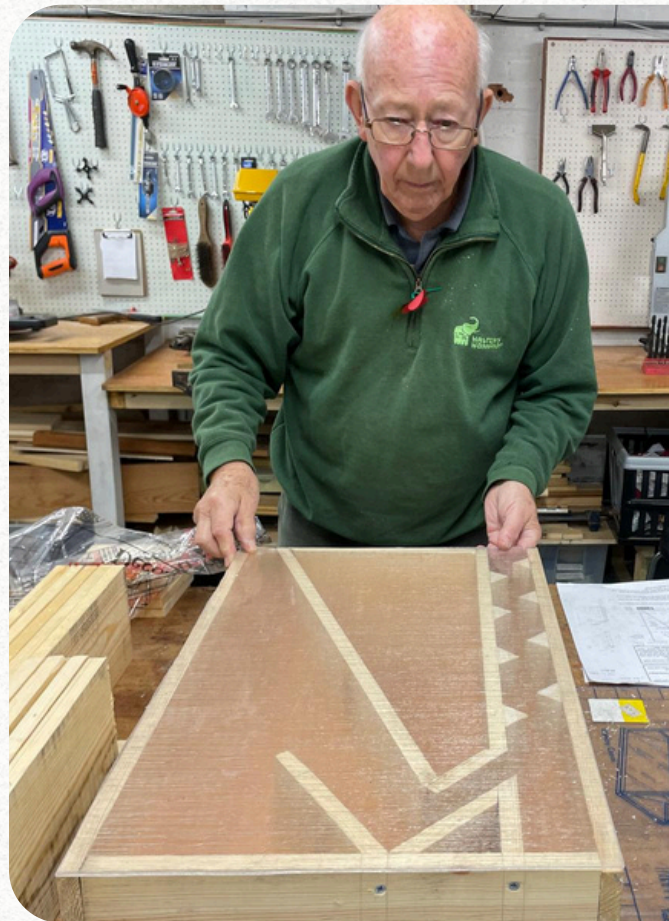
We know that the Christmas season drives overconsumption of resources, boosts waste and can get very expensive.

In this time of climate change, many are thinking of how to have a lower impact for holidays and special occasions.

What if we normalised giving seed? Or sourdough starter? or a fruit tree? Thankfully, these things don't cost the Earth...

Talk to our seed bank volunteers about selecting a few good starter packs as a gift for a home garden, porch or allotment.

We'd love to share your ideas for a low-impact Christmas. [Email us](#) or share your ideas with the [Bishop's Castle Climate Action Group](#)



## EXCITING NEWS!

Thanks so much to the brilliant team at Walter's Workshop for building this brilliant contraption... but what is it?  
**It's a seed cleaner!**

This is from [an open-source design created by Real Seeds](#), released for small independent seed producers - just like us at the BC Seed Bank!

"This design combines traditional zig-zag aspirator design with a 'swirl chamber' just below take-off to allow repeated sorting of each seed as it is poured through.

Suitable for small seed (poppy, amaranth) to medium seed (squash, sunflower)"

This means that the Seed Bank can be more efficient, clean and process **more** of our own seed!! A huge leap forward for this small community operation!



## PARSLEY: EASY PERENNIAL & A BIT OF FOLKLORE

As my curly parsley produced flowers in the spring, I decided to let it 'do its thing' and produce seeds. We tend to think growing seeds is difficult but in this case it was very easy! I waited until the seeds showed signs of ripening (turning brown), then took them off a few at a time and put in a dry warm airy place until they were ready to drop off their stems. One plant produced a jam jar full of seed! Now available on the seed bank stall.

-From Jacqueline

A lot of superstitions exist relating to parsley, mainly based on the fact that it can take up to 6 weeks to germinate! As a child I was told that parsley goes down to the devil and back! (apparently a 17th Century proverb). Despite association with the devil, parsley has been used in cooking over 2000 years - Flat leaf, curly leaf and all the many varieties contain so many vitamins and minerals as well as being rich in iron. It is an anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-oxidant immune booster. Fun to grow and such a valuable and useful herb.

- From Liz

## WOULD YOU JOIN A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

Shropshire Council passed '[The Right to Grow](#)' in 2022 allowing citizens to apply to grow food on council owned land.

