

A publication of the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance

# SEED CULTURE

We are living the dream...collectively!

Quarterly

Volume 1, Issue 3 Fall 2024

**THE POWER OF  
COMPOSTING:  
A PATHWAY TO A  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

**Sorghum**

**Lifecycle**

**Michele Coleman  
A Heart 4 People**

**Black Food  
Black Futures Tour**

**SPECIAL:**

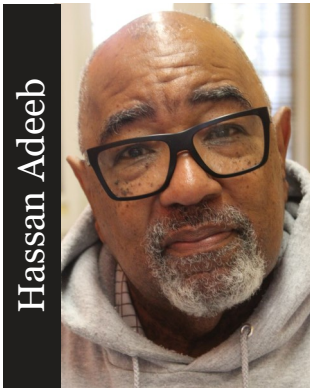
**UCFA 2024 WORKSHOPS & CONVENING  
Community Building Through  
Culturally Meaningful Seeds**



# Publications Team

Bonnetta Adeeb  
Hassan Adeeb  
Kathy Anderson  
Karen Bowlding  
Tomia MacQueen  
Justice Madden  
Gordon Reed  
Nathan Kleinman  
Diane Fisher  
Rick Carter  
Thomasina Rogers  
Fatimah Hasan  
Chris Keeve  
Dr. Cynthia Greenlee

Editor In Chief  
Creative Director  
Seed Descriptor, Content Editor, Digital Journalist, Photographer  
Graphic Designer, Content Editor, Digital Journalist  
Digital Journalist  
Digital Journalist  
Digital Journalist  
Seed Editor  
Seed Editor  
Seed Editor  
Content Editor  
Content Editor  
Content Editor  
Content Editor





# SEED CULTURE

## CONTENTS

<b>Founder's Note</b> by Bonnetta Adeeb	<b>01</b>
<b>2024 UCFA Convening:</b> <b>Community Building Through</b> <b>Culturally Meaningful Seeds</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>The Power of Composting:</b> <b>A Pathway to a Sustainable Future</b> by Renee Padmore-Baccus	<b>06</b>
<b>A Seed Has A Story</b> by Chris Smith	<b>09</b>
<b>Save the Seed</b> by Karen Bowlding	<b>10</b>
<b>Scratch Recipe</b> by Gordon Reed	<b>12</b>
<b>Calendula</b> by Lina Bird	<b>13</b>
<b>Sorghum</b> by Kathy Anderson	<b>15</b>
<b>Lifecycle</b> by Matt Feinstein	<b>17</b>
<b>Ujamaa Seed Farmer Profile</b> <b>Michele Coleman</b> By Kathy Anderson	<b>19</b>
<b>Demonstration Seed Farm and Training</b> <b>Ground Update</b> by Kathy Anderson	<b>21</b>
<b>Black Food Black Futures Tour</b> by Kathy Anderson	<b>22</b>
<b>Market Opportunities for</b> <b>Culturally Meaningful Seed and Food</b>	<b>25</b>



### Connect with us

Voice mail: (240) 515-8558  
Email: [ujamaa@gmail.com](mailto:ujamaa@gmail.com)  
Address: P.O. BOX 1124 Bryans Road,  
Accokeek, MD 20616  
Instagram: @ujamaafarms  
Facebook: @ujamaafarms  
[www.ujamaafarms.com](http://www.ujamaafarms.com)  
[www.ujamaaseeds.com](http://www.ujamaaseeds.com)  
[www.steamonward.org](http://www.steamonward.org)  
Copyright ©2024 All rights reserved



Cover photo by  
Dom Nicky



**SEED CULTURE** is a magazine dedicated to highlighting Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance events and culturally relevant seeds. UCFA covers all things seeds and agriculture related information through articles. The content produced by contributors are not necessarily the views of UCFA. We welcome letters and news items from readers. All request for permission to reprint articles must be directed to [ujamaa@gmail.com](mailto:ujamaa@gmail.com).

# Seeds, Sorghum, Sovereignty, and More!

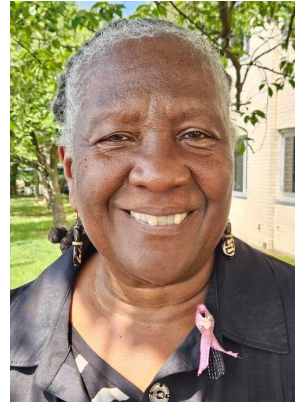
Dear Friends and Growers,

This season has truly been a wonder. Welcome to our 2024 annual workshops and convening. We have an engaging lineup of keynote speakers, workshops, sessions, and exciting projects to share. Many of you are super busy and you have traveled from near and far, so we truly appreciate your effort to attend and spend time with us. We are glad to be able to meet with so many colleagues, growers, guests, partners, and sponsors at the beautiful Piscataway Park at Accokeek, Maryland.

All of us have worked hard to make this year's event fun and interesting, and promise to make the time worth your while. Seeds, sorghum, sovereignty, and more...you will hear quite a few operative words from our keynote speakers and throughout the demonstrations, panels, sessions, and project accounts. With gratitude, Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance honors you for encouraging and sustaining our mission to cultivate and distribute heirloom seeds as well as grow culturally meaningful crops for food, healing, and textiles. Thank you, Accokeek Foundation for granting use of this wonderful setting and sharing the cultural and natural heritage of Piscataway Park.

