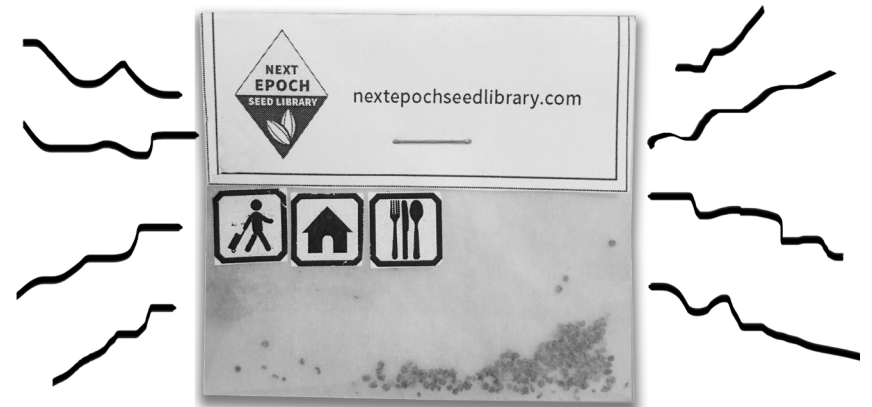
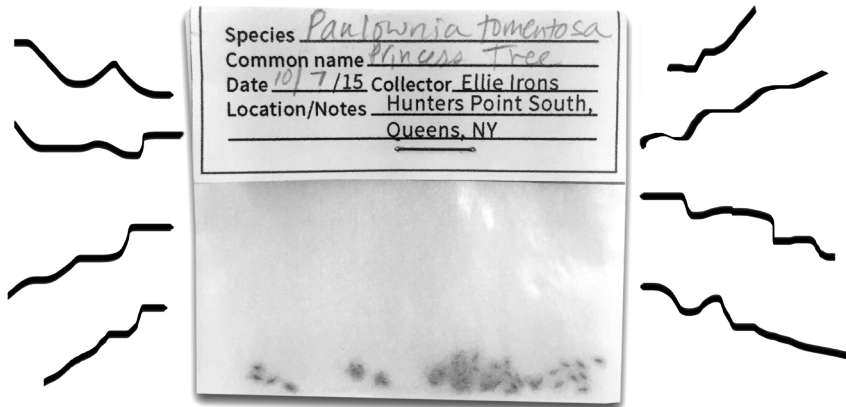


So I've got these seeds...



## Now What?



NESL 2016, share & share alike  
<http://nextepochseedlibrary.com>

THE SEEDS YOU SELECTED MAY HAVE SOME OF THESE QUALITIES:



NATIVE



WILD CROP  
COUSIN



MEDICINAL\*



INTRODUCED



INVASIVE



ORNAMENTAL



EDIBLE\*



PIGMENT  
PRODUCING



TOXIC



HUMAN  
UTILITY



REMEDIATION



NONHUMAN  
BENEFITS

SEE [NEXTEPOCHSEEDLIBRARY.COM](http://nextepochseedlibrary.com) FOR MORE QUALITIES & DEFINITIONS

# What can I do with these seeds?

Possible futures for these gifts from our feral urban commons

## 1. Art Object as Conversation Starter: Spread the word



Keep your packet of seeds intact as an art object. Stick it to your fridge, your bulletin board at work, or carry it in your wallet. Make a point of using it to tell the story of our often overlooked urban plant neighbors. Ask your friends/family/co-workers what is happening in the so-called vacant lots and informal greenspaces in their neighborhoods. Are weedy plants thriving? Have they been “cleaned up”? Who appreciates them & how?

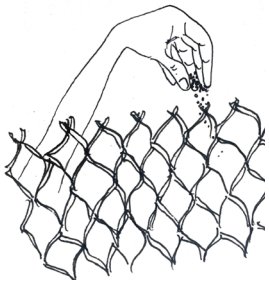
## 2. Mini Weedy Sanctuary: Get to know your neighbors



Try living with and caring for the potential plant life held in these seeds, and see what they give back to you. Fill a container with potting soil (yogurt container? milk jug?). Sprinkle the seeds on the surface, then put the planter outside for the next few months, where it will be exposed to winter weather (a fire escape works well)\*. In January or February, when you're yearning for Spring, bring the planter inside and set it on a windowsill with good exposure to daylight or a grow light. The shift in temperature will prompt your seeds to sprout. Keep the soil moist, and by March you'll be cohabitating with a thriving community of weedy species. If you attend to them throughout the summer, you'll get seeds next fall!

*\*if you don't have access to an outdoor space, you can also try storing the seeds in the freezer for a few months before*

## 3. Guerrilla Restoration: Give back to the commons



Is there bare, open earth in your neighborhood? Or an urban meadow that's been shorn to the ground? A place where wild plants may not have had the opportunity to go to seed? The seeds in your seed packet are well adapted to challenging situations like these. Sprinkle them on the ground in a construction site, toss them over a fence in a recently mowed vacant lot, or plant them in a barren street tree pit. Come back in the spring and see what's growing.

# Why Weeds?

Rethinking interactions with spontaneous urban plants

Stocked with seeds gathered from the vacant lots, street verges, superfund sites and abandoned infrastructure of the greater New York City area, NESL provides a gene pool of tough, highly adaptable plants well suited to live in close quarters with humans and their attendant landscape transformations.

Providing services like **soil stabilization and formation, moisture retention, heat-island reversal, toxic bioaccumulation and medicinal and nutritional attributes**, these plants will be the ideal pioneer species, forming the base of new, novel ecosystems as we move through the bottleneck of the sixth mass extinction.

Additionally, many of these seeds are wild crop cousins, serving as **reservoirs of genetic diversity**. Holding traits that have been bred out of our highly domesticated, monoculture-oriented food crops, weedy species may provide the key to crop resilience moving forward. And many of them are already edible!\*

Interacting with these plants through seed gathering helps us engage them as an important part of the urban ecosystem, **acting as advocates for wildness and weediness in the city**. It also may allow us to play a part in bolstering the genetic fitness of these plants. Many of them live on islands of urban soil surrounded by concrete. Circulating their seeds within the city may help with gene flow.\*\*

*\*Edibility is complex in an urban setting where plants take in nutrients as well as toxins from the urban substrate. Consider this before harvesting and consuming plants in urban areas. Do your own research and get the advice of an expert before consuming wild plants or using them medicinally.*

*\*\*We do not necessarily advocate moving seeds between large urban centers or isolated ecosystems. We work largely with species that are already present regionally, be they native, naturalized, or recently introduced. We are intrigued by questions around assisted migration and related strategies, but at present are focused on human-plant interactions at the local level.*

See [nextepochseedlibrary.com](http://nextepochseedlibrary.com) for references and further information.