

SeedBroadcast



*agri-Culture
Journal*

Cultivating Diverse Varieties of Resilience #19

SeedBroadcast

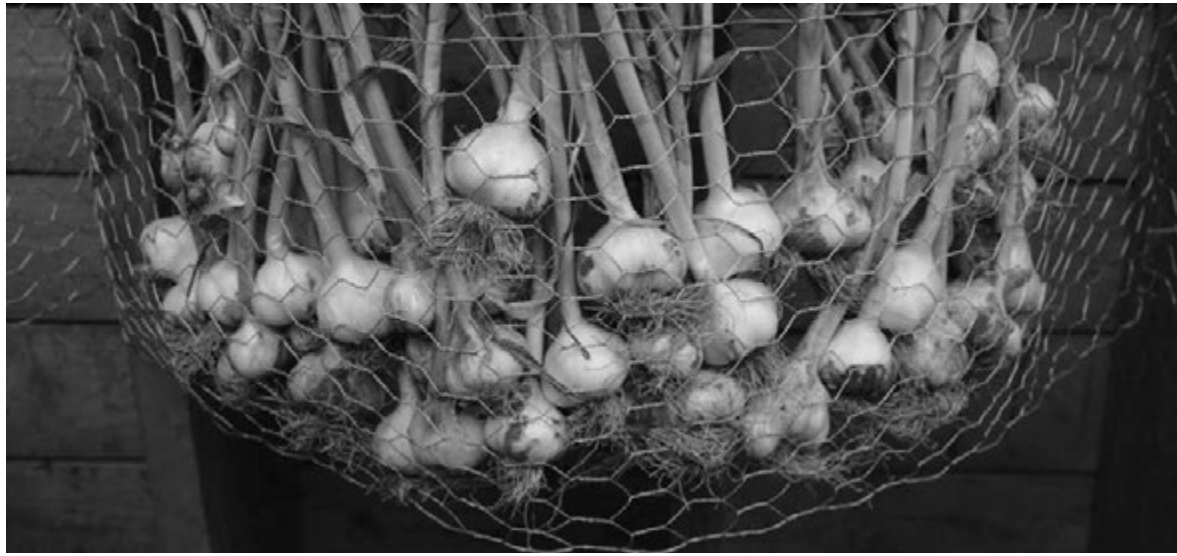


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19th Edition

SeedBroadcast Journal

We would like to thank all who generously contributed to our **19th edition** of the bi-annual **SeedBroadcast agri-Culture Journal**. The next edition will be in the Spring of 2023. We invite you all to consider sending a submission. This could be a drawing, photograph, story, recipes for climate change, poem, action (what can we all do to keep the seeds alive), or an essay, with relevance to the essence of seeds, seed saving practices, climate change, and food sovereignty.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.
Each of you holds a unique wisdom and it is this wisdom we hope to share.

Please include a short bio, images should be at least 300 DPI 4" x 6" and include your mailing address as we will mail you a stack of printed copies to distribute in your own locale.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS MARCH 6TH 2023

Send submissions to seedbroadcast@gmail.com

You can keep up with our actions and encounters with other seed lovers at on our website www.seedbroadcast.org and follow our blog at <http://seedbroadcast.blogspot.com/>

We want to thank our fiscal sponsor Littleglobe, our supporters Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Climate Change Solutions Fund, the Puffin Foundation, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Albuquerque Museum, our SeedBroadcasting cohorts especially the farmers that have allowed us into their fields and lives.

To our partners in Seed: Climate Change Resilience:
[AARON LOWDEN AND THE ACOMA ANCESTRAL LANDS FARM CORPS PROGRAM,](#)
[ACOMA PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO](#)
[DR. LARRY EMERSON AND JENNIFER NEVAREZ OF TSE DAA K'AAN](#)
[LIFELONG LEARNING COMMUNITY](#)
[IN HOGBACK, NEW MEXICO.](#)
[BEATA TSOSIE-PEÑA OF SANTA CLARA PUEBLO AND THE ESPAÑOLA HEALING FOOD OASIS](#)
[RON AND DEBORA BOYD OF MER-GIRL GARDENS, IN LA VILLITA, NEW MEXICO](#)
[LAND ARTS OF THE AMERICAN WEST,](#)
[ROCKY MOUNTAIN SEED ALLIANCE](#)
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To our partners for Earth Optimism:
[EXPERIMENTAL FARM NETWORK](#)
[UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE](#)
[STEAM ONWARD](#)
[SHARE A SEED](#)
[SMITHSONIAN FOLK LIFE X EARTH OPTIMISM](#)

To all those gracious humans that shared their poignant seed stories, Ana Ruiz Díaz, Toña Osher and Chris Wells for building our relationship to community actions and seed activists from Meso-America, David Gallegos, Kaitlin Bryson, Bonnetta Adeeb and Reana Kovalcik for partnering with us for Earth Optimism on the Mall in Washington DC, Whitney Stewart for graphic design, Paul Ross for distribution, Bill Mann, HawkMoth Farm, Rick Ferchaud for endless hoeing and digging, the many individuals for their continued support, and to the amazing anonymous donors that continue to support our work. And huge thank you to the soil, microbes, birds, sun, wind, rain and to our seeds that continue to inspire and give us hope. Thank you for joining with us in keeping these seeds alive.

SEED=FOOD=LIFE

“Once you engage with the simple enough business of feeding yourself, of soil and water, weather, season and harvest, it becomes personal. It is about you, your family and friends. Food becomes an aspect of those relationships as well as your intimacy with your plot.”

Monty Don

The hummingbirds are sipping their last drops of nectar before heading south, the light is changing, leaves are turning, and the harvest is full on. It's time to put our fields to rest to say a huge thank you for the abundance and beauty that holds us and supports us through these changing times.

Where is the reciprocity?
Are our gifts true and honest?

If you did not know already, we are at a crisis point. The pandemic, the uprisings, continued violence to other humans and our mother earth, unprecedented weather patterns, that threaten our very existence. Here in New Mexico the Hermits Peak/Calf canyon fires were the biggest ever recorded in the state's history. The fury of fire sent many fleeing from their ancestral homelands causing deep despair and disconnection.

Then the rains came.

The rains here in this dry desert and can be a blessing and normally we rejoice but this year they came hard and fast and flooded the lands that had been ravaged by the fires, washing the ash and debris into the water systems, destroying the ancient acequias, bringing profound heart-ache and grief.

The way we place one foot in front of the other has shifted.
Did we ever imagine this?

All can be over whelming and out of balance. We need to muster up the courage to dig deep into finding meaningful ways to ground ourselves back into this world. These ways might be different for all of us but each of us holds a responsibility to act in accordance to the reciprocal laws of nature.

We at SeedBroadcast have been learning from the incredible capacity of our seeds, are dedicated to what they teach us and in return offer our kinship to keep their nurturing stories alive and in good health. We believe and are acting on keeping the seeds alive.

Might you?

We too are seeds...

SEEDBROADCAST holds the belief that it is a worldly right to be able save our seeds and share their potential, to be able to grow our own food and share this abundance, and to cultivate grassroots wisdom and share in her radical creativity and resilience.

We seek to reveal the culture that has been lost in agriculture and believe that seeds are witnesses to our past and hold potential for our future. Seeds have their own story to tell and it is up to us to listen before it is too late.

SEEDBROADCAST encourages communities to keep local food and culture alive and vibrant through working together in creative and inspiring ways. We spend time with people on their farms, in their gardens, at seed exchanges and at community gatherings to dig deeper into the, often, unheard stories of local agriculture. Our traditional farmers, avid gardeners and local organic food growers are inspired by the seeds they sow and save, they take notice of what grows and what does not, they learn from the seasonal shifts, experiment with when to plant the first pea and when to harvest the seed for next year.

This vital knowledge base of plant and human connection is what we seek to cultivate, disperse and nurture.

We strive to live in reciprocity with all of our living breathing beings and to not only take but to sincerely give back.

What if we were to ask ourselves everyday “What can we gift?”

Our gift, to all who are willing to open their hearts to the necessity of listening, to those beings that have faced and are facing extinction and relocation and to learn from their fearless resilience.

In 2019 we launched the SEED: Climate Change Resilience exhibition at the Albuquerque Museum accompanied by

numerous theme-based events in collaboration with many bioregional partners and a special edition of the SeedBroadcast Journal. This year 2022 we continue to work in partnership with the Haak'u Museum ([HTTPS://WWW.ACOMASKYCITY.ORG/PAGE/HOME](https://www.acomaskycity.org/page/home)) in Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico to add new seed stories to this exhibit and directly involve their local communities. We are moving one careful step at a time. This exhibition is scheduled to open 2023. However, as we are all well aware, during these unprecedented times we need to be fluid, so this date could well change.

SeedBroadcast launched this year by gathering with 15 Nomad MFA ([HTTPS://WWW.NOMADMFA.ORG/](https://www.nomadmfa.org/)) students at HawkMoth Farm in Anton Chico, New Mexico. We collaboratively investigated the rigor of the relational pluriverse of arts and agri-culture and regenerative practices through the creative process of gathering and sharing the stories of seeds, seed cleaning and processing. The insert in the 18th edition was created by the students, from the seed concepts that emerged during our time together. A huge thank you to Roberta Trentin, Katie Grove, Aiyasha Ghani, Mauricio Vargas, Arneitha Douglass, Julie Chen, Kathryn Cooke, Monica Kapoor, Teal Gardner, Sarah C. Rutherford, Rebecca Zablocki, Rebecca Schultz, Justin Moore, Morgan Kulas, Natalie Stopka and Mary Mattingly.

SeedBroadcast was on the National Mall in Washington DC at the Smithsonian's Earth Optimism X Folk Life Festival (<https://festival.si.edu/2022/earth-optimism>). We were honored to partner with local seed savers and activists, Reana Kovalcik of Share a Seed and Bonnetta Adeeb of Steam Onward and Ujamaa Farming Cooperative Alliance. We shared and recorded seed stories and engaged in conversations about the deep connection food sovereignty has to resilience and reciprocity in the face of pandemics, rampant injustice, and climate crisis. See pages 32-33 and 17-19.

We are also honored to share that the incredible Kaitlin Bryson has joined SeedBroadcast. Kaitlyn is an artist, mycologist and educator and the Co-founder of Submergence Collective. She has a Master of Fine Arts from the Arts and Ecology department at the University of New Mexico.

While 2022 has been a year of action we will continue to take time to slow down and to reflect on how to best take meaningful action for change. We are redoing the website to make it more accessible and interactive as it is seriously out of date. A new version will be up and running soon and much easier to navigate. We are continuing our conversations and networking with farmers, seed savers, backyard gardeners and activists, and teaching and mentoring as much as possible.

And we are always in the process of tending our own fields and gardens, learning as much as we possibly can from the seeds and soil and trying new ways to keep the seeds alive and vibrant.

This issue is dedicated with deep bow of gratitude to all the peoples of the world who are facing the rapid changes to their homelands, with the ongoing fires, floods, hurricanes and erratic weather patterns that are threatening their survival and the survival of their seeds, lands, plants and animals.

How will you know the difficulties of being human if you're always flying off to blue perfection? Where will you plant your grief-seeds? We need ground to scrape and hoe, not the sky of unspecified desire.

Rumi

PLEASE HELP US GROW! Support SeedBroadcast with a tax-deductable donation!

With the increasing demands for SEED Action now, we need your help to ensure that we continue to expand our collaborations and activations. Your support will keep the SeedBroadcast agri-Cultural Journal free and accessible, nurture seed stories and keep them alive and percolating and allow our partnerships with Native Seeds/SEARCH, Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance and community activist organizations to deepen the focus on food and seed sovereignty and climate change resilience. These are times of rapid climate and environmental crisis that are causing devastation to our mother earth so we need to continue to sustain and deepen our efforts. Your donation will help us to build the capacity to dig deep, sprout tall, and shout out for more action to plant the seeds of our ancestors across the land.

TO MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO SEEDBROADCAST GO TO:

Online donation:
[WWW.SEEDBROADCAST.ORG/SEEDBROADCAST/SEEDBROADCAST_DONATE.HTML](https://www.seedbroadcast.org/seedbroadcast/seedbroadcast_donate.html)

[WWW.LITTEGLOBE.ORG/PORTFOLIO/SEEDBROADCAST/](https://www.littleglobe.org/portfolio/seedbroadcast/)

Or contact our fiscal sponsor Littleglobe for other payment options:

Phone: 505.980.6218
Email: INFO@LITTEGLOBE.ORG

- Your donation will support the on going activation of Seed: Climate Change Resilience and community engagement.

- Your donation will help us to keep activating local food and seed resiliency through community partnerships.
- Your donation will help keep the agri-Culture Journal free. Available online [HTTPS://WWW.SEEDBROADCAST.ORG/SEEDBROADCAST/SEEDBROADCAST_AGRICULTURE_JOURNAL.HTML](https://www.seedbroadcast.org/seedbroadcast/seedbroadcast_agriculture_journal.html) and at various locations around the nation.

SeedBroadcast has been and continues to be funded by in-kind donations of time, labor, and money from collective SeedBroadcasters.

SeedBroadcast has received generous grants from the Kindle Project Fund of the Common Counsel Foundation, McCune Charitable Foundation, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, the Puffin Foundation and anonymous donors that support our continued projects. All of these funds are essential for the successful operation of SeedBroadcast.

SeedBroadcast thanks you for your support and BELIEF in the power of Seeds, Stories, and acknowledging the vital aspects of culture that is held within traditional forms of agri-Culture!