You all are integral to UCFA's growth and we are looking forward to a future of seed prosperity and abundance. Wishing you a pleasant time, memorable experiences, and a safe journey home.

~ Bonnetta Adeeb,  
Founder, Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance



Sesame Seeds



Bonnetta Adeeb and Rick Carter at the Demonstration Seed Farm and Training Ground



# UCFA FALL 2024 WORKSHOPS & CONVENING

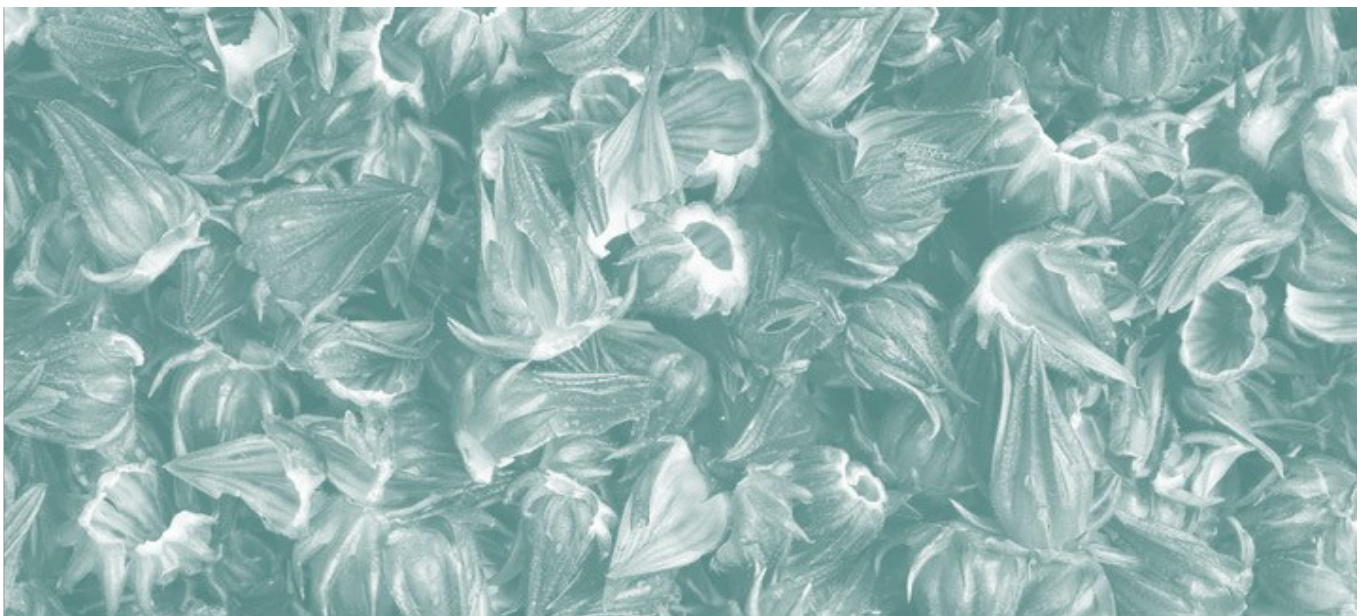
## Community Building Through Culturally Meaningful Seeds

Written by Kathy Anderson

Together, we will  
grow from culturally  
meaningful seed to  
community food  
sovereignty.

The theme of our Fall 2024 Workshops and Convening is Community Building Through Culturally Meaningful Seeds. Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA) members labor and strive to build within their local communities, bringing people together with farm and garden opportunities, education, and fellowship. UCFA fosters and nurtures experienced and new seed growers to develop a strong knowledge base for culturally and regionally relevant heirloom seeds. Our work is a holistic approach incorporating awareness, outreach, research, training, and seed saving to secure the integrity of cultural, economic, and social foodways. We connect with sponsors, partners, organizations, and institutions to engage in joint projects, network, promote synergistic support, and develop policymaking to maintain plant bio-genetic diversity and expand fields germane to culturally meaningful heirloom seeds, including enhanced availability and access.

We are grateful to have keynote speakers Ira Wallace, Brennan Washington, Michael Carter, and Ben Burkett talk about seeds, gardens, farming, Africulture, and cooperatives. We are honored to share the expertise and good works of our members. We encourage you to interact with your peer attendees, presenters, demonstration hosts, and keynote speakers and build your community through participating in demonstrations, information sessions, panels, and a tour. Enjoy the tastes of Jordan's okra oil and Paul's sorghum juice and be nourished with the meals from Foodie Delights, Yummy Food Corner and Grill Catering (Kritch Yampai), and Chef Michael Atkins. Experience the reverence of the Heirloom Collard and Oral History Projects. Learn about our seed farming trials and get ready to start up your own farm. Welcome to our seed journey.



# UCFA FALL 2024 WORKSHOPS & CONVENING

## Speakers



**Ira Wallace** is an organic grower, author, speaker, visionary and worker/ owner of the cooperative Southern Exposure Seed Exchange where she co-coordinates outreach, education, and new seed grower contracts.

Southern Exposure helps people keep control of their food supply through seed saving and sustainable gardening. Ira serves on the board of the Virginia Association for Biological Farming. She was named a 2019 Great American Gardener by the American Horticultural Society and is a 2023 James Beard Foundation Leadership Award Finalist.