This is land that citizens pay taxes to maintain, so the logic is that citizens should be able to use it to cultivate.

Are you interested in developing a community growing space in Bishop's Castle? [Get in touch](#) and keep an eye out for an upcoming event in January to discuss community food security in BC.

## SURPLUS VEG APPEAL:

The Food Bank is always looking for donations of fresh vegetables. If you have surplus this season, please consider sharing. Opening Hours are:  
Tuesdays - 10 to 11.30am  
Thursdays - 2.30 to 4pm



### **INCREASING OUR STOCKS FOR THE SEED BANK, BY VICKY HUNNS**

This growing year I concentrated on trying to increase seed for some of the 'high value' seeds that Daphne bought into the seed bank in 2024 - we started to mark these with dots to show seed-bankers the ones which cost a reasonable sum to buy, and weren't numerous in the packets.

So far, I have been harvesting and drying the Giant Butterbeans (which means I haven't actually tried them!) - and, although only 2 of 3 seeds germinated, these performed quite vigorously and overgrew my 8' frame. I've also been saving Jalapeño chilli seeds which were, again, in a 'high value' seed packet - despite there being multiple seeds in just one fruit!

Based on Jacqueline's experience with lambs lettuce, in the garden I've let these plants go to seed to see if they will also spread here, as it is supposed to stand well over winter (while I've not seen any signs of germination, there were plenty of flowers, so may be I will be more lucky in the Spring?). I am also letting rocket - which I had from the seed bank last year - self seed itself around the place, nipping off bits when I fancy a peppery leaf. Similarly I am keep an eye on a patch of ground where I let a couple of rainbow chard plants go to seed (which is a very very tall plant when it does!) and I am hopeful that this year my self-set leeks (from just leaving some full flower heads on the ground after they have been bee-buzzed and seed appears) will actually get to a size beyond a small pencil (not an issue with the seed, but with the grower/soil!)

**HAVE A LOOK: WE HAVE DEVELOPED DOWNLOADABLE SEED SAVING 'POSTCARDS' FOR EASY REFERENCE:**

**LETTUCE**  
**TOMATOES**  
**PEAS**  
**BEANS**  
**SWEET PEPPERS & CHILLIES**



## A GUIDE TO SEED DONATIONS!

The seed bank welcomes clean, dry and labelled seed donations (including donors name, variety, date, notes and details) for fruits, vegetables, flowers, wildflowers, grains and pulses.

We accept only open-pollinated varieties of seed (Non-F1 Hybrids and Non-GMO seed.)

The above walnut seedlings are thanks to a kind donor who shared a scoop of walnuts at the BC Environment Day in 2023!

The Seed Bank is free if you are a local member and can share back some of what you have grown and saved - The sustainability of the project relies on this cycle.

Please consider a monetary donation if you are not able to save and share back.

## SPECIAL FEATURE AT THE SEED BANK!

Five years/generations of carefully selected 'Germidour' garlic has yielded delicious, long-storing and HUGE bulbs at Little Woodbatch.

It might be a little late in the season, but we think there's still time to plant some cloves! Come to the Seed Bank stall on November 16th at the Town Hall to get some!

### Lazy Fermented Garlic Paste Recipe:

"We use a food processor to puree the garlic and add 2% salt before putting it in a loosely-sealed jar, packed down so there are no air bubbles. We allow it to ferment for 5 days at room temperature, then seal it and refrigerate for easy use for as long as it lasts" - Daphne

**"All life begins in seed. Seed is not just the source of life, it is the very foundation of our being." - Vandana Shiva**

# FOOD FORWARD

BISHOP'S CASTLE

GROWING COMMUNITY FOOD RESILIENCE



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Along with working at the seed bank table on market days, our volunteers also get together to harvest and process seeds. In the winter months, you might find our crew gathered around a table with a pint or two in the back of the pub to pack and label seeds.

If you have the time and inclination to help out for any of these activities please let us know by contacting [mikejwatkins@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikejwatkins@hotmail.co.uk)

## Resources



**Forestart**

tree and wildflower seed



**Vital Seeds**



**Gaia Foundation**  
**Seed Sovereignty**  
**Course**



**Real Seeds**