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE AND FLOOD AFTERMATH Sharon Stewart | 4 |
| SEEDS Vincent Waring | 6 |
| PLEGARIA A LA TIERRA PRAYER TO THE EARTH Hanna Gonzalez Chomenko | 7 |
| CELEBRATING MULEIN Iren Schio | 8 |
| PROTECTOR OF SEEDS Alicja Lukasiak | 12 |
| CAMAS LILY Anita Vasquez | 13 |
| MONARCHS ON THE WING: FROM MAINE TO MEXICO Sara Wright | 15 |
| WITCHES BUTTER Sara Wright | 18 |
| ELDERBERRY-IS IT TIME TO TAKE A SECOND LOOK Sara Wright | 19 |
| THE DAY THEY SAVED EVOLUTION IN NEW MEXICO Chris Wells and Mariel Rose Garcia | 21 |
| REANIMATING THE CULTURE THAT HAS BEEN LOST IN AGRICULTURE | 23 |
| HOW MANY HANDS Melody Joy Overstreet | 26 |
| SEED OF LIFE Emily C-D | 28 |
| GRIEF AND GRATITUDE IN A NEW MEXICAN FIRE John McLeod | 30 |
| SEEDS OF HOPE AT THE SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE X EARTH OPTIMISM FESTIVAL | 37 |



PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST

HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE AND FLOOD AFTERMATH

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

SHARON STEWART

The Hermit's Peak + Calf Canyon Fire has officially been declared contained and there are no longer daily or even weekly updates from the US Forest Service. The post-fire floods indeed inundated the valley when our monsoon season advanced early and lingers late. Regrettably and predictably, those areas downstream from the greatest burn severity were impacted and shall be for years hence. Some neighbors, weary of mud, ash, and debris flow in and around their homes and pastures, chose to leave or sell. Other's nights remain uneasy. Many are staying, determined to rebuild.



Our acequias are silted in and their headgates jammed rendering them inoperable. To this point there is only vague federal assistance forthcoming to clear and repair them for winter livestock watering and next spring's irrigation flows. In Chacón we continue to receive tendered water each day and work is proceeding to build a new spring box and establish a new line with hopes this work can be completed by the cold months.



ABOVE: ACEQUIAS: DAMAGED HEAD GATES FROM POST HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE FLOODING. ACEQUIA DE LAS COLONIAS, CHACÓN, NEW MEXICO AND ACEQUIAS ENCINAL AND CAÑONCITO, HOLMAN, NEW MEXICO

BELOW: BLACK BURN DIPTYCH :THE AFTERMATH OF THE BURN SEVERITY OF THE HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE-
-A FAMILY CABIN AND AN OAK ALONG THE ACEQUIA DE LAS COLONIAS, CHACÓN, NEW MEXICO

Now, how about this reality? The cost of fighting this US Forest Service caused fire came to 1 million dollars per burned acre--that's 1/3 million acres, 1/3 billion dollars. What we see daily are remediation crews grinding through the valley working on roads, land, and fences damaged by "fire suppression efforts" though there is little clearing, cleaning, and rebuilding of what isn't included in that designation. Re-seeding planes and helicopters are the hum and beat of our days. FEMA's miasma of promises continues to shade expectations toward despair. Who knows what will revive? What will emerge? What will never return?



LEFT: BURN AND FLOOD AFTERMATH: A BURNED FOREST WITH NEW PASTURE GROWTH AND THE REMNANTS OF ASH FLOW ON THE FOREST FLOOR AFTER THE 2022 HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE. MORA VALLEY, NEW MEXICO

BELOW: PLUMS: THE INITIAL HARVEST OF GREEN GAGE PLUMS FROM SHARON STEWART'S PROPERTY POST HERMIT'S PEAK + CALF CANYON FIRE. CHACÓN, NEW MEXICO

Undoubtedly, I am one of the grateful, fortunate ones to be writing you from the embrace of my adobe home. However, it's the daily sightings of evergreens, now black spikes cresting our ridges and ranging across our valley that bruises my spirit, especially because this fire is the result of a cascade of poor human decisions. And though this missive carries a dire tone, I am doing fairly well. There seems a significance, an importance, to share what continues to transpire in this climate change reality coursing through all our days. And to end here is a photo of fecundity amidst the destruction—Green gage plums from my property. Jam has been made.

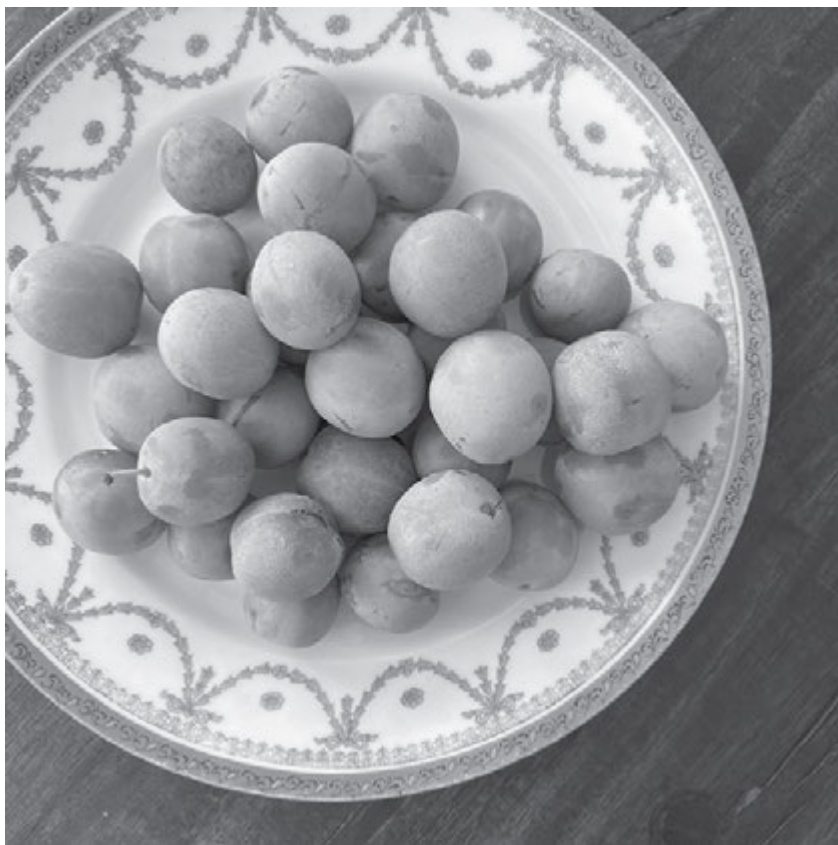


PHOTO CREDIT: SHARON STEWART

PHOTOGRAPHER SHARON STEWART RESIDES IN THE MORA VALLEY VILLAGE OF CHACÓN WHERE SHE HAS EXTENSIVELY PHOTOGRAPHED THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, FAMILIAL, AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES THAT DEFINE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF NORTHERN NEW MEXICO.

WWW.SHARONSTEWARTPHOTOGRAPHY.NET

SEEDS

VINCENT WARING

The first image is a cyanotype print I made that depicts an avocado seed in the process of germinating underground. The second image is a photo I captured of my partner and artist, Melody Overstreet, who is holding seeds in her hand from a Lupine plant along the coast that recently flowered and had gone to seed. The last photo is of two sunflower heads that were harvested from our home to collect seeds after sharing with the birds.

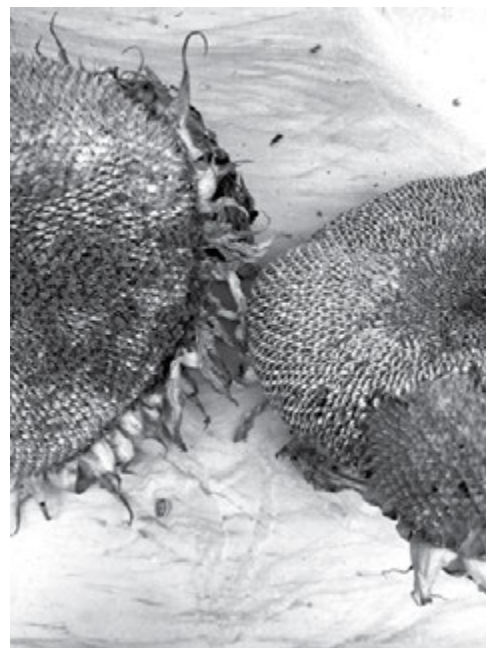


PHOTO CREDIT: VINCENT WARING

VINCENT IS AN ARTIST AND CRAFTSMAN BASED ON THE CENTRAL COAST OF CALIFORNIA. HE IS INTERESTED IN THE ECOLOGY OF WILD AND INTENTIONAL SPACES, WHICH HE OFTEN EXPLORES THROUGH IMAGERY REFLECTING PARTS OF THE WHOLE. HE UTILIZES A VARIETY OF MEDIUMS, INCLUDING PRINTMAKING, PAINTING, AND DRAWING. IN THE MIDST OF MAKING ART, HE ALSO SPENDS HIS DAYS WORKING WITH TEXTILES, WOOD, AND PLANTS.



PLEGARIA A LA TIERRA, PRAYER TO THE EARTH

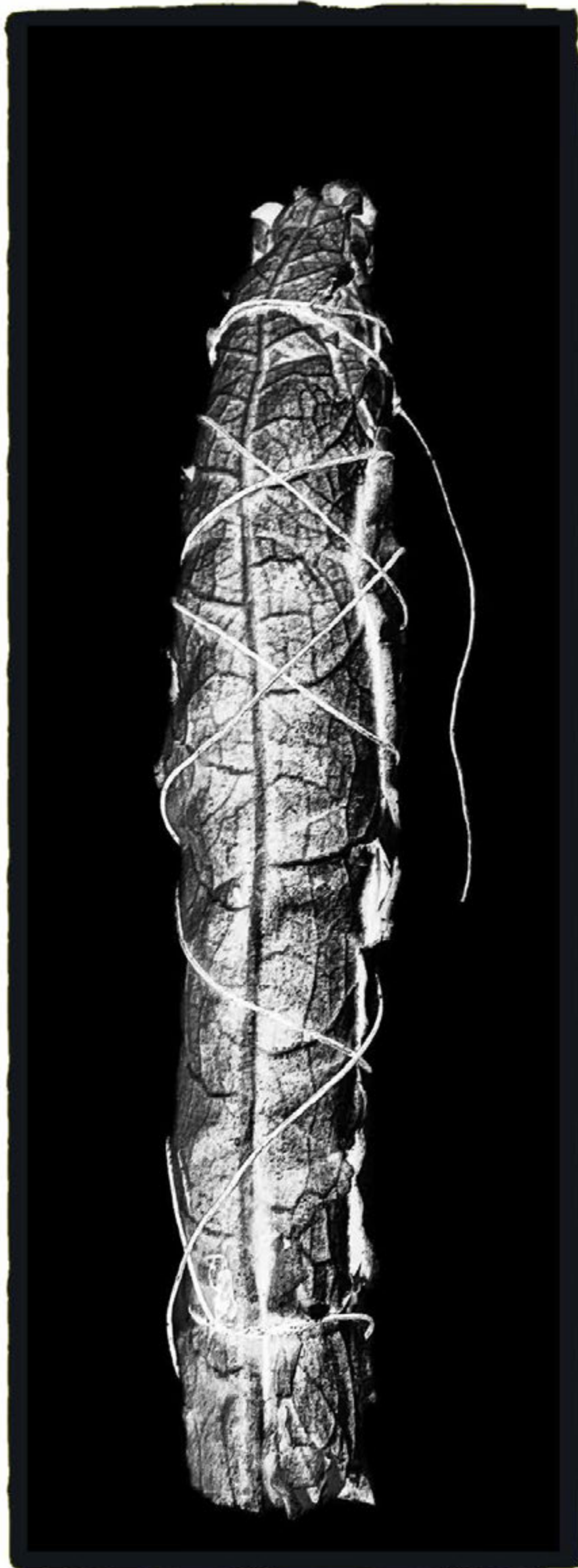
HANNA GONZALEZ CHOMENKO

Hanna was born in Havana, she is a visual artist, with a Polish mother and a Cuban father. She is a graduate of the Cuban Academy of Fine Arts "San Alejandro" and has a degree in Sociocultural Studies from the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the University of Havana. She has made twenty personal exhibitions and more than fifty collective exhibitions on and off the island. She works as an illustrator and at the same time carries out her visual work, inspired by the man-nature relationship. She lives and creates in Cuba. hannachomenko@gmail.com

CELEBRATING MULLEIN

IREN SCHIO

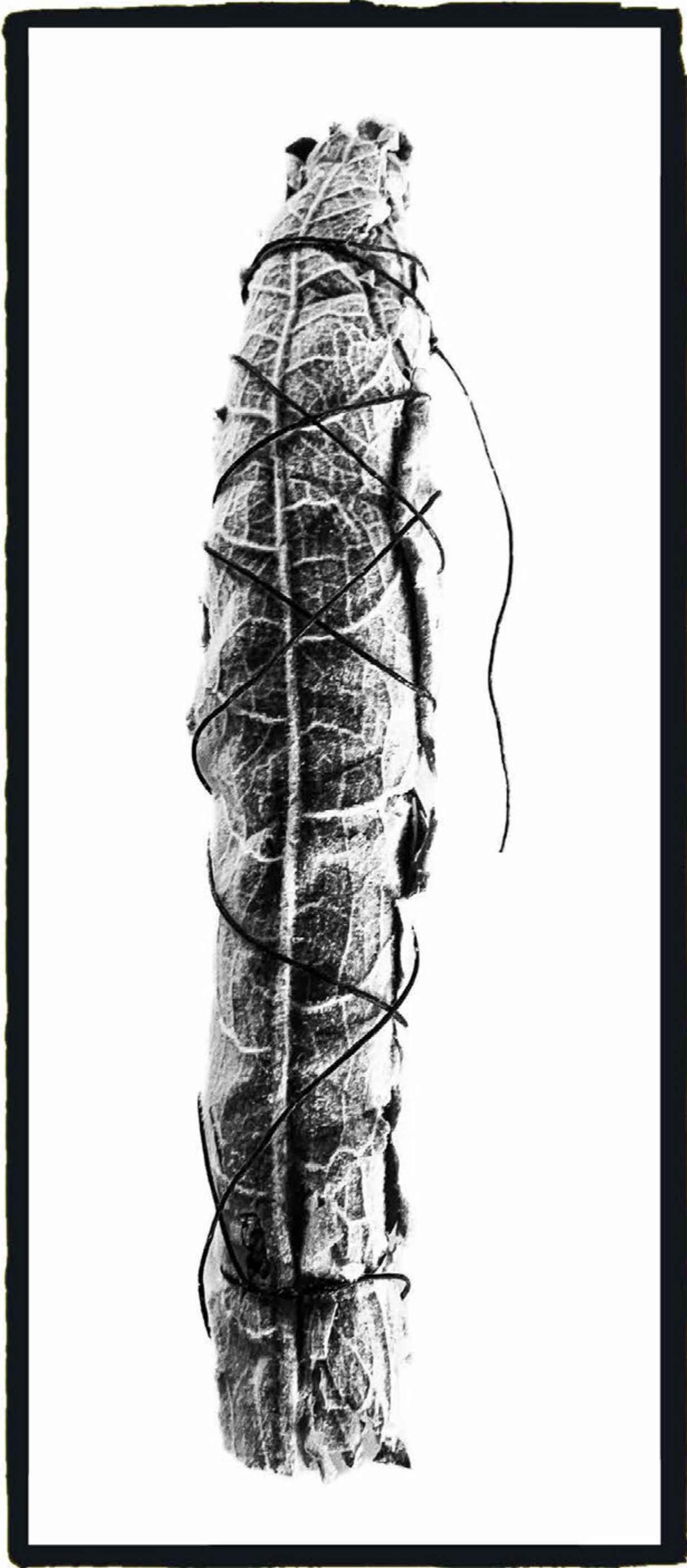
Mullein is a native plant without thorns, that doesn't require extra care, just let it grow where it comes up and enjoy its elegant presence. Mullein helps prevent soil erosion, gives nectar to pollinators, and gives us medicine. A tea can be made from the leaves and flowers to sooth a cough. Leaves can be smoked like tobacco, but without nicotine. I also love its texture and softness.



