Utilizing RSA's Seed Library Broad Category Enhanced Brief Records Guide

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If your library currently has—or is interested in beginning—a seed library for patron use, then taking advantage of the RSA provided broad category enhanced brief records for seed libraries might be of interest. These enhanced brief records are available on a local level only within WorkFlows, and they were created with two goals in mind:

1. To increase a library's seed library visibility to their patrons in the RSAcat.
2. Allow libraries to track seed library usage and compile more detailed statistics more easily. This information can be used to justify a seed library to a library board, be used to determine which seed varieties are most popular among patrons for restocking purposes, etc.

Use of these broad category enhanced brief records for your seed library items is NOT mandatory and is completely optional.

In addition, how a library utilizes these enhanced brief records is up to each individual library. It is perfectly acceptable to use these records to promote a seed library within the RSAcat to patrons, but a library could decide to not track usage in WorkFlows because generating statistics is not their goal. Furthermore, libraries can opt to use "standard" brief records in WorkFlows for seed library items instead if they prefer. It is also perfectly acceptable to forgo cataloging your seed library items entirely. As with most things, please do whatever works best for your library and your patrons.

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How do I know if I have found a broad category enhanced brief record (BCEBR) created by RSA in WorkFlows?

When searching for an RSA created BCEBR in WorkFlows, there are a few fields to check to confirm if RSA has created the brief record:

1. In the 245 field, every RSA created BCEBR will begin with SEED LIBRARY followed by the category of the enhanced brief record. For example: SEED LIBRARY : GARDEN VEGETABLES AND FRUITS.
2. RSA created BCEBR will have fields not found on a standard brief record. Our enhanced brief records have a 520 summary note briefly explaining what sort of seeds should use this enhanced brief record, there will be 3XX fields, and they include 650 fields (subject headings) to aid with searching and description.
3. Finally, there are two "local field only" fields as well. A 590 for a local note that reads "This seed library broad category enhanced brief record was created by RSA for member library use." Plus, a 690 field for the local subject heading of "Seed library."
   a. These two local headings are searchable, visible in WorkFlows, but will not display on the RSAcat.

I've found a matching BCEBR. How do I add an item to the brief record and let users know what seeds we have in our seed library?

After you have found a BCEBR that fits the seed variety you are cataloging, please do the following:

1. In the Call Number and Item Maintenance wizard, within the Call Number/Item tab, click Add Call Number at the bottom of the screen.
2. Select your library's code from the drop-down menu in the pop-up box that appears.
3. Use the Call number field to add specificity to your item. Remember, since the BCEBR is describing a variety of related plant types, being specific in the Call Number is where you tell patrons what specifically you have in your seed library.
   a. For example, if you are using the SEED LIBRARY : GARDEN VEGETABLES AND FRUITS enhanced brief record to catalog a seed packet of Cherry Tomatoes, you could enter the Call Number as CHERRY TOMATO if you wanted to be detailed with your tomato varieties.
      i. Note, your library can be as granular or broad as you like with your Call Numbers. If your library decides that there is no need to get as specific as CHERRY TOMATO, simply adding TOMATO SEEDS for the Call Number (and then using TOMATO SEEDS to track all tomato varieties) is fine as well. Ultimately, this will vary by library, and RSA encourages each library to do what makes sense for their community needs.