She is author of the Timber Press *Guide to Vegetable Gardening in the Southeast*. Her new state specific book series including, *Grow Great Vegetables in Virginia*, are available online and at booksellers everywhere.

[www.SouthernExposure.com](http://www.SouthernExposure.com)

**Michael Carter Jr.** is an 11th generation farmer in the United States and is the 5th generation to farm on Carter Farms, his family's century farm in Orange County, Virginia where he gives workshops on how to grow and market ethnic vegetables. In addition he runs Africulture, a non profit dedicated to educating and expounding upon the principles, practices, plants and people of African descent that has contributed to agriculture.

Carter sits on the Board of Directors of the Montpelier Descendants Committee, Orange County African American Historical Society, Virginia Food Systems Council, American Climate Partners and Virginia Agrarian Trust, respectively. He serves as a fellow for the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation.

Michael was recognized as a 2020 Audubon Naturalist Society Taking Nature Black Regional Environmental Champion, the 2020 VSU Small Farm Outreach Agent of the year and Future Harvest Casa Farmer of the Foodshed for 2021. He acquired an agricultural economics degree from North Carolina A&T State University and has worked in Ghana, Kenya and Israel as an agronomist and organic agricultural consultant.

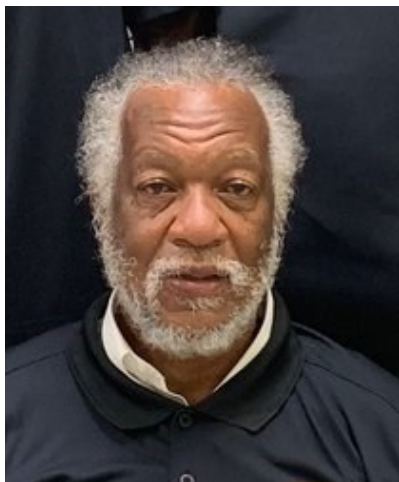
He presently consults with numerous governments, organizations, institutions, and individuals throughout the region and nation on food access, food security and insecurity, market outreach, social and economic parity, equity, evaluation programs, racial understanding, immersion, history, and cultural training, among other areas.



As a cliometrician, curriculum developer, and program coordinator for his educational, cultural, and vocational platforms, Hen Asem (Our Story) and Africulture, he also teaches and expounds on the contributions of Africans and African Americans to agriculture worldwide and trains students, educators, and professionals in African cultural understanding, racial literacy, empathy, and implicit bias recognition. He teaches his course Africulture, at the University of Virginia as a Practitioner in Real Life' in the school of Environmental Thought and Practice major. He happily assists his sons in running their respective businesses, Carter Brothers and Sunnyside Entertainment, when not coaching soccer or mentoring young people in his community.



## Speakers



**BEN BURKETT** is an outspoken advocate for preserving family farms food sovereignty. For over 40 years, he has stood up for the rights of independent family farmers across the United States and internationally. He is a speaker, writer, and testifies for farmer rights.

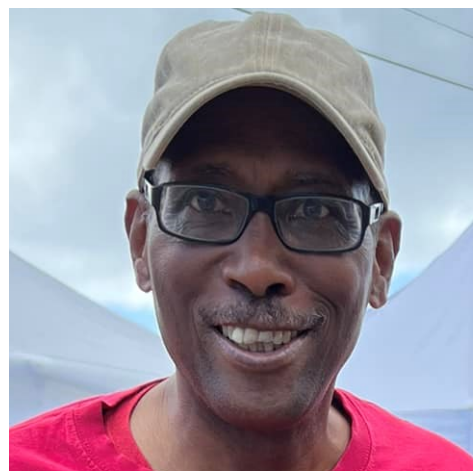
In 2014, Mr. Burkett earned a leadership award from the James Beard Foundation and was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2020. He is a leader in the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, campaigning for economic democracy through cooperative enterprise.

From 1889 to present, Ben Burkett's family has been farming on the same land. As a steadfast fourth-generation farmer, his B& B farm, located in Petal Mississippi, is well known for growing watermelons and sweet potatoes.

Since 2006, **Brennan Washington**, along with his wife Gwendolyn, has owned Phoenix Gardens, a small diversified urban farm that grows produce, herbs fruits and other agricultural products. In 2021, Mr. and Mrs. Washington were awarded the Barbara Petit Pollinator Award by for outstanding service to the local and organic food movement. Mr. Washington is currently the 1890 Land Grant Liaison and South-eastern Outreach Coordinator for Southern SARE where he works with 1890 institutions, non-profit organizations and BIPOC farmers to advance all forms of sustainable agriculture in the south.

Brennan currently sits on the advisory boards of the Wallace Center Advisory Group, the Rodale South-eastern Operations Center and the city of Atlanta's AgLanta urban agriculture program. He has also been appointed as one of the first USDA urban agriculture committee members in the country. He has served as a board member of Southern SARE, Georgia Organics, the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) and was the co-founder and former Board Chair of the Georgia Farmers Market Association.

Brennan is a graduate of the Southern University Small Farm Agricultural Leadership Institute and the University of Georgia's Advancing Georgia Leaders in Agriculture leadership program.



