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Holly Christy tries her hand at podding beans along with her father Randy at the seed saving workshop at the Branch District Library. JULIA BARATTA PHOTO

# BDL hosts seed saving workshop

By Julia Baratta  
For The Daily Reporter

COLDWATER — The Coldwater branch of the Branch District Library hosted Ben Cohen of Small House Farm to share his knowledge on seed saving and the importance of passing on the stories of the seeds.

Cohen's farm, located near Midland, is where he and his family grow most of their own food through gardens and animal care. He collects histories of seeds and has



Ben Cohen of Small House Farm, near Midland, shares the importance of saving seeds and collecting the stories that go along with them. JULIA BARATTA PHOTO

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written a book containing several of those. His talk incorporated the steps to processing seeds and the importance of preserving both the produce and the stories.

Cohen's enthusiasm was obvious as the discussion began and attendees entered. His wide range of interests included popular gardening speakers and authors along with festivals, farmers markets, and organizations he has worked with. The dialogue continued into the presentation as Cohen encouraged the participants to ask questions

and share stories and experiences of their own.

He talked about the various groups of seeds and the proper ways to preserve them. He also offered the participants the opportunity to try the techniques out for themselves. Cohen had beans to 'thresh' and tomatoes to squeeze. Everybody had a chance to participate in one of the steps to saving the seeds. Cohen shared a story about his boys sitting on the kitchen floor and podding the beans together.

"Small House Farm is always open to visitors," Cohen said. "We have something you can do such as slopping the pigs or weeding the garden."

With his two young boys as an inspiration,

Cohen and his wife have chosen to live this lifestyle with a focus on his main job: He presses seeds, nuts, and plants for the oils.

"I soon learned that I couldn't make a living on seeds saving so I do the pressing as our living," Cohen said. "One of the boys has taken over the care of the chickens and he is learning a lot about them."

His inspiring talk is part of the library's seed library program. The staff intends to have a program every fall with a focus on the seed saving. The seed library is open now for those interested in fall plantings and to receive new seeds from those that were grown by patrons.