4. Complete the Item Information section and add in any notes in the Extended Information area if desired. Click Save at the bottom once complete.
    a. Please use a real barcode for your Item ID.
        i.   When determining barcode placement, think about how you want to track seed usage. Depending on the methodology of tracking, where the barcode lives will either compliment or impede tracking. For example, if you choose to track usage visually/verbally, then keeping all of the seed variety Item IDs at the circulation desk might make for easier tracking in WorkFlows since everything is right where you are at the desk.
        ii. There are two primary options for barcode placement. These are suggestions only and are not required. Your library might have a completely different system that works best for you.
            1. A barcode can be placed on the seed packet itself (or an envelope the seed packet(s) is stored in).
            2. Barcodes can be placed on a sheet of paper kept at the circulation desk, with all of the other seed variety Item IDs placed on the same paper.
    b. For Item Type, RSA recommends using a unique Item Type that your library is currently not using. This is because (as explained further in the document) RSA suggests using the Ephemeral wizard to track seed library checkouts. Using a unique Item Type when using this wizard helps to easily identify the number of checkouts for seed library items in your library's monthly circulation reports.
        i.   Examples of Item Types that work well for a seed library include KIT, KIT-SPEC, REALIA, and SPECCOLL. The Item Type may use your library's default circulation rule because the seed packets will not check out like traditional items in your collection.
    c. For Home Location, RSA recommends using SEED because holds are not typically allowed on seed library items. If your library wants to allow holds, use SEED-H.
    d. For ItemCat 4, there are a couple of related codes that can be used if wanted: GARDENING, LIBTHINGS (for Library of Things), and PLANTS. Using ItemCat 4 is optional. Assign UNDEFINED if ItemCat 4 will not be used.
    e. ItemCat 5 also includes LIBTHINGS. Using ItemCat 5 is optional. Assign UNDEFINED if ItemCat 5 will not be used.

If there are parameter codes you would like added to your Home Location, Item Type, and/or ItemCat 4 or 5 drop-down menus, or would like help determining an Item Type to use, please contact the RSA Help Desk at 866-940-4083 or help@rsanfp.org for assistance with setting up parameters for your seed library.

How should our library track and check out seeds in WorkFlows when using an RSA created BCEBR?

If your library decides to track seed library usage in WorkFlows to generate statistics, you will use the Ephemeral Wizard in the Circulation+ module in WorkFlows. It can be found in the Special Group:
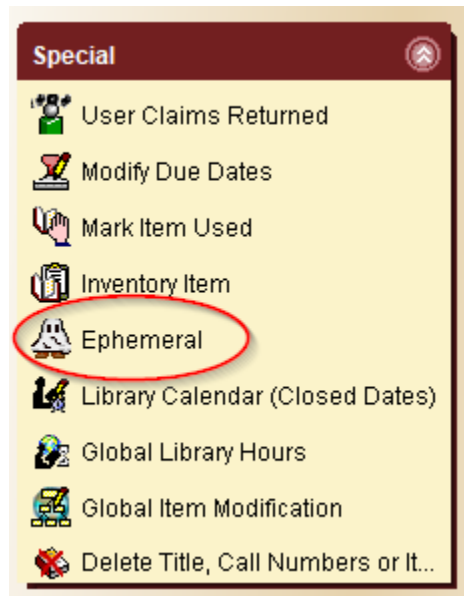
While you can scan in the user ID of the actual patron who is taking seeds, you can also "checkout" to a user using the Ephemeral wizard with a "dummy" account. Essentially, you can create a "dummy" patron card specifically to track usage of your seed library. Whether your library chooses to scan in the user ID of a real patron, make use of a "dummy" card, or do a mix of both depending on the situation is up to each individual library.
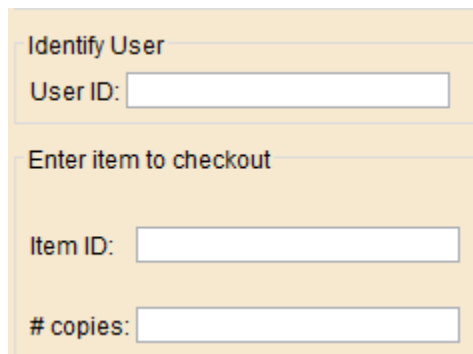
To create a "dummy" account:
1. Take an unused patron card from where you store them.
2. In permanent marker or pen write on the card to designate it as your SEED LIBRARY USER.
3. In the Circulation+ module, use the User Registration wizard to add your "dummy" user to WorkFlows. Below are specifics of what to fill in, but please note if a field is not listed below, there is no need to fill it out or edit the existing default value.
   a. Scan the barcode of the "dummy" card into the User ID field and use LIB-USE as the Profile name.
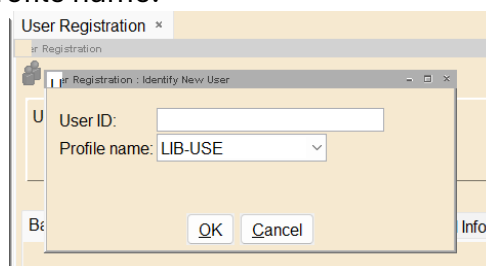
      b. Under the Basic Info tab:
   - i. Last name = SEED LIBRARY/*your WorkFlows library code* (e.g., SEED LIBRARY/AYER-PLD)
   - ii. User ID = the user barcode
   - iii. Library = select your library
   - iv. Profile name = LIB-USE
   - v. Charge history rule = NOHISTORY