He has also been a fellow in the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies fellowship (BALLE) Brennan has served as a mentor and program manager for the Georgia Organics Farmer Mentoring Program and continues to provide guidance to new and beginning farmers.

He regularly serves as a grant reviewer for several agricultural grant programs reviewing several million in grants annually and has written several grants designed to improve local food systems. He was the principal architect and visionary behind the recently awarded \$30 million Southeastern Regional Food Business Center. Mr. Washington had a long career in information technology management prior to starting his agricultural career.

## Sessions | Workshops

- Sorghum Pressing
- Seed Cleaning
- Organic Gardening
- Composting
- How to Start a Farm
- Policy Panel
- Bee Keeping
- Oral History Project
- Growers Contract
- Seed Farming Trials
- Okra Oil Tasting
- Herbal Farming



[www.freedseedfederation.org](http://www.freedseedfederation.org)



**CHESAPEAKE EDUCATION, ARTS &  
RESEARCH SOCIETY  
CHEARS!**

[www.chears.org](http://www.chears.org)



[www.wilddreamsfarm.org](http://www.wilddreamsfarm.org)



*Celebrating the power of plants with:*

Herbal consultations  
High quality, sustainable, and  
locally grown herbal oils  
Custom herbal formulations

[www.catsandcardamom.com](http://www.catsandcardamom.com)



# The Power of Composting: A Pathway to a Sustainable Future

Written by Renee Padmore-Baccus

---

**“In a time when environmental challenges are becoming increasingly urgent, composting stands out as a simple yet powerful practice that anyone can embrace.”**

---

As a Master Composter, I'm excited to share the many benefits of composting and inspire others to take part in this essential activity. Composting is more than just waste management—it's about nurturing a healthier environment and contributing to a sustainable future. Getting started with composting is easier than you might think. The key is to maintain a balanced mixture of “brown” and “green” materials to achieve a 30:1 carbon-to-nitrogen ratio. Keep your compost pile moist, but not waterlogged—it should feel like a wrung-out sponge. Regularly turning the pile helps provide oxygen to the microbes, ensuring even decomposition. For best results, chop or shred materials into smaller pieces to speed up the process and create a more uniform mix. With these simple steps, you can begin composting today and join the movement toward a healthier planet.

## **Waste Reduction: A Direct Impact on Our Landfills**

One of the most significant benefits of composting is its ability to drastically reduce the amount of waste we send to landfills. Organic materials, including food scraps and yard waste, make up a substantial portion of our waste stream. By composting these materials instead of discarding them, we not only decrease landfill overflow but also mitigate methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas produced when organic waste decomposes anaerobically in landfills.

## **Enriching Soil Health: The Foundation of a Vibrant Ecosystem combat Climate Change**

“Black Gold” is the common name that is often referred to as Compost and for good reason. It enriches the soil by adding essential nutrients and improving soil structure, leading to healthier plants



Photo credits: Renee Padmore-Baccus

and increased crop yields. Moreover, compost enhances the soil's ability to retain water, reducing the need for irrigation and protecting plants during dry spells. By nurturing the very foundation of our food systems, composting plays a critical role in sustainable agriculture. Composting is an incredibly powerful tool in the fight against climate change. By improving soil's ability to store carbon and diverting organic waste from landfills, composting reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Each compost heap is a small, yet impactful, step toward a larger goal of mitigating climate change and protecting our planet for future generations.

*Continued on next page.*

### Boosting Biodiversity: A Flourishing Habitat

The amendment of healthy compost is teeming with life; worms in soil are the best indicator of healthy soil. It provides a habitat for a diverse range of beneficial organisms, including bacteria, fungi, insects, and worms. These organisms are essential in breaking down organic matter and maintaining healthy soil ecosystems. A thriving compost pile is a testament to the intricate balance of nature and its ability to regenerate. Composting offers tangible economic benefits as well. For individuals and municipalities alike, composting can reduce the costs associated with waste disposal. Additionally, by reducing the need for expensive chemical fertilizers, composting offers a more sustainable and cost-effective approach to soil management and agriculture.



### Fostering Community Engagement: Building Connections

**Composting serves as a powerful tool for community-building by bringing neighbors together around a shared environmental goal.**

Local composting programs create opportunities for collaboration, fostering a sense of collective responsibility for the environment. Schools, community gardens, and neighborhood initiatives are ideal platforms for promoting composting and instilling a sense of environmental stewardship in future generations. Beyond simply turning food scraps into soil, composting raises awareness and educates people on the broader importance of waste reduction, recycling, and environmental responsibility. By embracing composting, we inspire others to take small, meaningful actions that collectively lead to significant environmental benefits.

Moreover, composting strengthens the resilience of local food systems by improving the health and productivity of local soils. In times of supply chain disruptions or extreme weather events, having rich, fertile soil close to home becomes invaluable. Composting is a proactive step toward building a more resilient and self-sufficient community.

As we all participate in the cycle of eating, recycling food sources through composting enables environmental regeneration, benefiting both the environment and our communities. Composting isn't just a practical activity—it's a deeply rewarding experience. The knowledge that you're actively contributing to a healthier environment and reducing your carbon footprint brings a profound sense of fulfillment. Every compost pile you create, every shovel of rich, dark soil, stands as a testament to our shared commitment to a sustainable future. In a world facing increasing environmental challenges, composting offers a simple yet powerful way for everyone to make a real difference. Whether you're an experienced gardener or just beginning your journey, your efforts in composting have a lasting impact. Let's come together to expand this essential practice. By enriching our soils and reducing waste, we can build a more sustainable future for all.