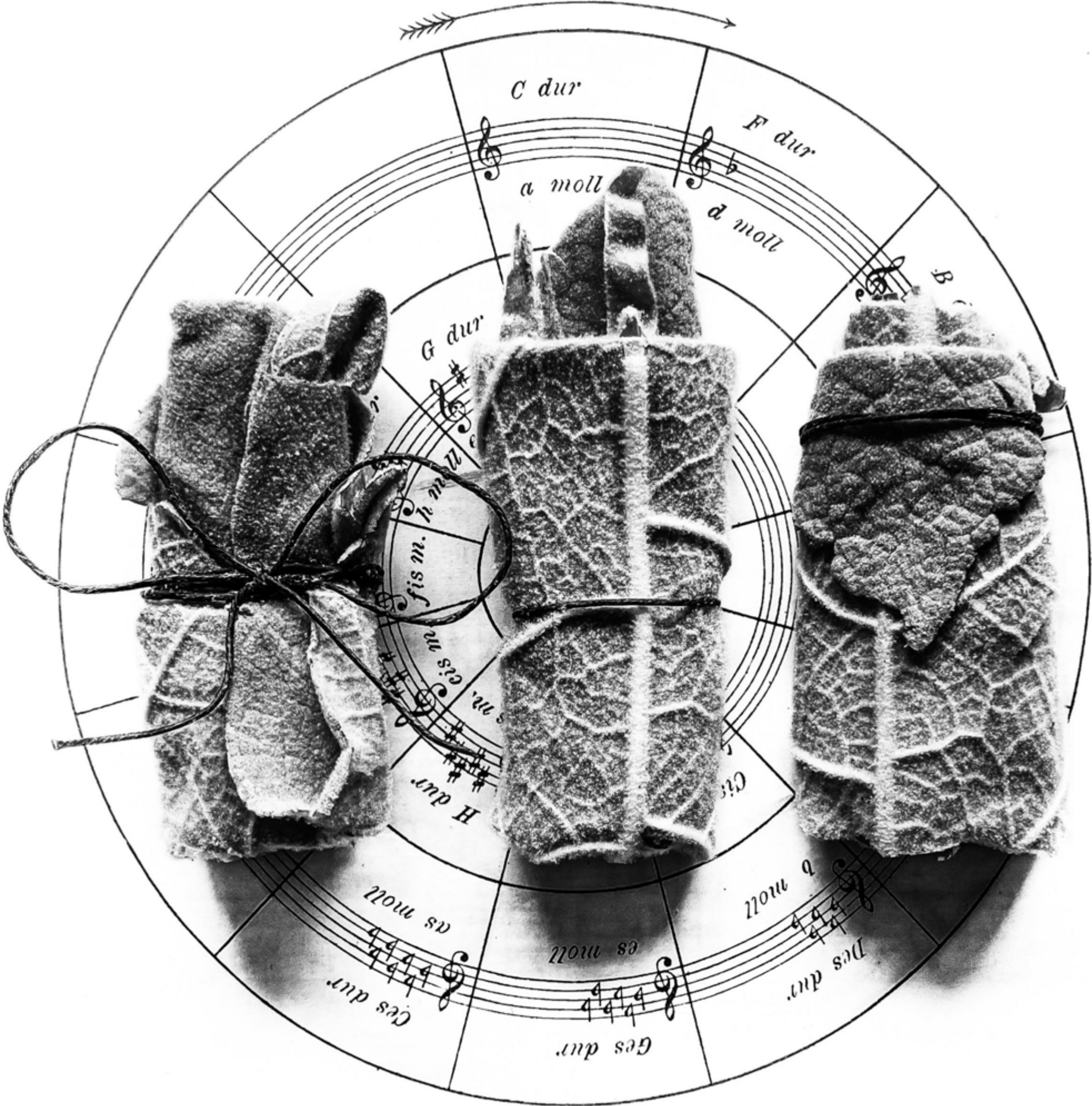
WRAPPED MULLEIN LEAF



ABOVE: MULLEIN GROWING ALONG ABIQUIU LAKE
BELOW: MULLEIN ROSETTE



WRAPPED MULLEIN LEAF II



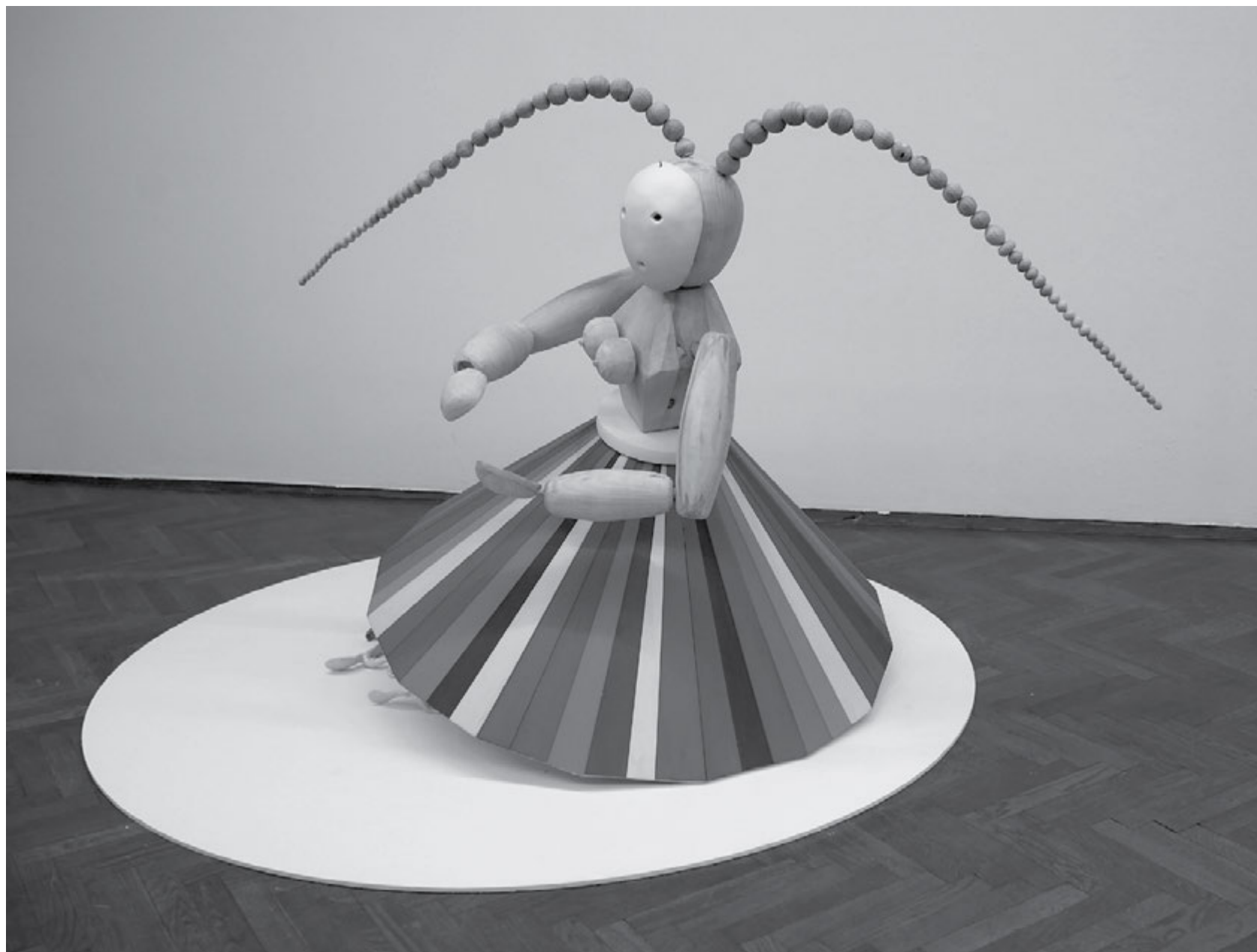
THREE MULLEIN BUNDLES

IREN SCHIO LIVES AND WORKS IN ABIQUIU, WHERE SHE LOVES TO HIKE, GARDEN AND PURSUES HER ART.

PROTECTOR OF SEEDS

ALICJA LUKASIAK

Dancing Slavic defender, dressed in colorful striped uniforms. Her role is to protect seeds and preserve species continuity. She has a pale mask on her face and her braided hair floats to the rhythm of the dance. She/he protects the seeds that are the guarantee of the primal fight of opposites. Here is the eternal struggle of the Seed maker with the mythical creatures, the goal is to take absolute power. Monoculture, homogenization, standardization, development, better faster, more modern or cheaper, there are the slogans which take us to permanent blindness.....



SEED PROTECTOR, WOOD, PORCELAIN 2015

ALICJA, BORN IN POLAND, IS INTERESTED IN NATURE, IN WHICH SHE ANALYSES MAN AS A DOMINANT SPECIES. ON THE ONE HAND, SHE PORTRAYS MAN'S DESTRUCTIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND SHE TRIES TO SHOW THE BEAUTY AND DIVERSITY OF LIFE, WHICH IS A MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENON FOR HER, AND THE ARTISTIC CREATION IS A FORM OF EMOTIONAL STORY. IN HER WORKS, FAUNA AND FLORA ARE PERSONIFIED, THANKS TO WHICH INSECTS AND PLANTS ARE SUBJECT TO LAWS IMPOSED BY THE SUPERIOR FORM OF EXISTENCE – MAN. SHE WORKS USING CLAY OR WATER PAINTS, EXPERIMENTS WITH TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES. SHE PAYS ATTENTION TO THE STRENGTH OF COLOR AND ITS MEANING. ART IS FOR HER AN ETHICAL ACT, IN WHICH IT IS ART THAT PLAYS THE MAIN ROLE, NOT THE SOCIETY.

ALICJA ZAINTERESOWANA NATURĄ, W KTÓREJ ANALIZUJE CZŁOWIEKA JAKO GATUNEK DOMINUJĄCY. Z JEDNEJ STRONY UKAZUJE JEGO DESTRUKCYJNY WPŁYW NA ŚRODOWISKO, A Z DRUGIEJ STARASIĘ UKAZAĆ PIĘKNO I RÓŻNORODNOŚĆ ŻYCIA, KTÓRE JEST DLA NIEJ ZAGADKOWYM FENOMENEM, A TWÓRCZOŚĆ ARTYSTYCZNA FORMĄ EMOCJONALNEJ OPowieści. W JEJ PRACACH FAUNA I FLORA ULEGAJĄ PERSONIFIKACJI, DZIĘKI KTÓREJ OWADY CZY ROŚLINY PODLEGAJĄ PRAWOM NARZUCONYM PRZEZ NADRZĘDNĄ FORMĘ EGZYSTENCJI – CZŁOWIEKA. PRACUJE WYKORZYSTUJĄC GLINĘ CZY FARBY WODNE, EKSPERYMENTUJE Z TRADYCYJNYMI TECHNIKAMI. ZWRACA UWAGĘ NA SIŁĘ KOLORU I JEGO ZNACZENIE. SZTUKA JEST DLA NIEJ DZIAŁANIEM ETYCZNYM, W KTÓRYM TO NIE SPOŁECZEŃSTWO, LECZ NATURA GRA GŁÓWNA ROLĘ.

CAMAS LILY

ANITA VASQUEZ

I live in Missoula, Montana, grow and harvest my own wild Camas Lily seeds. The close-up Camas Lily pictures show anthers and stamen during high pollination period. The deep purple petal veins are highly visible. The bulb flowers increase every year quite well. They need a lot of moisture but tend to burn in too much of hot afternoon sun. I have Camas Lily bulbs planted in various "microhabitats" so they are blooming for a longer:

- 1) the earliest bulbs are in a sunnier South-West facing area
- 2) the second group of bulbs start getting sun and open a couple weeks later and
- 3) the third area gets sun later and is covered with ice longer.





ANITA GROWS A VARIETY OF WILDFLOWER SPECIES AND COLLECTS, DRIES AND SAVES THEIR SEEDS EVERY YEAR. ANITA'S NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CAN BE SEEN IN THE ACCOMPANYING CAMAS LILY PHOTOGRAPHS. SHE DOCUMENTS WILDFLOWERS, SEED SAVING AND HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS AND WRITING.



