The Importance of Weeding

“Next to emptying the outdoor bookdrop on cold and snowy days, weeding is the most undesirable job in the library. It is also one of the most important. Collections that go unweeded tend to be cluttered, unattractive, and unreliable informational resources.”


Why Weed?

• Makes room for new materials
• Makes finding the good stuff easier
• Helps maintain a relevant collection that is attractive to patrons
• Will boost your circulation

Top Ten Things to Know About Weeding

1. Everything in the library needs to earn its shelf space.
2. Deselection is just as important as selection: Use the same care and criteria while weeding as you do while purchasing.
3. Library materials should reflect your collection development policy: This is your guiding document when it comes to the materials that comprise your collection.
4. Be transparent with the public: Make sure that weeding is fully explained in your collection development policy.
5. Library materials should be in good condition: Get rid of moldy, torn, damaged items.
6. Library materials should be accurate: It is better to have nothing on a particular subject than something that is incorrect or out of date.
7. Run circulation reports: Evaluating an item on its circulation is not the only way to decide whether or not to keep something, but it’s right up there.
8. The books have to go somewhere: Know where to donate or sell your weeded books. Allow public the opportunity to acquire materials before discarding them.
9. Recycle: When there is no other option but the transfer station, please recycle. (And NCLS can help!)
10. When in doubt, wait until next time... unless you’re weeding a part of your collection that will be reprocessed. Then, be ruthless.

Weeding Resources


*CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*, by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission

https://www.tsl.texas.gov/id/pubs/crew/index.html