**To get started and be part of this vital movement, reach out to us at:  
[info@healthyhandsofharvest.com](mailto:info@healthyhandsofharvest.com).  
Join the movement today!**





# STEAM ONWARD

Youth exploring STEM concepts through hands-on activities in agriculture, natural resources, health, and the environment.



## STREAM MONITORING

Youth engage in hands-on environmental learning by observing and recording data on local streams. Through this activity youth learn how human activity and pollution affect natives species, and affect the health of local communities. Youth also explore environmental awareness and justice issues.



## COMMUNITY GARDENS

By establishing and maintaining community, home, and school gardens, youth explore biology, agriculture, biodiversity, nutrition, plant adaptation, as well as teamwork, community engagement, and citizenship. Youth also explore environmental awareness issues.



## AGRO-FORESTRY

Through our *Wangari Maathai Food Forestry Program*, youth plant native trees and shrubs as they explore concepts of sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, water management, as well as how native trees and shrubs support local wildlife, improve soil health, and reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides.



## YOUTH ANTI-VAPING

To counter the rapid increase of youth use of vaping devices, Steam Onward conducts outreach and education in schools, and at community sites and at community events on the adverse health effects of nicotine use.

Through in-person lessons and presentations on the health effects of nicotine use, youth learn how to create anti-nicotine counter marketing posters, videos, and memes. Through this project youth engage in creative thinking, as they learn about health, marketing, advocacy, and community engagement.

LEARN MORE AT:  
[steamonward.org](http://steamonward.org)

DONATE

# A SEED HAS A STORY

Written by Chris Smith  
*Republished with permission from Edible Asheville*

A seed is connected to all the plant mothers that came before it, and to all the plant mothers that will come after it. The seed has a story, and every time we save and replant it, the story evolves in an ongoing relationship between plant, people, and place.

**E**ach year the seed learns and reacts to the environment in which it is grown: the lazy way you like to garden, the health of your soil, or the afternoon shade of that overgrown Maple. The seed can react to the changing climate, as long as the changes aren't too rapid or extreme. We benefit from this regionally accumulated seed wisdom when the seeds are saved and grown in place over time. Robin Wall Kimmerer in an essay titled, *Corn Tastes Better On The Honor System*, describes the relationship like this,

**“Using indigenous science, the human and the plant are linked as co-creators; humans are midwives to this creation, not masters. The plant innovates and the people nurture and direct that creativity. They are joined in a covenant of reciprocity, of mutual flourishing.”**

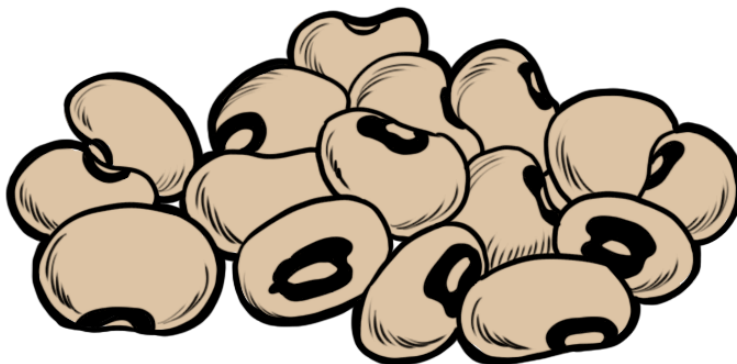
In this light, when we talk about seed stories, we are also talking about people stories. Seeds and people have been intertwined for thousands of years, and saving the stories is just as important as saving the seeds. The Heirloom Garden Oral History Project (HGP) is a collaboration between the Ujamaa

Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA), Princeton University, and Spelman College. The project aims to collect and preserve stories related to Black and Indigenous foodways.

UCFA began life in the Covid-19 years where, along with the tragic loss of life, there was a massive loss of wisdom, knowledge, and stories held by our elders. With a mission of cultural reconnection, UCFA began the important work of seed reconnection. They hosted workshops which asked questions like, “What did your grandmother eat?” and “What ten crops can you not live without?” These were simple but powerful questions because they asked about relationships, family, food, and culture. These are questions you can, and maybe should, ask yourself and your family. The Heirloom Garden Oral History Project grew out of these humble questions, aiming to preserve food, garden, and seed stories so we can stand on the shoulders of our elders and build a better future.

During the summer of 2024 the HGP sent three oral history student interns to Asheville, and I was excited to be their regional host. There are plenty of examples of extractive approaches to collecting oral histories, with little thought or regard for the people and communities where the stories are collected.

*Continued on next page.*





I was reminded of an adage I heard from Dr. Cynthia Greenlee, historian and journalist, “Community before collaboration.” It speaks to developing trusting relationships before transactional ones. As part of their time in Asheville, the students spent time volunteering at Southside Community Garden. They weeded rows, dug potatoes, and planted seeds. They also interviewed Black elders from the historically Black Southside neighborhood. The Heirloom Garden Oral History Project is clear in its intentions to record and archive stories, but also to have those stories be a gift to the communities that will value and use them.

