

Deselecting/Weeding Items

Weeding is the process of reviewing the library collection and removing materials that no longer serve the library's clientele. The analogy can be drawn to gardening where the gardener removes weeds and weak, sickly plants so that healthy plants can grow and prosper. This principle should be applied to libraries. The collection should be weeded so that the good material will be readily accessible, not buried in the clutter of "weeds," or overcrowded bookshelves.

Weeding is an integral part of "collection development" and is as important to a library as selecting and purchasing new materials. The criteria for weeding can vary from library to library depending on local conditions and the mission of the library. Criteria may include the following:

Appearance (Caution: Books which fall into one of the categories below may be retained if they are rare or hold some significant local value, e.g., congregational histories.)

- Books of antiquated appearance that might discourage use.
- Badly bound volumes with soft pulpy paper and/or shoddy binding.
- Badly printed works, including those with small print, dull or faded print, cramped margins, poor illustrations.
- Worn out volumes whose pages are dirty, brittle, or yellow, with missing pages, frayed binding, broken backs, dingy or dirty covers.

Superfluous or duplicate volumes

- Unneeded duplicate titles/copies/volumes.
- Materials in subject areas where there is little, if any, local demand.

Content

- Information is outdated.
- Book is poorly written.
- Information is incorrect or doctrinally not in accord with Lutheran confessions.
- Improved edition exists. (e.g., Most people in WELS churches use the NIV, hence the library should have concordances, etc., based on the NIV. Some may still use the KJV and it may be useful to retain a copy of this.)

Other

- Material that should not have been purchased/accepted in the first place.
- Material which has not been used over an extended period of time.
- Directories and yearbooks that have been superseded.

Weeding is a matter of good stewardship, the result of which can lead Christians to renewed spiritual growth. May the Lord bless your efforts. When you withdraw a book, pull the shelf card, cross off the accession number and write "WD" (if withdrawn) and the date. When you withdraw a book, be sure to pull all the catalog cards from your card catalog drawer.