THE EXHIBIT:

Seed Stories

A tiny fraction of the more than 6,500 seed and nursery firms represented in the collection are featured in this exhibit including:

Stories of local characters, including three Minneapolis seedswomen, as owners and operators of family seed-house – quite an unusual feat in the early 1900s – feature Mrs. Jessie Prior, Miss Emma V. White and Miss Carrie Lippincott.

Regional pioneers and colonial innovators give a more intimate look at the life and gardens surrounding these publications. Stories of Midwest companies include L. L. May & Company and Northrup King, both of Minneapolis; and Farmer Seed Company of Faribault. Oscar H. Will & Company, established in Bismarck, ND in 1881, collaborated with the Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa tribes, and was the first in the region to introduce several Native American varieties.

Seed Stories: Catalogs of Life and Gardens in America

Other chosen themes, such as patriotism and marketing, occur across companies and time. Images with visual appeal or interest have been chosen; these are complemented by letters and other text that provide a lens for peering into the past.

As you go through the exhibit, each wall is devoted to a theme identified by a sign overhead. Sub-themes are labeled and related images and captions are color-coded in corresponding colors.

SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM GALLERY

Wall 1: PATRIOTISM: Patriotic Events; Patriotic Images; War & Victory; Americana
Wall 2: HAPPY 227th BIRTHDAY (D. Landreth & Co.)

THIRD FLOOR ATRIUM GALLERY

Wall 4: 3 SEEDSWOMEN (Emma White, Carrie Lippincott, Jessie Prior)
Wall 5: PIONEER SEEDMAN (Oscar H. Will & Co.)
Wall 6: WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS!: Art in Advertising; Unusual Items; Advertising; Contests & Prizes & Bargains Galore
Wall 7: image of knight from Northrup, King & Co. 1907 catalog
Wall 8: IN THE YEAR 2111; Conclusion of Exhibit

COMMENTS

We hope you enjoy Seed Stories! Your comments are appreciated and questions are welcome. For more information, call (952-443-1405) or visit the Andersen Horticultural Library in the Snyder Building of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, or visit www.arboretum.umn.edu/library.aspx.
Seed Stories: Catalogs of Life and Gardens in America

The Collection
Andersen Horticultural Library (AHL) is pleased to offer a glimpse into one of the largest seed and nursery catalog collections in the country. Numbering more than 63,000 and dating from 1828 to the present, it includes catalogs from every state and 26 countries. Minnesota and other Upper Midwestern companies are strongly represented.

The catalogs are kept in acid-free folders and boxes on compact shelving. Older catalogs are kept in a climate-controlled room to help preserve them. All are available for research, with an appointment. Over 1,000 new catalogs are available for use by the public whenever the library is open.

Find More Information
History of Seed and Nursery Companies and Catalogs
Andersen Horticultural Library

More than 90 years have passed since the first seed and nursery catalogs were produced by American companies. These trade publications were a necessity to communicate the wording of plant propagation and environmental considerations. Early brochures featured energetic descriptions, technical diagrams, renderings, and photographs, but the plants and their history were the real focus of the page. Sometimes, the text was handwritten.

To acquaint the reader with the catalog as a discovery tool, the Seed Stories exhibit highlights the evolution of the seed and nursery catalog through the lenses of social values and change.

The Seed Stories exhibit will be on display in the Andersen Atrium Gallery from August 10 - October 28, 2011.

Curator: Kathy Allen, Librarian, Andersen Horticultural Library, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Posters of some images are for sale through the Arboretum Gift Store; a portion of proceeds benefit the Arboretum and the library. To order posters call 952-443-1439 or visit www.arboretum.umn.edu/onlinefistore.aspx