Neither seeds nor stories should be static things. Seeds need to be grown and stories need to be told, both draw on the past to inform the future. In this sense, seeds *are* stories, and planting and growing is an act of retelling. I history project and access the recordings, visit [heirloomgardens.princeton.edu/](https://heirloomgardens.princeton.edu/)

To learn more about the oral history project visit  
<https://heirloomgardens.princeton.edu/>

## SAVE THE SEED!

Written by Karen Bowlding

**“Seeds are living links in an unbroken chain  
reaching back into agriculture’s antiquity.” - UCFA**

Since the beginning of agriculture, indigenous peoples have been saving seeds to provide sustenance for their families and carry on their cultural legacy and traditions. We are at a critical juncture when big ag conglomerates are actively preventing fruits and vegetables from growing seeds and modifying them. Soon enough, there will be no seeded foods in the grocery stores. We cannot wait. “They don’t care about us.” Everything is about profit, so we shouldn’t expect the companies to go back to our old ways.

We must do for self. Saving seeds no longer should be ignored. For Black Americans, because of our history, and as with cotton, too many of us tie saving seeds to “slave” work and will not do it. We must get over ourselves, and put in the work so that our heirs will have “clean” foods. Our indigenous ancestors saved seeds prior to colonization. Let’s honor them and break the chain of mentally tying everything to a horrible blip in our history.

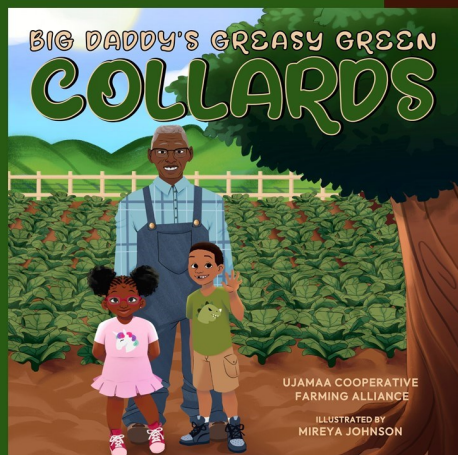
For any cultural groups that have and are experiencing displacement, social unrest, forced migrations, eminent domain, and land theft, we all must put in the work to save our precious unadulterated seeds. Start off with purchasing your seeds from [ujamaaseeds.com](https://ujamaaseeds.com), grow out your plants, and save the seeds at the end of the season. If you wish, send some back for germination testing and release to UFGA so that we can continue to grow. Our future and seed diversification depends on us!

Seed saving helps us to pass culturally-relevant varieties to our future generations and retain control of our healthy food supply.

**Save heirlooms seeds!**

# UJAMAA

COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE



Ivie and Jace, created a collard patch on her family's multigenerational farm. Big Daddy supplied the heirloom seeds and taught them how to grow their own collards.

Discover what it takes to grow from seed.

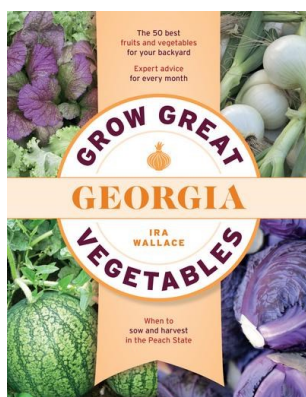
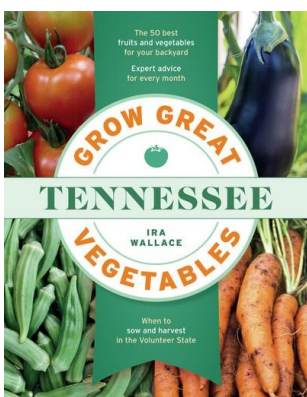
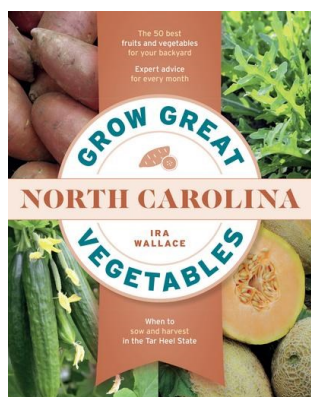
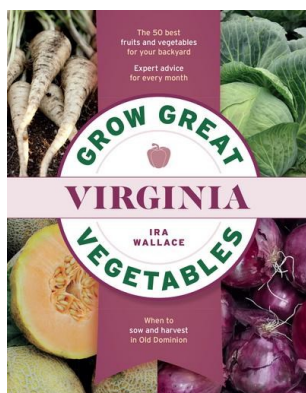
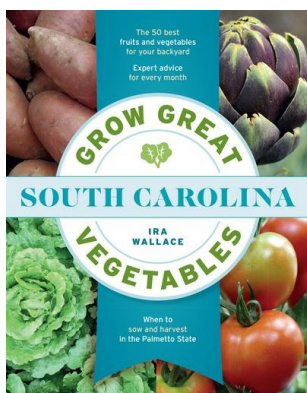
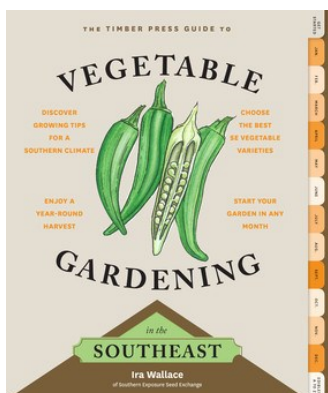


All proceeds will support Steam Onward / Ujamaa Farming Cooperative Alliance for STEM, environmental, and agriculture education for children.