MONARCHS ON THE WING: FROM MAINE TO NEW MEXICO

SARA WRIGHT

I am going to begin this essay with a personal story. Yesterday was a gorgeous blue and gold day and I was walking through my milkweed - strewn field when suddenly I discovered a baby monarch caterpillar chewing up a leaf... I was just starting new research for this essay and so I was very excited. This year I had already planned to raise another monarch as I have done for most of my life – and here he was! I carefully removed the milkweed stalk, added others and brought them up the hill to place in a bucket. I planned to raise this one outdoors as has been my custom. Then I came in to work on my research... needless to say I was simply horrified to learn that scientists are now saying that it may put the monarch at risk to hand raise them. I checked other sources with the same result. I went out to see my little friend thinking I had best return him to the field as fast as I could and he was GONE. Oh no, I was distraught. I came back in with a heavy heart that I couldn't shake all day. Why do I have to keep learning again and again that nature takes care of her own WITHOUT MY HELP, even though I rarely I interfere? Last night returning from a walk with my dogs I casually checked his nearby milkweed patch – and lo – there he was munching on a leaf warming in the sun! I quickly took a picture and then moved closer to inspect my little friend and he simply dropped off the leaf and disappeared out of sight! Enough of this predator; the message couldn't have been more clear. As I came down the driveway I realized the little fellow had made a long arduous journey up the hill to rooted milkweed, no doubt guided by scent. He must have been exhausted. But what choice did he have? His field was a quarter of a mile away. I was relieved but still worried. Monarch caterpillars like full sun and this batch didn't have it. This morning I couldn't find him – the sun doesn't hit this particular milkweed patch until after 10 AM. When the sun rose over the trees I went back to check and

he had moved to another plant that was getting full sun. I apologized profusely telling him that I was so sorry to have behaved so stupidly but that I just didn't know... then I left him unable to decide whether moving him back to the field was what I should do, or perhaps it would be better to let him be? It soon became apparent that this little caterpillar was perfectly happy where he was, so this little story has a happy ending! Just yesterday I watched him nibbling down a milkweed pod. Perhaps when the time comes I might even find the chrysalis.

But you can be sure I will NEVER move a monarch caterpillar again. This little fellow taught me a powerful, painful lesson that I needed to learn... again! Nature does not need my help!

Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on the leaves of milkweed, the only host plant for this iconic butterfly species. As such, milkweed is critical for survival. Without it, they cannot complete their life cycle. Simple.

Indeed, eradication of milkweed both in agricultural areas as well as in urban and suburban landscapes is one of the primary reasons that monarchs are in trouble today (it used to grow wild throughout this country from coast to coast.).

The good news is that planting milkweed is one of the easiest ways that each of us can make a difference. There are several dozen species of this wildflower native to North America, so no matter where you live, there is at least one milkweed species naturally found in your area.

Planting local milkweed species is always best. You can collect your own seed, or purchase seed or plants to add to your garden, or to any landscape. Three species have particularly wide ranges and are good choices in most regions: common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), and butterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*). The latter two are highly ornamental and widely available via the nursery trade.

Note: *Tropical milkweed, (Asclepias curassavica), available at many retail nurseries is not native to the U.S. However it has naturalized in the Southeastern U.S. Science is discovering that its long bloom time may have some detrimental effects on monarch migration and possibly be a source to spread disease within monarch populations. If you do have tropical milkweed in your garden in milder climates, it is recommended to cut the plant back in the winter months to encourage monarchs to move on to their natural overwintering sites and to prevent disease.*

What follows are some salient suggestions for folks who want to improve the monarchs' chances of survival.

1. Plant Lots of Milkweed

It bares repetition. Milkweed is the only plant monarch caterpillars eat. These caterpillars

hatch from eggs laid on the plant before consuming its leaves.

However, not just any kind of milkweed will do. The key is this: You must plant milkweed native to your area.

The reason? Planting non-native types of milkweed risks monarch butterfly health. In many areas, non-native, tropical milkweed survives through the winter, allowing ophryocystis elektroscirrha, a parasite that can be found on monarchs and milkweed, to build up to dangerous levels. By sticking with native milkweed, the parasite dies with the plant in the winter, ensuring that new milkweed grows with less risk from the parasite when monarch butterflies return in the spring.

You can purchase milkweed seeds but please ask about the origin of both seeds and plants. Some have already been treated with pesticides.

Another option, if you have milkweed in your area is to harvest the plant yourself. To harvest seeds at the right time, make sure their pods pop open under light pressure or pick and dry unripe pods in a shaded attic room like I do.

The best time to plant milkweed seeds is in the fall so the cold temperatures and moisture that come with winter stimulate germination. In Abiquiu, the only place I ever had to plant milkweed to have some, I sowed the seeds in early November.

Milkweed should probably be planted in the sunniest parts of your yard or garden. In places like NM protection from afternoon frying is probably a necessity. If you have a choice of soil, most milkweed species thrive in light, well-drained soils with seeds planted a quarter-inch deep. Since milkweed is a perennial you can harvest the seeds from your new plants and grow them in other parts of your yard or garden the following year.

For places like Abiquiu NM the only milkweed I found was the common *Asclepias syriaca*, and then I only discovered a plant or two growing along the ditches shaded from the ferocity of the afternoon sun. However, when I harvested the seeds I planted them by a partially shaded drainage pipe near the house and they not only survived but multiplied. Note, they required daily watering.

Please Also Note: *Tropical milkweed also called Mexican milkweed (Asclepias curassavica) is available at many retail nurseries but is not native to the U.S. However, it has naturalized in the Southeastern U.S. Science is discovering that its long bloom time may have some detrimental effects on monarch migration and possibly be a source to spread disease within monarch populations as already mentioned. If you do have tropical milkweed in your garden (It's gorgeous), it is recommended that you cut the plant back in the winter months to encourage monarchs to move on to their natural overwintering sites and to prevent disease.*

Once monarch caterpillars transform into bittersweet bright orange butterflies, they need the right food to survive and prepare them for their long winter migration to Mexico or the California coast.

Once again, be sure to include flowers that are native to your region, since these are plants monarchs have relied on and are suited to the local environment.

In Maine it is easy and such a pleasure to visit the local MLT pollinator garden to look for monarch friendly plants. In other areas it's important to do your homework to find out what plants do best your particular area. My common milkweed grows wild and I have never interfered with this process.

I have a field overflowing with it and it's on my road just about everywhere (the latter I seeded in because I love walking past it – the scent is intoxicating!). I grow bright orange butterfly weed around the house. Thanks to the MLT pollinator garden I have fallen in love with *A. incarnata* and may try some here. Swamp milkweed is also next on my list to be planted at the edges of my favorite forest. Adult monarch favorites are Mexican Sunflowers, the color is beyond belief and monarchs love it. *Liatrus* is another good choice for monarchs, as is verbena, cosmos, or butterfly bush. There are so many possibilities. Start researching now!

2 Don't Use Pesticides

This is such a no brainer that I feel stupid writing the words but the shelves of our stores are full of these plant hating products – Roundup is just one of a mass of deadly killers .

Neonicotinids also known as neonics, are particularly destructive. When applied, neonics spread throughout all parts of a plant, becoming dangerous for monarchs and every other living being including humans. With monarchs the outcome is always fatal.

Canada and the European Union banned the use of neonics but the US still lives in the capitalistic, take the easiest way out, dark age mentality. These toxins continue to be used without restrictions in this country. If you *must* purchase yard and gardening products, avoid those with neonicotinoid ingredients including clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and dinotefuran, and neonic-like ingredients, such as flupyradifurone and sulfoxaflor.

3. Avoid Rearing Monarchs

Raising butterflies is an enticing activity for families and educators, and I have done it most of my life but now I have learned the hard way that breeding monarchs in captivity is hurting the survival of the species. Captive-bred monarchs are less likely to survive, and scientists warn those that do survive long enough to mate will pass down their weaker traits to wild butterflies, hurting the chances of survival for the whole population. Instead of raising monarch caterpillars in your house or yard, you can watch wild monarch caterpillars grow from eggs to butterflies by monitoring the milkweed as I plan to do in the future – beginning now!

Remember that eradication of milkweed both in agricultural areas as well as in urban and suburban landscapes is one of the primary reasons that monarchs are in trouble today but not the only one. This is a complex issue. We need more than milkweed to save the monarchs and the rest of the insect population – we have to restore natural habitat – lots of it. We are a *no context* culture so we have a tendency to choose a species and then try to save it (whales, butterflies, trout, birds – could go on and on here) without dealing with root causes, the *context*: logging machines, cattle run amok, general loss of habitat, drought, fires, climate change etc. I am assuming that most folks have developed some awareness around the crisis we are facing on a global level.

On the thorny subject of monarch tagging: I am a member of our local land trust (MLT) and am a volunteer for this organization. I personally am against monarch tagging and have expressed my views on this issue to those in power.

I believe that we tag butterflies primarily for people not for monarchs. Studies show that tagging creates stress for the insect, possibly lessening its ability to journey to its winter destination safely. More studies are being conducted as I write. As a lifetime naturalist/ethologist (Ph.D), it is still my common sense that tells me that creating stress for the butterfly may interfere with its survival for the short or long term. Of course, tagging helps humans monitor the monarch population so that the species has FINALLY become officially

endangered. So, like everything else there are always two sides to the story. I leave the reader with a question each individual must answer for herself/himself. Do you think tagging monarchs helps the *butterfly* or not?

There's new research that indicates that butterfly wing dust **protects them from being eaten**. The dust or powder on every butterfly wing is made up of tiny scales that may form patterns that help the butterflies blend into their background, and thus escape being eaten by birds or other animals.

While touching a butterfly's wings may not kill it immediately, **it could potentially speed up the fading of the colors on the butterfly's wings, wiping out patterns that are used to protect the butterfly from predators**. Thus touching the butterfly's wings could potentially result in a shorter life expectancy.

I think it may be prudent to let scientists do further studies before we champion tagging any further, but of course, this is simply my opinion.

I was fascinated to learn that the Desert Southwest harbors at least 41 of the 76 milkweed (*Asclepias*) species known to exist in the lower 48 states. The species richness of milkweeds in this region is influenced by the tremendous diversity and range of vegetation types, soils, topography, climate, and the exposure of unusual rock types that occur over more than a 9,000 foot elevation range. The nectar of milkweed flowers is attractive to dozens of insects including bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. The bees that milkweed flowers attract to agricultural landscapes are important for pollinating a wide variety of vegetable forage and fruit crops.

Also of interest is that traditional ecological and utilitarian knowledge about milkweeds in the Desert Southwest has persisted due to the many living traditions among the region's long-standing Native American cultures. Of the milkweed species found native, naturalized, or cultivated in the desert southwest region, there are recorded traditional uses of spider milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*); short-crown milkweed (*A. brachystephana*); tropic milkweed (*A. curasaavica*); Hall's milkweed (*A. halli*); giant sand milkweed (*A. erosa*); mahogany milkweed (*A. hypoleuca*); swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*); corn kernel milkweed (*A. latifolia*); Zizotes milkweed (*A. oenotheroides*); showy milkweed (*A. speciosa*); horsetail milkweed (*A. subverticillata*); butterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*); and whorled milkweed. Wow!

The Hopi boiled the flowers or floral buds of showy milkweed before mixing them with corn or wheat flour to then be added to meat dishes. In addition, many people—especially children—have used the white latex of milkweed buds, stems, and fruits as a chewing gum, hardening the latex over a fire or by other means. Such use has been common among the Diné (Navajo), various Piman cultures (Akimel, Tohono O'odham, and the Zuni). There are some accounts from Puebloan and Hispanic peoples using milkweed pods in stews to tenderize the meat, but the culinary techniques and chemistry of this traditional practice are not well understood.

Many milkweed species in the Southwest borderlands were used medicinally—as an emetic, a treatment for warts, burns, and scalds, a respiratory aid (using powdered leaves and stems), a treatment for throat and nose congestion associated with colds and pleurisy, and when the entire plant was infused it was used to treat infants afflicted with diarrhea.

In addition, an infusion or tea made from various milkweed species served as a gynecological aid for mothers after childbirth, a common practice for the Hopi and nearly all other tribes situated on the Colorado Plateau.

In the northern reaches of the Desert Southwest region, various bands of the Southern Paiute also used the root as an analgesic to wash heads to relieve headaches.

The Hopi occasionally used the woody stems of milkweeds as a planting stick for dribbling seeds into their sand dune fields of native crops. The Diné and Zuni also used the floss or cottony fiber of barely-ripened seedpods to spin into string. The string was then used to fasten feathers to prayer sticks (pahos), or it was mixed with cotton to weave dance kilts or women's belts. Rabbit and fish nets in the prehistoric Desert Southwest may have been comprised of both *Asclepias* and *Apocynum* species. Several milkweed species have also been used by Diné medicine men and Hispanic Curanderos to treat livestock ailments among cattle, goats, and sheep.

However, because of varying toxicity, please do not experiment with the use of *Asclepias* without foreknowledge!

In conclusion, as we can see from the above Indigenous practices milkweed is yet another plant with a multitude of uses aside from being the primary host for monarchs.

As our culture continues to be destroyed by western cultural practices that are not sustainable, perhaps we need to become 'more Indigenous', as well known author and scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer suggests (*Braiding Sweetgrass*). If we were to take that route the monarchs might again find habitat, food, they need, and what's left of land and trees might once again be valued as a complex interrelated Living Being, more than able to sustain us all. At the very least, it's food for thought.



PHOTO CREDIT: MICHAEL WOOD

WITCHES BUTTER

SARA WRIGHT

The other day I found the most beautiful fungus on an aging white pine set against deep green moss that was almost arcing over the brook. When I looked up *Dacrymyces palmatis* I discovered that it's common name was "Witches Butter". That figures I thought – this must mean that this plant has medicinal qualities, and of course it does along with the fact that the fungus is edible.