      c. Under the Privilege tab:
   - i. Privilege expires = NEVER

      d. Under the Demographics tab:
   - i. User cat 1 = select your library
   - ii. Birth date = NEVER
   - iii. Language = ENGLISH

      e. The Addresses tab can be left blank.

      f. The Extended Info tab can be left blank, or you can add text in the note field explaining specifically the purpose of this card.
   - i. For example: This card is for seed library Ephemeral checkouts only.

      g. Once the "dummy" card registration is complete, be sure to keep the card at the circulation desk for easy access when needing to track items using the Ephemeral wizard.

To track using the Ephemeral wizard, after opening the wizard please do the following:

1. Scan in the "dummy" SEED LIBRARY USER ID—or the real patron's User ID for the patron who is taking seed packets with them—into the User ID field.
2. Scan in the Item ID for the seed variety that the patron is taking with them.
3. Enter the number of seed packets that the patron is taking with them in the # copies field.
4. Then click the Check Out Item to User button at the bottom of the screen.

Note: The Ephemeral wizard will quickly check out the plant variety X times based on the number entered in the # copies field, then immediately check the item back in. The checkout via the Ephemeral wizard will not display in the patron's list of current checkouts, but it will track as checkout statistics. The Ephemeral checkout does not generate late notices or bills.

Does RSA have ideas for how to accurately track seed usage or other practical suggestions?

While the use of these RSA created BCEBR will provide statistics of seed library usage when care is taken to use the Ephemeral wizard to track patron usage, the reality is that this will never be 100% accurate due to the "take what you need" nature of seed libraries. Tracked numbers shouldn't aim for perfection, but instead attempt for a good, educated guess.

To accomplish this, listed below are a few optional suggestions to aid with tracking. Again, nothing below is required—these are just ideas. Ultimately, your library should create a system that works best for your staff, patrons, and goal of your seed library.

A. Visual + verbal tracking.
    Library staff track seed library usage as they witness it, or if patrons inform them of usage.
B. Create signage where your seeds are stored.
    Another way to help with tracking is to create signage asking for patron help. Signs can include one asking that patrons see the circulation desk with the seeds they are interested in taking, or one asking patrons verbally tell staff what they took.
C. Create a tracking sheet for patrons to fill out.
    Libraries can also create a tracking sheet that stays where seeds are stored asking for patrons to put a tally next to a seed variety they took. It is recommended to date the tracker and adding "checkouts" via the Ephemeral wizard as dated forms are replaced.
D. Require patrons to see library staff to get seeds.
    Place dummy cards of each seed variety for patrons to browse and ask that they bring the cards of what they would like to "checkout" to the circulation desk. Real seeds are kept behind the desk and staff will give patrons the seeds they want based on the cards they brought to the circulation desk. Staff then return the dummy cards to the seed library browsing area.

I have questions about seed libraries, and I have ideas for new BCEBR that RSA should create. How should I let them know?

If you have questions about starting a seed library or a suggestion for a new BCECR in WorkFlows, please contact the RSA Help Desk to let us know! You can reach us at 866-940-4083 or at help@rsanfp.org.