Purchase today at [ujamaaseeds.com](http://ujamaaseeds.com)

## Each order includes:

- The *Big Daddy's Greasy Greens Collards* Book
- ~ 20 Collard seeds
- Collard Growing Guide
- 1 gallon grow bag



Books by Ira Wallace

<https://www.southernexposure.com>



## NEW CROPS

Xiye Butternut  
Squash, Ashwagandha, Biquinho  
Spice Peppers, Pink Zinnia,  
Soleado Zinnia, Green Finger,  
Cucumber, Beaujolais  
Spinach, Golden Guardian  
Marigold, Showstar  
Melampodium, Purple Viking Potatoes, Queensland  
Lettuce, Quan Yin Lettuce,  
Orange-Fleshed Cekirdegi Oyali  
Watermelon, and Spinner's  
Ivory Cotton



# Scratch RECIPE

Written by Gordan Reed



## GREEN VEGGIE FRITTATA

CAST IRON OR STAINLESS STEEL SKILLET

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter and oil
- 1/2 cup each of spinach, kale, chard, celery, peas, carrots, summer squash, and bell pepper
- 1 cooked potato diced
- 2 green onions diced
- 1/2 cup mushrooms
- Cooked meat, your choice
- 6 to 8 eggs
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese

### Directions

- Sauté and brown and veggies except greens.
- While veggies cook, mix the eggs milk and half the cheese in a bowl.
- Once the veggies are cooked to your desired doneness, add the egg mixture along with the greens and cook on the stove until the edges are set and firm.
- Move the skillet to a heated oven (350°) to finish cooking.
- The last 5 mins, add the remaining cheese to the top of the eggs to melt.
- Remove skillet from oven and let cool 10 minutes and serve.

# Calendula

Written by Lina Bird



**It's easy to grow, beautiful, and a gentle yet useful addition to the medicine cabinet. Calendula has a special place in my heart and yard.**

freely available through PubMed, does a nice job of summarizing the research on Calendula's medicinal properties. The bulk of the clinical studies have focused on topical uses and suggest that calendula extracts can be useful in treating dermatitis, wounds, venous ulcers, and vaginal infections.

My earliest exposure to calendula was in purchased baby oil. It was a staple in my childhood home for minor skin irritations. These days, I make my own. Every summer I infuse plenty of olive oil with freshly dried calendula flowers. Usually, I then mix it with comfrey infused oil and beeswax, and fill tins with calendula-comfrey salve, which we rub on everything from paper cuts to sprains.

Although you can certainly buy dried calendula flowers, make sure you are getting the whole flower heads, not just the petals! When you use it in various calendula-infused creams and salves, there is something special about growing it yourself. It isn't just the cheerful yellow and orange flowers that open every day for a good long blooming season. It is also the scent. Fresh calendula plants are covered with a beautiful sticky resin that smells rich, sharp and well, herbal. It surrounds you as you pluck the flower heads and it clings to your fingers and fills the room as the flowers dry. Unfortunately, not much of the scent remains in even freshly dried flowers. It is one of those fleeting summer pleasures that make both gardening and herbalism such a joy.

Okay, so you've planted the culinary herbs. Maybe you even have a patch of mint and have discovered the joys of fresh mint tea. What is next in your herb gardening journey? In my opinion, you could do worse than calendula. It has long been used in Europe medicinally, something you can tell by its Latin name: *Calendula officinalis*. The officina was the herbal storage room in medieval monasteries, and the species name *officinalis* was given to dozens of herbs commonly used by the monks in their healing ministries.

According to Maude Grieve's work (an excellent historic herbal resource available freely online at [botanical.com](https://botanical.com)), calendula was used as an anti-inflammatory for a variety of ailments, including chronic ulcers, eye inflammation, insect bites, varicose veins, sprains, and wounds. It was also a mild diaphoretic, used to promote perspiration during a fever. Modern western herbal traditions continue to use it both in teas and in topical preparations. While historical traditions can tell us a great deal, it is also interesting to see what modern scientific studies can contribute. A recent review article (Shahane et al. 2023), published in the journal *Pharmaceuticals*, and



# Sorghum

Written by Kathy Anderson

**B**ake, boil, pop, sip, and sweeten ... sorghum is the wonderful ancient grain with many delicious healthy uses. The earthy nutty flavor and

chewy texture millet can be cooked similar to rice or quinoa or used as porridge, as well as ground into flour for fruit breads, desserts, and pizza dough. Sorghum may be popped to create a unique flavorful gluten -free snack. The cane can be made into light green juice, fermented beverages, or cooked down for syrup. Also, sorghum has been historically used for brooms, brushes, and ornamentals, as well as building materials.

Sorghum bicolor typically grows on 5' to 8' tall stalks and can grow up to 15' tall. Seed heads mature into shades of amber, black brown, red, tan, yellow, and white. The three types of sorghum are grain, sweet, and broom corn with names such as Rox Orange, Sugar Drip, Honey Drip, Black Amber, Kansas Orange, Broom-corn, Della, Kassaby, and Kawanda. Sorghum is a drought-tolerant crop and sustainable grain. The grain is a staple in African, Asian, and Indian cuisine. Southeastern American Indians also utilized sorghum as a subsistence crop.