Any time I see the word witch associated with a plant if I am not familiar with it I start digging into research inevitably coming up with the same kind of information – the plant/ tree/ fungus/slime mold is edible and has medicinal value.

The word witch as many of us know has at its root to bend or shape. Shape -shifting by non –ordinary means.

Witches were and are healers that use herbs, talk intimately with animals, are counseled by plants and humming trees. Witches wait patiently for instructions,

It's no surprise that in fairy tales witches almost always live in the woods and are solitary creatures by nature and design.

After having spent more than half of my life living alone by choice, my non – human neighbors have become my teachers. It is painfully obvious to me that listening to nature is an art form lost to western culture.

Observing, listening, refusing to make judgments or draw premature conclusions allows Nature's truths to seep slowly into our bodies. I think of this process as a kind of percolating – extraordinary knowledge and insights arise out of these complex relationships with the rest of nature that only some Indigenous cultures seem to be able to maintain today.

Although I am not a witch in the western tradition as in Wiccan I am one having been initiated by nature.

I'll give the reader one recent example. A number of years ago while walking through a Bosque along the river in New Mexico, on a daily basis during the winter months, always before dawn, I began to sense *light* emanating from under my feet *underground*. I could feel that this light was beneficent but it also seemed that I was tapping into the unknown.

Very mysterious.

I was learning something but what? Having learned to trust my body's truth I waited for more information.

When I learned that the latest research in western science had discovered that mycelial networking operated much like the human brain does by creating synapses accompanied by sparks of light

that wove the roots below my feet into one tapestry that stretched across *unbroken* ground, I still experienced as sense of awe and wonder! I thanked my body for hearing the message: We are all connected! At least in some places. These networks stretch across parts of the desert in the wetlands if they are protected as this area was. Most desert lands have been trashed by cattle grazing destroying the networking. The same process occurs in more temperate areas when roads are paved over the earth, cities are built or agribusiness pollutes the earth with chemicals. I could go on here.

My point?

If earth was allowed to be in her natural state the underground networking would stretch across the whole planet. It is amazing to think that such complex communication lines lie just under the surface of our feet.

One of the things I love most about being in unbroken stretches of forest, and I do have one nearby (12,000 plus acres), is that it is very easy to slip into that light trance state while walking slowly. Softening my vision with intent I feel and sense that communication occurring beneath my feet, experience being *loved* by something so much greater, than I can comprehend. Every time I enter this forest I can feel her/him casting a veil around me as I slip into "all there is". My only thought afterwards is to give thanks for the two people who saved this land from destruction.

The witch in me is always repeating the same words: let the Powers of Nature lead you Home.

I listen with deep love and appreciation, grateful for instruction.



ELDERBERRY- IS IT TIME TO TAKE A SECOND LOOK?

SARA WRIGHT

"Plants are an integral way to reweave the connection between land and people."

Robin Wall Kimmerer - Scientist/ Author

I begin this column with my own story. Yesterday I spent 'gathering in'. Going to the places where medicine still grows wild. My relationship to the land is strengthened by these forays into marsh, mud, thorny blackberry canes, prickly wild roses - scratches are part of the tale as I choose clumps of ripe purple berries never worrying about taking too many because not even one Elderberry bush ripens her fruit at the same time! There are always plenty left to spread next years bounty and to feed the birds...when my basket was full, the cicada symphony was deafening and I was exhausted from the heat of the noonday star.

I came home, took an ice cold bath in my brook pool, watched fish peering at my feet and returned to the cabin porch completely refreshed and ready to begin the process of winnowing. Winnowing takes hours of repetitious work as I stripped tiny purple berries from their tree like branch clusters thinking about how nature repeats her pattern of becoming on every plant and tree. At first I watched the goldfinches hungrily nipping seeds from the feeder. After Hairy arrived so did the nuthatches and chickadees and finally my adversary, 'pig squirrel' interrupted the bird feast by leaping on the tube and then insulting me with his resentful chatter as I caught him in the act and forced him to vacate the premises again and again!

Then I settled into winnowing my mind ceased her ramblings and the joys of the afternoon – the moist water scented air, the buzz of a hundred hummingbirds, and stalks of crimson bee balm, the sight of my two sleeping dogs stretched out on the couch, and the croak of a single croaking green frog became all there is....

It was dusk when I finished this first batch of berries just in time to walk the dogs into the coming cricket filled night, scanning the clear horizon, my eyes tuned to tree spires as I walked up my now ever so peaceful road enjoying the goldenrod still shining in the twilight hour...I am part of what is, and that is enough.

Today I will tincture and bottle this bounty to gage how much more I need. I gift this medicinal tincture to others who ask for it every year".

As some folks know Elderberry is an ancient remedy used as a healing medicine for colds and respiratory issues.

In the spring of 2020 when Covid struck I wrote an article that included these words:

"With the spread of the Coronavirus increasing exponentially each day it might be time to take a look at Elderberry, an herb that I have grown in my yard and wild crafted around forest edges in Maine. I have used the berries to make a tincture for a number of years to help me reduce the chance of becoming ill with colds or the flu and it has worked effectively. When I went to New Mexico I left the tincture home by accident. Because I feel it's important to have a relationship with a plant in order for it to work most effectively I did not buy a commercial preparation and got the worst flu I have ever had. I also came down with infection after infection. Obviously Elderberry is an affective home remedy for me.

Research Director Dr. Jessie Hawkins and coauthors (*Complementary Therapies in Medicine*) undertook the first meta-analysis to study Elderberry because so little research has been done by the scientific community as a whole.

How much this prevailing American scientific attitude has to do with the pharmaceutical companies and their outrageous pricing is an ongoing question for me.

Because the studies were varied, researchers were able to apply a random effects model to evaluate the effect of Elderberry. Calculations yielded a large mean effect; Elderberry does substantially reduce the duration of upper respiratory symptoms in colds and flu.

Additionally, the researchers learned that getting the flu vaccine didn't significantly alter the effects of Elderberry. They also discovered that it not only reduces the symptoms of colds and flu, but that it works more effectively for flu symptoms than for cold symptoms.

Other Researchers performing in vitro studies confirm that Elderberry is active against human pathogenic bacteria as well as influenza viruses (H1N1) In separate clinical trials, investigators also demonstrated that Elderberry reduced the severity and duration of cold and flu-like symptoms.

A recent study by a group of Chemical and Bio-molecular Engineering researchers from the University of Sydney's Faculty of Engineering and IT has determined exactly how Elderberry can help fight influenza.

The group performed a comprehensive examination of the mechanism by which phytochemicals from elderberries combat flu by blocking key viral proteins responsible for both the viral attachment and entry into the host cells. The phytochemicals from the elderberry juice, elderberry compounds *directly inhibit the virus's entry and replication in human cells. The words bear repeating: compounds in Edlerberry are capable of stopping the virus from infecting cells.* However, to the surprise of the researchers they were even more effective *at inhibiting/blocking viral propagation at several stages of the influenza cycle when the cells had already been infected with the virus.*

They also discovered that Elderberry stimulated the cells to release certain cytokines, which are chemical messengers that the immune system uses for communication between different cell types to help them coordinate a more efficient response to an invading pathogen.

Additionally, the team also found that Elderberry's antiviral activity is attributed to its anthocyanidin compounds -- phytonutrients responsible for giving the fruit its vivid purple coloring.

In another placebo-controlled, double-blind study conducted by virologist Dr. Madeleine Mumcuoglu, 93 percent of the people taking Elderberry reported significant improvement in flu symptoms within 2 days of starting it, compared with the 6 days it took for the placebo group to see improvement.

A similar randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study performed in Norway demonstrated that Elderberry that was given to patients who reported having flu-like symptoms for less than 48 hours had similar results.

Researchers have also found that people who have taken Elderberry have higher levels of antibodies against the influenza virus, indicating that not only may Elderberry be able to treat flu symptoms it may also be able to prevent influenza infection.

Collectively, this research indicates that use of Elderberry presents us with an alternative to antibiotic misuse for upper respiratory symptoms due to viral infections. Additionally Elderberry use is a potentially safer alternative to prescription drugs for routine cases of the common cold and influenza."

After Covid struck in March of 2020 the World Health Organization began an organized study of Elderberry as a result of earlier studies. This work continues today.

To paraphrase or quote directly from the World Health Organization:

Viral diseases have always played an important role in public and individual health. "Several studies were conducted to implement antiviral drug therapy, until the arrival of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. Since then numerous scientific investigations have considered some nutraceuticals as an additional treatment of COVID-19 patients to improve their clinical picture. In this review, we would like to emphasize the studies conducted to date about this issue and try to understand whether the use of nutraceuticals as a supplementary therapy to COVID-19 may be a valid and viable avenue. Based on the results obtained so far, quercetin, astaxanthin, luteolin, glycyrrhizin, lactoferrin, hesperidin and curcumin have shown encouraging data suggesting their use to prevent and counteract the symptoms of this pandemic infection."

The definition of nutraceuticals and their related products generally depends on the source. These products can be classified on the basis of their natural sources, pharmacological conditions, or chemical constitution.

The National Library of Medicine reports that "Elderberry may be useful against COVID-19 due to its capacity to stimulate the immune system and inhibit the replication of viruses, including human coronavirus NL63 (HCoV-NL63), which differs from COVID-19 but belongs to the same family of coronaviruses. It could be especially helpful during the initial stage of coronavirus infection or for preventing infection. By inhibiting replication of the virus, elderberries significantly increase the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines especially one which enhances the response of macrophages to a viral infection. A review by the Natural Standard Research Collaboration concluded that there is level B evidence in support of the use of elderberries to treat the flu which may be of significance for the prevention of COVID-19. The typical dose of 2:1 elderberry extract is 10–60 mL a day for adults and 5–30 mL a day for children".

What this recent research suggests to me is that more and more evidence is coming in that indicates the efficacy of Elderberry in situations where we are now facing more challenges as these Covid related viral infections continue to mutate. It's not as if we are going to be able to eradicate mutations because they are an intrinsic part of how nature works. And most importantly, we have done nothing to stop the ROOT causes of the spread of these viral infections. For example, the International Pet Trade continues on as before under American capitalism, the cultural disease of our time. And Covid originated from illegal animal – human contact: Bats infected a civet cat that was then exported illegally.

I leave it to the reader to decide what choice s/he will make in regards to the information presented. Anyone steeped in the western medicine paradigm and not open to a 'both and' approach that includes alternate ways of treating disease will probably find this article ludicrous. Oh well.

SARA IS A WRITER, ETHOLOGIST (PERSON WHO STUDIES ANIMALS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT) AND NATURALIST WHO LIVES IN A LOG CABIN IN THE WOODS WITH HER TWO DOGS AND DOVE IN WESTERN MAINE. SHE HAS INDIGENOUS ROOTS. NATURE IS HER MUSE AND THE INSPIRATION FOR MOST OF HER WORK. SHE WRITES FOR A NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS WITH A FOCUS ON NATURE AND THE BELIEF THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE EARTH IS ALSO HAPPENING TO WOMEN AND MOST MEN. SHE IS PRESENTLY PUTTING TOGETHER ESSAYS AND POETRY FOR A BOOK THAT WILL BE PUBLISHED HERE IN MAINE.

THE DAY THEY SAVED EVOLUTION IN MEXICO

CHRIS WELLS AND MARIEL ROSE GARCIA

"It is one of the great paradoxes of Mexico that everybody eats corn three times a day but only 1% of the people have seen colored corns. I carry Ears with me daily in my medicine bag, and as I sit down in a crowd of strangers to have a coffee or tacos, I put them on the table. It's like fishing. Every time within minutes, someone will walk up, stare and want to touch them and talk to me in amazement, as if seeing a ghost, who had been a family member."

Perhaps you have heard the news that the Mexican Supreme Court has unanimously decided against the use of Genetically Modified Corn and the toxic Glyphosate fertilizer in a historic decision designed to protect Mexico's original 10,000-year-old native, rainbow corn. Here in its origin state of Oaxaca this is historic news, as all the daily tortillas have been made with white hybrid corn from the US for some 50 years. Organized by the now defunct North American Free Trade Act wherein corn from the US Midwest became the main source of daily Mexican market corn. In the process native agriculture was destroyed as the family way of life, with corn growing & gardening at its center. The farms were left unmanned by cheap corn from the north and loss of co-laboring young adults to the corporate farms of the northern borders.

As a result of this historic affirmation of traditional Milpa, small scale agriculture, as an accomplishable way into a convivial future we have remembered here in Oaxaca, the movement of MURALISMO and Belles Arts Schools, started by Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, and many others, 100 years ago, to "document Mexican History through painting and Murals".

The Santa Fe All Species Projects will now donate a commemorative mural to its sister Art City, Oaxaca, Mexico. This mural designed by Mariel Rose Garcia is an historic depiction commemorating "The Day They Saved Evolution in Mexico: Mexico's Supreme Court Decision to ban genetically modified Corn & Glyphosate Fertilizer.

We dedicate this appreciation of the Mexican Judicial process to the worldwide Rights of Nature Movement in hopes that all countries will soon follow in agreement with this historic decision here in the Origen Bioregion of Corn, Mesoamerica.





**SIN MAIZ NO HAY PAIZ .
QUE VIVE' CORN CULTURES**

"Corn is as you know genetically amazing and each sowing of the field produces a new weave of Corn Maidens Bead~Loom holding new secrets and the return of ancient ones that we can only see when taking a complete inventory. So other than a few for salads or steaming when its "in the milk", it is best to wait and sort the seed for subtle differences and surprising varieties before giving it away. Old Genetic codes unwind or wind up over generations."

