

Collection Development Policy Recommendations
for the
Charles L. Durham Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia
Urban and Community Gardening Collection

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INFO 665: Collection Management

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October 17, 2012

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**Collection Development Policy Recommendations for the
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Introduction

The Charles L. Durham Branch Library is the second smallest branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Located in West Philadelphia, it serves the Mantua and Powelton neighborhoods. The Durham branch shares the same mission as the Free Library of Philadelphia, to “advance literacy, guide learning, and inspire curiosity” (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2012a, 2012d). As stated in its five-year strategic plan, goals the Free Library has set forth include implementing and increasing the use of new technology, creating a balance among its physical and virtual presences, and pursuing partnerships within the community (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2012d). The Durham branch library is committed to honoring this mission and these goals.

The Durham Library serves a population of 13,734 people (City-Data, 2011a, 2011b). Based on previous demographic research for the Mantua and Powelton neighborhoods, the general user community for Durham Library is largely English speaking, single, young adults and children, mostly of African American ethnicity (Smith, 2012). Over 41% of the population lives below the poverty level, and nearly 60% of adults have a high school level education or less (City-Data, 2011a, 2011b).

The Charles L. Durham library will develop a subject collection on urban and community gardening that coincides with the recent release of First Lady Michelle Obama’s book, *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America*. This book

not only offers readers a look at the implementation and growth of the public garden at the White House, but is generating conversation nationwide on how gardens and community gardens can serve as a learning platform for promoting healthy living among families and children (Amazon, 2012).

The urban and community garden subject collection has the potential to serve many populations in the Durham Library area. Its primary users will likely be community organizations, including leaders of the organization as well as members, and families, including parents and children. The Mantua and Powelton neighborhoods have a strong community organization presence, many with the potential to institute or help in an urban and/or community garden effort (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2012c; Mantua Community Improvement Committee, 2012; Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 2011). There is also an established interest in community gardening by organizations in the area (McKechnie, 2012; Summer Winter Community Garden, N.D.). Another primary user group of this collection is families and children. A quarter of the population in Mantua is comprised of school age children (City-Data, 2011b).

In creating an urban and community garden collection, the Durham Library promotes its mission to guide learning and inspire curiosity. It is recommended these two statements be the official mission for this specific collection. The purpose of the collection is to not only provide users information about gardening, but inspire them to think about healthy living and community development. Proposed objectives for this collection include supporting educational and civic activities in the community, encouraging continuous learning, and providing materials that help people know more about themselves and their world. Development of this collection emphasizes

Durham Library's commitment to public library service in meeting the recreational, educational, and informational needs of its community (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, pp. 92-93).

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria are often part of the library's larger collection development policy. The inclusion of selection criteria serve to aid in objective decision making regarding selection of library materials. Criteria outline standards for inclusion (or exclusion), providing a consistent approach to selection (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 71). This reduces the influence of an individual contributor and personal bias (Collins, 2012; Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 71).

The following selection criteria will be used for the urban and community garden collection. These criteria were established by reviewing and evaluating selection policies from the Free Library of Philadelphia, Brooklyn Public Library of Brooklyn, NY, Arizona State Library, Memorial Hall Library of Andover, MA, and recommendations by *Choice* magazine.

- *Attention of critics, reviewers, media, and the public*

The use of reviews and recommendations provide important information to librarians about a material's strengths, weaknesses, and biases. Demand by the public or user community identifies interest and demonstrates need.

- *Suitability of format for library use and content*

Selected materials must be durable and able to withstand heavy circulation. Non-print materials, such as audio/visual and digital mediums, must be thought of with respect to access and platform requirements.

- *Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience*

Selection must be considered with respect to the subject of this particular collection, urban and community gardening, as well as the various user groups. As the cited users are community organizations, families, and general gardeners, it will be important to have a diversified collection with materials suited for various ages.

- *Authority, reputation, or qualifications of the author, artist, publisher, or producer*

Whenever possible, selection priority will be given to authors, publishers, etc. whose work(s) is known to be highly regarded and/ or reputable.

- *Organization and ease of use; clarity, accuracy, and logic of presentation*

The subject nature of this collection often necessitates the use of lists, directions, images, and/or diagrams to inform users. Selecting materials that are organized, accurate, and easy to use will be important.

- *Currency of information*

Though date of publication is not as important for selection of recreational reading and works of literary merit, informational sources should be timely and reflective of current practices (Memorial Hall Library, 2009). Informational resources will be prevalent in this collection.

- *Cost*

Selection will be considered with respect not only to budget limitations, but the value an item provides to the overall collection. Additionally, Durham Library is a public library and incidents of lost or stolen items must be considered. Costly items may be prohibitive in terms of a cost to usage comparison (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 89).