**THE SEED BASE IS VITAL EVEN
IF THE HARVEST IS MINIMAL**

CHRIS IS AN OUT OF THE BOX COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL & MYTHICAL THEATER PRODUCER AND HAS BEEN OBSESSED WITH GROWING NATIVE CORN FOR 30 YEARS. ALLSPECIES@EARTHLINK.NET

MARIEL IS A MURALIST AND MULTIMEDIA ARTIST. SHE WAS BORN IN TAOS, NEW MEXICO TO A FAMILY OF ARTISTS AND HAS BEEN DOING ART SINCE SHE FOUND THE GIFT OF HER HANDS. SHE WAS RAISED IN AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE ON THE WEST RIM OF THE RIO GRANDE GORGE, AND DOWN SOUTH, ALONG THE MIMBRES RIVER NEAR SILVER CITY. THE RICH CULTURES OF NEW MEXICO, AND THE COMMUNITIES OF ARTISTS I GREW UP IN, INFLUENCE HER ARTIST'S EYES; AND HEART.

REANIMATING THE CULTURE THAT HAS BEEN LOST IN AGRICULTURE

SEEDING SEED STORIES: AN ACT OF RADICAL LOVE

"When you plant a seed in the soil, you're burying a time capsule filled with generations of wisdom and hope for the future. People everywhere have been saving and sharing seeds for generations in order to foster agricultural biodiversity, ensure food availability, and nurture cultural traditions. Today, nearly 98% of all these food crops have gone extinct and one major reason is because many people no longer save seeds. Yet, right now, there is a growing movement connecting community-based seed saving to climate resilience, food justice, and cultural vitality. In this, SeedBroadcast promotes seed saving through creative agri-Culture and Seed Stories."

It was in December 2021 that, out of the blue, SeedBroadcast received an email from the Smithsonian asking if we might be interested in being part of their Earth Optimism event. In June 2022. This event is an important component of the extremely popular Folk Life Festival which has been on a hiatus since the beginning of the covid pandemic. This year's return focused on "changing the conversation to spotlight the bright ideas, successful solutions, and passionate people working to protect our planet".

We took the email as a challenge and the request evoked many questions for us to ponder.

This would take us away from our fields at a time when the seeds we planted last autumn, and this spring needed careful tending.

How could we make a difference being part of a huge event where there are many distractions?

How could we engage the public in a sincere way to animate a shift in consciousness?

Would we have enough of a positive impact to justify flying to Washington?

We debated these critical questions before making the decision to take up the challenge.

By accepting the challenge, the questions might be answered.

Throughout the winter and spring, we collaborated with the curatorial team at the Smithsonian. Through endless emails and many zoom calls we began to imagine an interactive installation, including text, images, seeds, the action of seed stories and pertinent information on seed saving strategies. This installation would be installed on the Mall outside the Natural History Museum and between the Capital and the Washington Monument, as part of the Community Solutions area of Earth Optimism. We designed, redesigned, and planned through the seed network to find local partners, and packed boxes.

A few weeks before we were to head to Washington, New Mexico (the home of SeedBroadcast) burst into flames with the largest fire ever recorded, over 600,000 acres of ancestral home lands, ranches and farms went up in smoke. There were many evacuations, and hearts were broken to see the lands that have been in the same family for generations charred and blackened. Many left with few possessions, but the essential bundle of seeds was not forgotten.

The heat, the dry winds and ongoing drought hit us all hard, so it was difficult to muster up the optimism with red tinged clouds of smoke overhead and diminishing water for the sprouting seeds in our fields.

**CLIMATE CHANGE, CLIMATE, CLIMATE CHAOS.
THE HOW TO HOLD THE FAITH.
HOLD THE SEED.**

SEED INTIMACY





Two days before leaving the rains came, big rains and our hearts rejoiced. Hope returns, the seeds will survive, the seeds sharing their resilience.

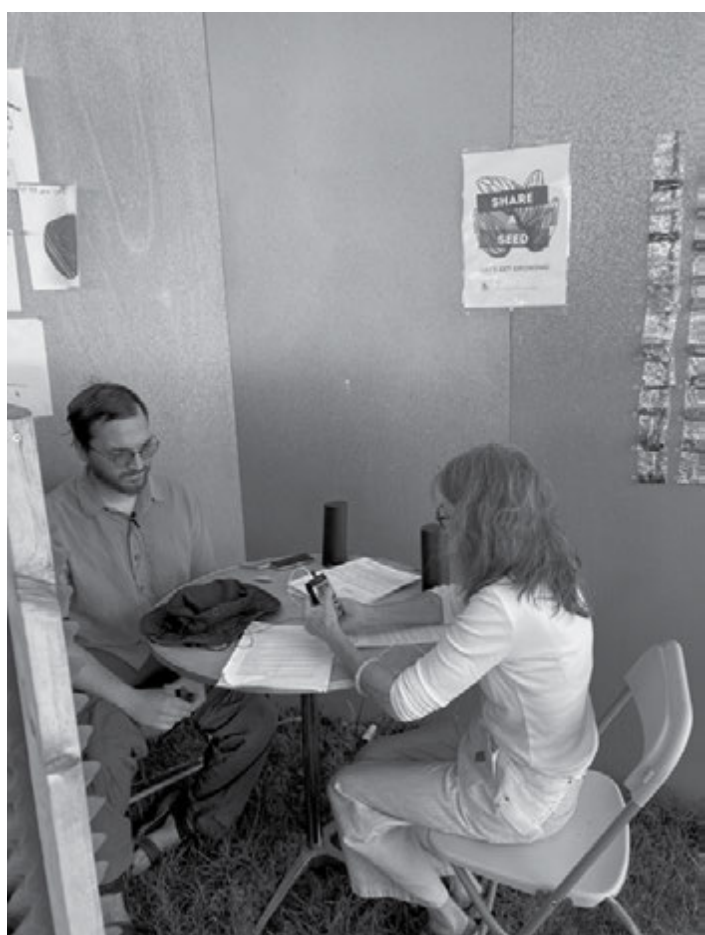
SeedBroadcast is a collective and we believe in collaboration, as in the world of seeds and plants, diversity and symbiotic partnerships make for more resilient and nourishing crop. So, we foraged our way through the network of seed savers and landed on a call with Nate Kleinman of the Experimental Farm Network, who put us in touch with the mover and shaker Bonnetta Adeb of Ujamma Cooperative Farming Alliance and Steam Onward.

Our seeds bring the right people together.

Bonnetta joined us for the first week of the event and brought her local wisdom and seeds into the mix. Not only is Bonnetta an activist for food sovereignty and for advocating for Bipoc youth, but she is also an engaging storyteller.

During our time on the mall we swapped seed stories with hundreds of visitors, we passionately discussed the importance of saving seeds and food sovereignty we shared information, handed out free seeds (thanks to Steam Onward) and our SeedBroadcast agri-Culture Journals were quickly dispersed under arms and in bags to be appreciated at a later time.

In the midst of this huge event the beauty of the seeds, the sound of them spilling from hands evoked a momentary quiet. Their beauty, the sound of the seeds spilling from hands, a momentary quiet, a slowing down to breathe, a rare intimacy. As children and adults plunged their hands deep into the baskets of seeds, stories emerged, and conversations began between strangers, relevant ideas were shared and discussed. Many of our visitors had never thought to save their seeds, this was a new concept, so we talked and shared information and made connections with the hope that a radical change would ripple outward from the heart of the seeds, the exchange of words and intimate connection.





Being with the seeds and honoring them is an act of radical love. Can this spill out into how we humans engage with each other and the natural world?

It's time for hope and action.

Here are some of the Seed Stories that were shared with us: Ethan Swiggart shares his story and passion about Appalachian ginseng and his research at the International Ginseng Institute.

Ada [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/SEEDBROADCAST/ADA](https://www.soundcloud.com/seedbroadcast/ada) shares her story about the life cycle of a seed. This story was also shared through her drawing

Connor Rice [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/SEEDBROADCAST/CONNOR-RICE](https://www.soundcloud.com/seedbroadcast/connor-rice) is an agriculture specialist with Customs and Border Patrol. He shares his unusual interactions with seeds and the importance of controlling invasive species.



Carly Borgmeier [SOUNDCLOUD.COM/SEEDBROADCAST/CARLY-BORGMEIER](https://www.soundcloud.com/seedbroadcast/carly-borgmeier) shares her childhood memories of playing in the corn silos on her father's farm in South Indiana.

Note: it might be easier to access these links via our website: [WWW.SEEDBROADCAST.ORG](http://www.seedbroadcast.org) and click on the soundcloud button.

Thank you to David Gallegos, Kaitlyn Bryson and Reana Kovalcik [FROM SHARE A SEED AND SLOW FOOD DC WHO JOINED WITH SEEDBROADCAST FOR THIS EVENT.](#)

[PLEASE CHECK OUT UJAMMA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE AND STEAM ONWARD](#) as these are incredible organizations involved with important poignant work.



HOW MANY HANDS

MELODY JOY OVERSTREET

How many hands have held, tended, saved, and shared these beautiful seeds? What stories do they contain? Each seed— etched with topographic layers, fingerprints, spirals that parallel the motion of the galaxy, and the subtle curves of an ear that listens closely to the songs of the Earth. What do you see, hear, and feel when you lean in?

Harvest: The blessing of one becoming many!

Chaff: Seeds intermixed with plant matter at the end of the season. Dry, outer shells rattle in their basket.

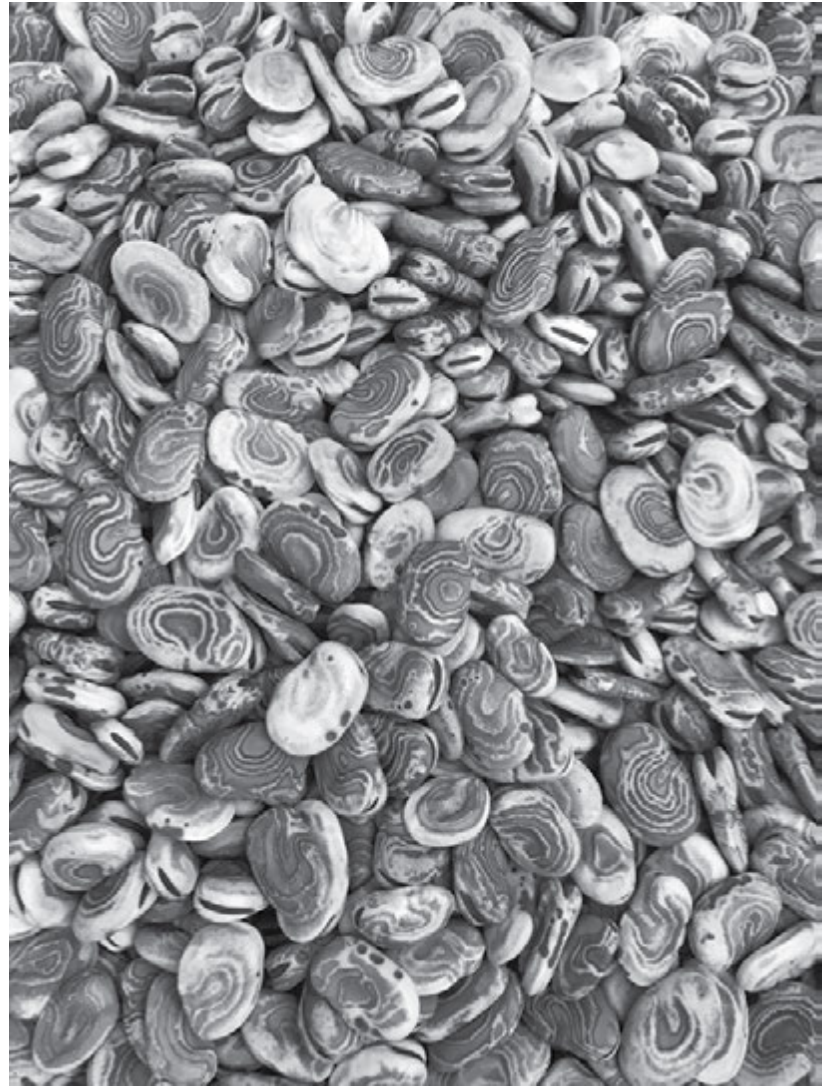
Winnow: Honoring all that has carried the seeds here, and simultaneously letting go of all that no longer serves them. Refinement, distillation, breath. Return to an essential form.



—
"The ground's generosity takes in our compost and grows beauty. Try to be more like the ground." Rumi
—



PORTRAIT OF MELODY JOY OVERSTREET RECORDING POEMS
WHILE SITTING ALONGSIDE PLANT KIN:
PHOTO CREDIT: ARTIST VINCENT WARING.



MELODY IS A POET, ARTIST, SEED KEEPER, WEAVER, AND
COMMUNITY EDUCATOR. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES WITHIN A
FLOOD PLAIN WITH HER PARTNER, VINCENT WARING, AND
MANY BELOVED PLANTS. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR
WORK VISIT [RECIPROCALFIELD.COM](https://reciprocalfield.com)

“SEED OF LIFE”

EMILY C-D

Locally sourced corn, bean & squash seeds on cotton canvas with agave fiber rope & cotton thread 4' diameter.

The artwork is a part of “SEMILLAS PARA TODXS: Seeds For Everyone,” an installation I created at The Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History for the MexiCali Biennial exhibit “The Land of Milk and Honey” 2022

Corn, beans and squash, the famous Three Sisters crops, color an ancient geometric design of interlocking circles known as the Seed of Life. This ephemeral floor mandala symbolizes the incredible way these three crops complement each other—both in the field and on our plates—and also the integral human connection to their cultivation in the Milpa. The goal of the artwork is to honor the diverse beauty of locally adapted Three Sisters seed varieties while simultaneously uplifting the work of local seed savers.