Formats

The following formats will be considered for inclusion in the Durham Library's urban and community gardening collection. These formats address the primary and secondary user groups of the collection.

- *Monographs in print and digital format*

This includes textual and visual print books and downloadable ebooks.

- *Serials in print and digital format*

This includes periodicals and journals in print and electronic form. Electronic form can include access to periodicals online.

- *General web resources in digital format*

This includes websites, webpages, document forms such as pdfs and docs, presentation formats such as powerpoints, interactive widgets, etc.

- *Videos*

This includes DVDs and downloadable and/or streaming formats.

- *Government publications*

This includes documents in print and/or digital format for civic information concerning starting a community garden.

- *Children's monographs in print and digital format*

This includes textual and visual print books and downloadable ebooks. Book format can include board books, picture books, reference books, kit collections, and interactive digital forms such as TumbleBooks.

- *Children's videos*

This includes DVDs and downloadable and/or streaming formats.

While print resources are noted in the above formats, efforts have been made to include digital formats where appropriate to support the goals of the Free Library of Philadelphia's strategic plan as well as the technology priorities and criteria outlined in its materials selection policy. The Free Library is dedicated to increasing its virtual presence, which includes improving its offering of electronic resources (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2012d). The Free Library as well as Durham Library recognize the increasing presence of technology in its users' lives and have made it a priority to select materials in a variety of digital formats and notes criteria for selecting Internet and electronic resources in its selection policy (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2007).

Limitations to the above mentioned formats include physical space. Durham Library is the second smallest branch in Philadelphia and shares its space with the Mantua Recreation Center. Therefore final considerations for formats will be in context of the library's physical space (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2012b).

Information about formats was obtained from various sources including the Free Library of Philadelphia's catalog, its selection policy, format outlines from Memorial Hall Library of Andover, MA, Overdrive.com's digital formats webpage, Lecture Notes and the course text for Collection Management: INFO 665. In the event Durham Library would need to obtain more information about available formats for its urban and community gardening collection, consultation with other librarians in the Philadelphia area as well as libraries that have or are interested in this type of collection. It would also be advantageous to consult horticultural and gardening societies/groups in the area for their recommendation on gardening resources (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 2011; Summer Winter Community Garden, N.D.).

Selection Aids

The following selection aids were evaluated with respect to usefulness in selecting materials for the urban and community gardening collection. The selection category is followed by the chosen aid(s) and its evaluation.

- *Current Sources for In-print Materials: Books in Print*

URL: <http://www.globalbooksinprint.com.ezproxy2.library.drexel.edu/bip/>

Books in Print is a very helpful resource for descriptive bibliographic information for titles. I found the indication of audience very helpful as well as links and availability information for publishers. Professional reviews are also linked when available. It is also helpful to be able to search by title, author, or even subject if looking to browse. Finally, I found the buttons to download, print, or email information helpful.

- *Publisher's Website: Bloomsbury Publishing and Workman Publishers*

URL: <http://www.bloomsbury.com/us/>

URL: <http://www.workman.com/>

Publishers' websites are helpful in offering specifics about titles, including cover images, size, pages, pricing information, etc. They can provide reviews, though this is not a given. These websites also are great resources for up and coming titles. The drawback to publishers' websites is the bias toward sales.

- *Current Review Resource: Library Journal*

URL: <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/>

Review aids offer professional reviews about titles. Accessing Library Journal through subscription offers archives of reviews searchable by specific title, subjects, authors, etc. Its freely available web access offers reviews, yet is not a full archive. However, doing a

simple search within reviews for “urban gardening” reveals a wealth of information from book lists, to best sellers, to collection development advice for a regional gardening subject collection. Review aids do not contain reviews for all published material, which is worth keeping in mind during the selection process. A helpful aspect of review aids is the definitive yes or no recommendation offered.

- *Bibliographic Database: WorldCat*

URL: <http://www.worldcat.org/>

WorldCat is huge database. If you are aware of a specific title, WorldCat can provide detailed information including local libraries that already have the title. This can influence purchase decisions during collection development. There are also links to reviews and subject heading recommendations for further searching. Browsing can be more difficult as it's best to search WorldCat with some parameters in mind. A quick subject search for “community gardening” yielded many results. It's helpful that there are limiters for date and language if you are looking to fill specific needs in selection.

- *Best Books/Recommended Lists/Core Collections: Genreflecting Advisory Series, Genrefluent, Reader's Advisory Online, LibraryThing*

Various URLs

I found much of these sources, with the exception of LibraryThing, relevant if only searching for information about fiction titles. As information materials will be prevalent in the Durham urban and community garden collection, most of these did not offer helpful information. LibraryThing was helpful in learning a number of things about titles including personal reviews, cover images, a tagging system that can lead to other titles, and site recommendations. The sense of community allows for varied views on titles,

whereas Genrefluent is based on one person's opinion. In general, the use of aids like those listed above provide reviews that are of pure opinion as the reviewers are not compensated. Drawbacks to aids like these are the notion that they often provide only one person's opinion, which may not reflect the public's view, and reviewers may be recreational and not formally trained.