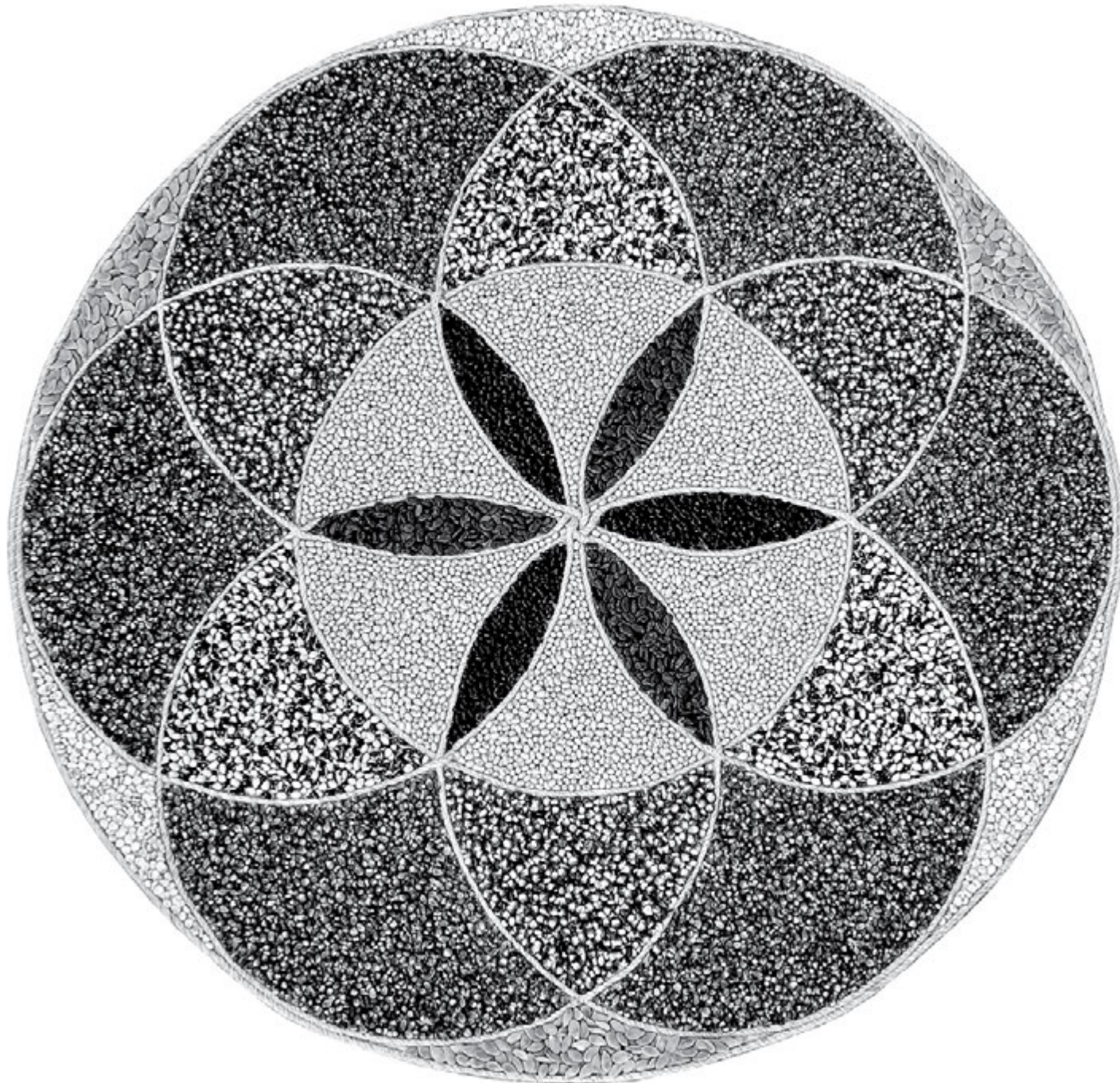
At its essence, the seed sovereignty movement is imbued with a spirit of generosity, since it is grounded in the idea of free exchange of seeds among growers and the open sharing of knowledge of their conservation. As such, I was not surprised to encounter enthusiasm when I reached out to local seed savers about my project. Coordinating from my home in Mexico the borrowing of all these seeds in Santa Cruz, California was a feat of great complexity. The fact that we pulled it off speaks to the beauty and resiliency that is the free seed network and the power of native seeds to unite us across borders. My deepest gratitude to The Demeter Seed Library and Pie Ranch who were incredibly generous with their time and seeds.

This is only the beginning of an evolving, nomadic project. The mandala will be recreated in various spaces with native seeds from the specific locales where the work is exhibited, therefor guaranteeing an incredible ever-changing presentation of colors and texture within the Seed of Life's various iterations. I will be creating the second version of the mandala in January 2023 when “The Land of Milk and Honey” travels to The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture of the Riverside Art Museum. From there I hope to independently tour the mandala to as many locales as there are seed savers who want to participate in its recreation. Please reach out if you want to be a part of creating a unique version of the Seed of Life in the place you cultivate and call home.

EMILY C-D IS AN ARTIST, ACTIVIST AND SEED SAVER WHO USES COLOR, RHYTHM, AND BEAUTY TO EMPOWER PEOPLE, PROTECT PLANTS AND RESTORE DIGNITY TO OUR SHARED COMMUNITIES. AS THE VISUAL VOICE OF THE SOMOS SEMILLA SEED LIBRARY IN SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO, EMILY'S WORK PROMOTING SEED SAVING THROUGH ART HAS BEEN INTEGRAL TO AMPLIFYING THE FREE SEED MOVEMENT IN MEXICO AND BEYOND. PLEASE FOLLOW HER @EMILYCDART ON IG AND CHECK OUT HER PORTFOLIO AT WWW.EMILYCD.COM



PHOTO CREDIT: DARIS JASPER @ CULTURESAVING, COURTESY THE SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM OF ART & HISTORY



SEED SOURCES & VARIETIES

in the SEMILLAS PARA TODXS: SEEDS FOR EVERYONE installation

THE DEMETER SEED LIBRARY

of UC Santa Cruz is a student-run, nonprofit organization of local farmers and gardeners who believe in the importance of preserving the genetic heritage of our food. The library maintains a large inventory of heirloom and native seed varieties that prosper in Santa Cruz's climate through grow-out collaborations with local organic farms. Seeds are distributed freely to all! If any community members find seeds relevant to their own identity within the collection, please reach out so the library can rematriate the seeds back to their communities of origin or take instruction on how the seeds should be handled.

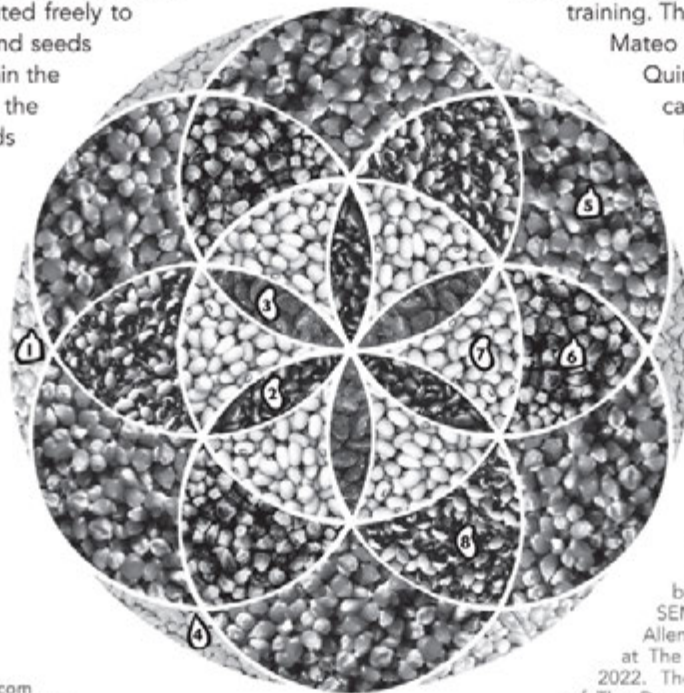


- 1 **CHEROKEE WHITE CORN**
(*Zea mays*)
- 2 **SHACKAMAXON BLUE BEAN**
(*Phaseolus vulgaris*)
- 3 **BREJO BEAN**
(*Phaseolus coccineus*)
- 4 **ATLANTIC GIANT SQUASH**
(*Cucurbita maxima*)

PIE RANCH is a nonprofit organization and organic production farm with a mission to cultivate a healthy and just food system from seed to table through food education, farmer training, and regional partnerships. It is their goal to change the food system and grow healthy, resilient communities through sustainable agriculture, education, advocacy and training. The farm is located on California's San Mateo coast just north of Santa Cruz on Quiroste lands that are represented and cared for by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Land Trust with whom Pie Ranch is in an ongoing partnership.



- 5 **FLORIANI RED CORN**
(*Zea mays*)
- 6 **HOPi BLUE CORN**
(*Zea mays*)
- 7 **HUTTERITE BEAN**
(*Phaseolus vulgaris*)
- 8 **CALYPSO BEAN**
(*Phaseolus vulgaris*)



The SEED OF LIFE mandala was conceptualized, organized and created by EMILY C-D, resident artist of SOMOS SEMILLA Seed Library in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, for the MexiCali Biennial at The Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, 2022. The artist is grateful for the participation of The Demeter Seed Library and Pie Ranch without whom this installation would not have been possible.



"MAP" BY EMILY C-D. THIS IMAGE DETAILS THE SEED VARIETIES WITHIN MY SEED OF LIFE MANDALA AND WHERE THEY CAME. IT IS INCLUDED AS A PRINT-OUT IN THE EXHIBIT FOR WHICH I CREATED THE ARTWORK. VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE THE PRINT-OUTS HOME, MY HOPE BEING THAT THEY WILL SPARK AN INTEREST IN PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL SEED ECOSYSTEM.

GRIEF AND GRATITUDE IN A NEW MEXICAN FIRE

JOHN MCLEOD



HERMIT'S PEAK IN EARLY STAGES OF FIRE.
PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD

We left the Gathering of Nations Powwow early when news of the fire's erratic behavior reached us. As we drove up to our home, Story Ranch, we saw the increased smoke and glow in the distance. Ready Set Go were the three stages of fire readiness. Ready meant to gather your precious items, fireproof your home in such ways as pulling interior wood and fabric items away from the window, clearing your porches. Set meant that you should be prepared to evacuate in a matter of minutes. Go, well, go means leave right now. In our valley, the first two stages had never been declared. Most of us were unprepared.

Three weeks into the fire and we had already grieved close friends' losses of hand-built homes that had disappeared in smoke. Hundreds had evacuated their homes. Traditional, land-based community members were scattering to the safety of friends, relatives or newly created evacuation centers. Generational adobe, stone and log homes along with newer minted structures, forests and fields were being threatened. And now it was our turn.



11:30PM APRIL 28, 2022
PHOTO CREDIT: BRUCE BERLIN

Shortly before midnight, the state police roared up driveways, sirens blaring, and announcing the necessity to leave. A fast-moving band of fire and tree flare-ups on the ridges beyond us were evident as we loaded our boxes of key paperwork, clothes thrown in trash bags, musical instruments, a few of our two daughters' paintings, two dogs, three geese, eight goats and one pregnant one packed into the back of our pickup truck. The newly liberated chickens remained behind.

At this moment, we directly and personally entered the growing multitudes of climate evacuees. Such an event was not unexpected. Our forests had become drier than kiln-finished lumber. If you struck 100 matches and dropped them to the ground, 90 to 94 of them would ignite a fire. Precipitation had become a long-lost friend. The link of a warming climate to such a cataclysmic event was evident throughout the region long before the fire drew its first breath.

Two nights later and ninety miles from our home and grateful to be at a farm, our pregnant goat, Ilora, gave birth to two healthy babies.

The spark that lit this monstrous fire was our federal Forest Service's ironic attempt to ignite a "controlled burn." This fire we fled, the Calf Canyon/Hermit's Peak, was becoming the largest wildfire in New Mexico's history, a fire that eventually devoured 350,000 acres and over 900 structures. Fire suppression efforts would reach over 3,000 personnel who fought unprecedented winds, high temperatures and extreme low humidity. Along with countless hours of frontline firefighting, members of our local volunteer fire department, Cabo Lucero Fire Department, were instrumental in providing local knowledge and protection of the roads, homes, structures and land.

For thirty days, our mandatory evacuation and the sheriff's checkpoints kept us at a distance from our home. Eight times during that month, we traveled the four-hour round trip to be near—to watch with other neighbors from a high point as the fire ate our valley and distant mountain range. Sometimes we were lucky. Once, two medics that we flagged down offered to regularly water our greenhouse and feed chickens. Such gratitude.



FIREFLY, THE NEW MEMBER OF OUR GOAT FAMILY. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD



BUILT ON THE TRUNK OF OUR 'STORY TREE' BY 20 YOUTH IN 2018... AND THE AFTERMATH.
PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD

Another time, after the first fire passed through the land, we snuck in through backroads to reach the ranch. A quick assessment showed the loss of several structures including our youth-constructed treehouse, but our main home and barns were standing. We were able to retrieve our 32 chickens and find a temporary home for them.

During the evacuation, the fire passed through our valley two more times, the second being the most intensive and damaging. Accounts by two neighboring brothers who chose to stay to protect their family ranch were horrifying, with 200-foot walls of fire spouting fire bombs that exploded on impact. Escape became impossible as their car lights were unable to penetrate the thick smoke and ash. Within a mile or two of our home, fifteen homes were reduced to ashes that night. Areas of forests were ravaged.

On our next attempt to visit our home, we were allowed through the roadblock to bring hay to a neighbor's sheep. The scene was devastating, still smoldering from the recent pass of fire. On our land, gone were six outhouses, the potable water system, two vintage trailers, an outdoor kitchen, our tree house, four 18-foot domes, as well as the Billy Goat Robert's Museum created to acknowledge prior history of the land. The dozer line put in by firefighters had held back the fire from our primary buildings and gardens. The beehive and bees had survived with the fire passing directly under them. And we were the lucky ones. Such a mixture of grief and gratitude.

Anyone familiar with wildfires will know that floods often follow fire imprints. The soil becomes hydrophobic, meaning resistant to water. Instead of the absorbing function of healthy forest floors, the burned surface acts more like concrete than the sponge it normally mimics. A one-inch rainfall within one hour can have catastrophic results downstream from the watershed. Predictions by the forestry personnel was that flooding could reach three to four times the historical highs. To prepare we needed to find ways to disrupt the water paths and hold back debris and ash.

Gratefully, Steve Reichert, a neighbor, was masterful at envisioning such features. On a walk along our likely water flows, Steve pointed out twenty spots where a variety of techniques utilizing straw bales, rock, sand bags, and tree limbs could be useful. Story Ranch put out a call for help. Twenty-five friends of the ranch arrived on a Saturday morning, post-fire and pre-flood. One hundred straw bales, eighty sand bags, tree branches, logs, stones, stakes, and a whole lot of love built an impressive series of features to protect the land from further degradation.



ABOVE: WITHIN A MILE OR TWO OF OUR HOME, FIFTEEN HOMES WERE REDUCED TO ASHES. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD

BELOW: A FORESTED AREA OF EXTREME HEAT. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD



This effort was but one of countless acts of generosity that were donated to individuals, families and communities impacted by the fire. Food and clothing banks emerged. Homes opened their doors to long-term guests. Arenas were developed to host a wide range of critters from cats to cows. Musical bands raised money for victims of the fire. Free breakfasts were shared on porches. The beauty of such selfless acts of kindness brought tears to our eyes.

And then the rains came. And they came. And they came. We learned to watch the sky ever so closely. Rains in certain areas of the watershed foretold massive flooding arriving shortly. The early flooding brought such force. The river of debris (logs, rocks, ash, branches, roots) coursing down the canyon sounded like a freight train rumbling into the valley. Rains from another direction foretold roads being inundated with high water, ash, and mud, making passage in and out of the valley impossible. Later, when the water lowered, snowplows could be heard wrestling with the residue of the flood. It was (and still is as of this writing) a time of collective anxiety as the daily thunderstorms rolled through the area.



TWENTY-FIVE FRIENDS OF STORY RANCH COLLABORATED TO PROTECT THE PLACE FROM THE COMING FLOODS USING STRAW BALES, SAND BAGS AND TREE BRANCHES. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD



ABOVE: WATER FEATURES WE INSTALLED WORKED MOSTLY WELL.
 PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD
 BELOW: OUR TECOLOTE CREEK IS NORMALLY BUT TWO FEET WIDE.
 PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD

Homes in the scarred regions of the fire were being flooded. Ranch equipment, fences, gates, vehicles, sheds, pump houses, bridges, roads, hay barns all proved vulnerable to the extremes of the black waters gorging their way through the landscape.

To add to the trauma, just upstream from us, an eight-foot wall of water cascaded down the canyon, stripping a cabin from the hillside. Inside were three elders. Two bodies were discovered shortly after. For the next many days, our valley was filled with search and rescue volunteers, state police, helicopters, search dogs and anxiety. On the fourth day, the third body was discovered. It was a sobering time. Collective grief.

As I write this piece, the nearby town of Las Vegas, which has been the epicenter of much of this crisis, has twenty days of drinking water left. Monsoon rains have overwhelmed and polluted one of the main reservoirs. Water in the rivers is too turbid, carries too much ash and silt to be filtered. People in town are rightfully nervous as the deadline approaches. We are running out of options.

That is, "WE" are running out of options.

How does one integrate these climate-driven impacts? How do people catch their breath when each day demands attention to mitigate damage? Woods that provided income through forestry products are now crisp. Acequias overwhelmed by ash. Horses and cattle loose from miles of burned fences. Homes, many uninsured and generational, vanished. Children, weary of stress.

At the same time, how magnificent is the Earth's response to the burn. Fields are as green and full as we have ever seen. Morning elk calls are heard once again. Connections with neighbors have deepened and new relationships formed. Our spring still flows clean and clear. Bees are buzzing. By carrying both grief and gratitude, we seem to be transforming at a rate matching the surrounding land.



LIFE GOES ON AND KEEPS SPREADING ITSELF: TWO BABY GOATS WERE BORN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CRISIS. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MCLEOD

The Climate Crisis has become personal. As catastrophic events driven by a warming planet increase in number and severity, more and more of us are experiencing such vulnerabilities or know of acquaintances, friends and families who have been impacted. For ever so long, indigenous communities, marginalized populations and climate activists have been banging the wake-up gong, screaming to reverse the trajectory. It is too late to dodge the bullet we have self-inflicted. It is too late to be unaffected. Consequences are upon us.

But it is not too late for a collective awakening. It is not too late for a global engagement of carbon and greenhouse gas reduction. And it is definitely not too late to engage with all manner of efforts to secure locally produced renewable energy, to protect the waters that provide you with life, to make resilient local food supplies, to secure and protect diverse habitats and to get to know your neighbors.

It is not too late.

JOHN MCLEOD IS A CLIMATE ACTIVIST, RETIRED PROGRESSIVE EDUCATOR, AND LONG-TIME NOVICE FARMER WHO LIVES AT THE FAMILY HOME OF STORY RANCH, A FARM WILDERNESS SITE IN NORTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO.

SEEDS AND HOPE AT THE SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE X EARTH OPTIMISM FESTIVAL



During the second half of the [SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE X EARTH OPTIMISM FESTIVAL](#) on the National Mall in Washington D.C., SeedBroadcast's, Jeanette Hart-Mann and Kaitlin Bryson, partnered up with [REANA KOVALCIK OF THE D.C.-BASED SHARE A SEED](#) to inspire seedy action, story sharing, art, and mutual aid focused on seeds and community empowerment in the face of environmental crisis. We were invited to this event by the Festival organizers to mobilize the work of SeedBroadcast as socially engaged art focused on the way food and seed sovereignty can catalyze climate action and social justice. We also contributed to the EO Story Stage and public discussions about seeds, art, and traditional ecological knowledge. For our project we decided that the most significant impact we could make was to be in service to local organizations already doing this work and give them a platform to present and connect with people, while sustainably doing what we do best, encouraging people to spend time with seeds wondering, dreaming, and connecting their stories to a nourishing and hopeful future.

The Smithsonian Folklife x Earth Optimism event brings local environmental organizations together with global crafts-people to demonstrate and share sustainable practices, which enable cultural and environmental resiliency. It's a moment when we can get together to share and celebrate cultural diversity and love for the earth. As Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch says, the focus on "Earth Optimism shows us how to find hope in the face of odds that might seem overwhelming. It reminds us that change happens when we focus on what works—when we collaborate to find solutions and celebrate our successes." In this, seeds do so much. They give us food, shelter, materials to create with, air, habitat, beauty, life, wonder, and a future filled with more seeds. There is no end to what a seed planted will make in our world. They are simply magic.

This was also the weekend of July 4, so the National Mall was packed full of people visiting the Smithsonian Institute, National Monuments, and keen to see the massive fireworks. There was also tension in the air with the ongoing war in Ukraine, global floods, droughts, and heatwaves and the recent Supreme Court decisions overturning of Roe vs Wade and the EPA's ability to regulate global warming pollution. All of this feels like a heavy burden for each of us to carry. This weight seemed to be wandering through the crowds, giving us pause to wonder how optimism might be part of our futures threatened by yet more chaos and crisis. Many of the people we met seemed to be carrying hope, but woven with threads of grief.

During the first two days of the festival, we asked visitors to share and record Seed Stories with us. Stacy Karmen and Amanda Lee were both excited to talk about garden projects, seeds saved, and seeds found. You can listen to all the Seed Stories we recorded at the festival, along with [STACY AND AMANDA'S HERE](#). Sharing seeds is about sharing stories and what better way to cultivate optimism than mobilizing these together to grow and perform it in action. Here is Reana Kolvacik sharing her Seed Story about Share A Seed and what inspired her to start this project.

We also met Elijah Goodwin and Jack Algieri from Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture who were participating in the festival. We discussed agriculture, food, and making sure to always make space for ecological communities who enable farms and gardens to be resilient and bountiful. Both gladly agreed to share a Seed Story with us.

Over the weekend when the crowds surged we discovered that recording one-on-one Seed Stories was going to be impossible, the noise level and pace of the crowds were not conducive to



“So in our reach for a new world, let’s think of language with intention: the word as seed, the sentence as cornstalk, the paragraph as bloom, the essay as body; and the period as an emergence, the comma a hope, and the question mark a sunrise.”

Jake Skeets, “My name is Beauty.”



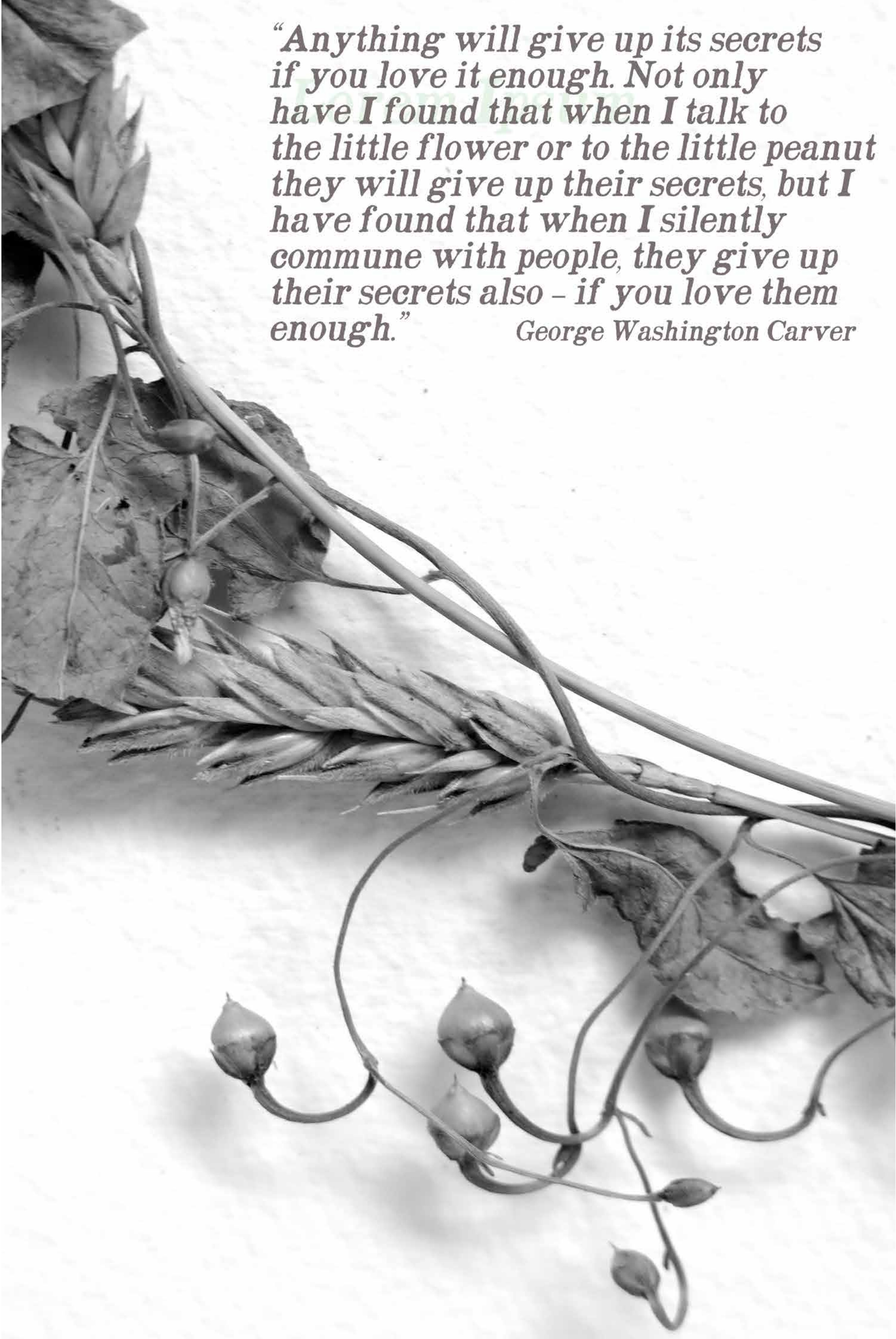
quietly sitting with people and recording their stories. But, on the other hand problems are always solutions in ecological thinking and this prompted us to take a different approach. We began asking folks for quick sound bites about the relationship between seeds and optimism/ seeds and hope with the intention to combine these into a Seed Story about what seeds teach us when we deeply listen to what they share. We combined several of the recordings into a creative remix composition you can listen to below and [YOU CAN LISTEN TO THE ENTIRE SEEDS OF HOPE RECORDINGS HERE](#). All of our Seed Story recordings from the festival will be archived at the Smithsonian Institute. Please reach out and let us know what you think the relationship is between Seeds and Hope.

Good wishes to everyone we met. We hope your Seeds and Stories continue to grow. Very special thanks to Reana Kovalcik of Share A Seed. We also want to give a shout out to [TO TRUE LOVE SEEDS](#), whose African Diaspora Seeds we were sharing at the festival. Check out this incredible farm-based seed company, who are not only growing important seeds, but are also reconnecting us to their stories. And check out their podcast, Seeds and Their People!

Thanks to everyone who recorded their Seed Stories and thoughts on Seeds and Hope with us – Amanda L Stacey, Berenice, John, Casey, Sarah, Min, Omowale, Carolyn, Thomas, Edward, William, Amanda B, Chris, Allison, Matt, Adrianna, Tomisin, Ahsal, Ada, Connor, Ethan, Carly, Reana, Jack, and Elijah. To hear all the Seed Stories go to our web site: WWW.SEEDBROADCAST.ORG and click on the soundcloud button.

Thanks again to the Smithsonian Folklife x Earth Optimism Festival and all the organizers and staff who made this possible.

LET'S KEEP IT SEEDY!



“Anything will give up its secrets if you love it enough. Not only have I found that when I talk to the little flower or to the little peanut they will give up their secrets, but I have found that when I silently commune with people, they give up their secrets also – if you love them enough.”

George Washington Carver