- *Subject Databases: ARGICOLA*

URL: <http://agricola.nal.usda.gov/>

This is described by Drexel as "comprehensive source of U.S. agricultural and life sciences information." One of the most helpful aspects of this aid was its resources lists on various subjects. I was able to locate lists that addressed gardening for children and community development resources. The search feature is extremely valuable in retrieving relevant materials without scouring through webpage after webpage. Through the search feature I was able to locate a toolkit that would be great in the Durham urban garden collection. Another valuable feature of this database is its sponsorship by the government which provides credibility to the listed resources. Using subject databases can unearth all kinds of information for librarians in their subject collection search.

- *Vendor Catalog: Baker & Taylor*

URL: <http://www.btol.com/index.cfm>

While I was unable to create or utilize their collection development lists function because I do not have an account, I was able to view their list for the upcoming Christmas season called "'Tis the Season." They have varied lists from entertaining during the holidays to featured titles. It is helpful to have services like this to produce lists for specific subject collections, however I'm unsure of the option to provide custom information. For

example, can demographic information or preferences for particular aspects of a subject be provided so that the lists are more individualized for a library's needs? Features like this would be ideal. Another drawback that I'm unsure of is the ability to refuse particular titles and have them changed out. Also, I am unaware of how the titles for the lists are constructed, especially since this is a vendor's site. On the plus, the lists I reviewed included various formats, from print books to movies to ebooks.

- *Expert Recommendations: Richmond Public Library Blog*

URL: <http://richmondpl.blogspot.com/2011/02/urban-gardening-resources.html>

I find blogs to be very informative. Blogs written by librarians often describe trials and tribulations; an honest insider's look at particular subjects. This blog highlighted programming to coincide with the library's gardening collection, which would be very useful for a library developing its own gardening subject collection. The list of recent purchases for the collection was helpful, however there was no rationale or review for why these sources were selected, which would have been helpful. The comments section on blogs is another source for valuable information. They are often rich in opinions and provide another point of contact.

Selection Responsibility

Though the ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the Free Library of Philadelphia's executive leadership, it is recommended the selection of the urban and community garden collection be delegated to the Durham branch librarian and children's librarian (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 74; Free Library of Philadelphia, 2007). These librarians are well versed in the needs and wants of their specific community, which may differ from those of the central

branch for example. It is advisable, time permitting, a selection committee be used which includes the Durham branch librarians, a member from the Free Library's central library materials management staff, and a member of a Mantua/Powelton community organization (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 74). The use of a committee can help reduce personal bias in selection as well provide input for issues. The final responsibility for selection resides with the President/Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Miscellaneous

It is recommended the urban and community gardening collection have a gifts policy. Though gifts and donations indicate interest and support of the library, they may not serve the library's best interests. Gifts may be outside the scope of the library's collections and place too much demand on physical space (Arizona State Library, n.d.). A gift policy stated similarly to that contained in the Santa Clara County Library District's Selection Policy (<http://www.sccl.org/about/administration/policies/selection-policy>) would serve the urban and community garden collection well.

To strengthen the subject collection and better serve its users, the Durham Library should have a deselection policy in place. Deselection or weeding is necessary to rid the collection of outdated, poor circulating, and damaged materials (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2007). A detailed deselection policy worthy of review for the Durham Library's urban and community gardening collection is that of the Memorial Hall Library (<http://www.mhl.org/about/policies/cd/maintenance/weeding.htm>).

Though every effort is made to develop this subject collection to meet the needs of its primary and secondary users, evaluation of the collection will be necessary to measure its

effectiveness. Including an evaluation or assessment policy ensures the library's commitment to its patrons. Among many things, an assessment can highlight strong and weak areas of the collection, identify any problematic issues within the collection policy itself, and provide qualitative information about how it is serving its community (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, pp. 134-135). Durham Library can model its evaluation on the assessment strategies provided in the Arizona State Library's Collection Development Training Manual (<http://www.azlibrary.gov/cdt/collass.aspx>).

With regards to complaints and censorship, the Durham Library subscribes to the principals of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement (Free Library of Philadelphia, 2007). This position should be clearly outlined in this subject collection's policy. In doing so, the policy becomes a "public relations document" demonstrating the library's commitment to intellectual freedom (Evans & Saponaro, 2012, p. 71). A formal complaint form should be included for patrons to express their concern about materials. For this subject collection, the form can be modeled after the Pima County Public Library's Reconsideration of Materials form (<http://www.library.pima.gov/about/policies/reconsideration.pdf>).

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