In Africa and Asia, sorghum is grown mostly for human consumption and in the United States, sorghum is grown for animal feed and biofuel. That paradigm is changing. Sorghum festivals have become popular and the craft food industry is a growing marketplace for sorghum products.

The wonder grain is a high protein powerhouse efficient in converting water and solar energy into high-density energy calories and is a low environmental impact crop. Bakers, chefs, and candy, beverage, snack, and syrup artisans utilize sorghum in drinks, treats, and meals. They also add a malty, caramel, or nutty twist to classic recipes. Imagine a slow cooked sweet and savory chicken dish, spicy sorghum stir fry, sorghum and molasses cookies, or a sorghum salad dressing. Have a toast to sorghum brews like beer, kombucha, whiskey, and wine.

During our past fall workshops and convenings, participants have enjoyed the expressed juices and kombucha fermented by founding member Paul Lovelace. Be sure to participate in the sorghum pressing demonstration and enjoy the light sweet flavors of sorghum.





# UJAMAA SEEDS

A Culturally Meaningful  
Heirloom Seed  
Company

[ujamaaseeds.com](http://ujamaaseeds.com)

Gardening with heirloom seeds not only preserves heritage varieties of vegetables, flowers, and fruits, but using heirloom seeds contributes to biodiversity and a more resilient and sustainable food system.



# LIFECYCLE

Written by Matt Feinstein

The following song is written by a young mother and seed exchange activist on a farm occupied by her family and other landless workers in northeast Brazil. The project, of which I have been supporting through documentary film and international exchanges is called Ciclovida (Lifecycle).

*A vida tem um ciclo, O que é que não tem?  
Qual é a melhor forma de fazer o bem?  
Andando por todo lado fazendo ecologia  
Andar de bicicleta de noite e de dia  
E ainda ter tempo para poesia*

*Cante uma canção me traz uma semente  
Pegue este violão e vem cantar com a gente  
Você tem muitas coisas para nos ensinar  
Sei que tudo o que trouxe para repassar  
Por isso essa semente eu vou plantar*

*Life has a cycle, what doesn't?  
What is the best way to do well?  
Walking everywhere bringing ecology  
Biking day and night  
And still having time for poetry*

*Sing a song, bring me a seed  
Take this guitar and come sing with us  
You have many things to teach us  
Everything I bring is to share  
That's why I'm going to plant this seed*

Though I was inspired to spread the word about seed saving, forest gardening, and agroecology many years ago by the Ciclovida project in Brazil, it was not until my recent change in pace in life for parenting young Micah that I really got my hands dirty. Now my now four and a half year old and I, along with several other folks from Global Village Farms, have recently expanded our forest garden to over an acre and have done our first year of seed farming.

With seeds from Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance, Micah has both taken on his own little garden, and is involved in the broader cultivation

efforts here on Nipmuc land in Grafton, Massachusetts. His face lights up as he notices community members' cars arrive for community farm days where we plant, play, connect, share food, and discuss current social justice organizing efforts.



“I’m helping daddy!”

At the age of two, during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, Micah insisted on bringing his own wheelbarrow to worksites at tribal members’ houses where we were installing raised beds and distributing free seeds.

“We can fix it daddy!”

When his wheelbarrow handle broke, he was surprisingly helpful at fixing it in the woodshop.

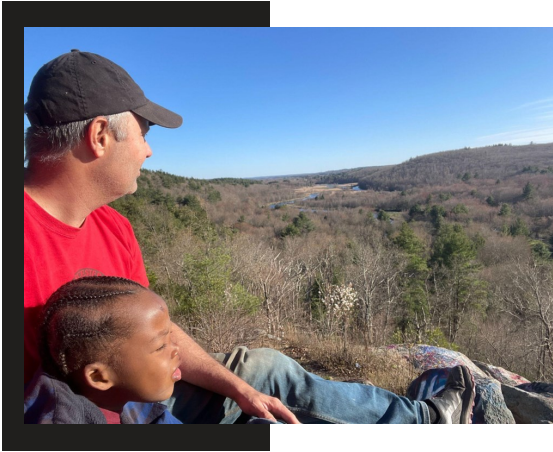
As we transplant out in the field and water in the seedlings, Micah takes the opportunity to get really wet and dirty.

One day, with his hands, face and knees covered with soil, he looks up with a gentle smile, locks eyes with me and says, “It’s still now, daddy.”

This inspired me to stay more present while doing farm work as well as write songs about mindfulness. We also went to the farm that I grew up on, where my brother built a recording studio last year to record a kids album based on Micah’s interests.

*Continued on next page.*

Each father's day I reflect on the happiest times growing up as my dad involved me in projects on the farm. The feeling of getting things done together and at the same time of such freedom to roam, explore, get dirty, and eat the food we grew. I appreciate the time he took to have one on one time with me and my three siblings despite his busy life as a psychologist and community-based institution builder.



Micah's love for autumn olives, a berry I find very astringent, has ensured an annual practice of harvest, manual food pressing, jam making and fruit leather drying. The "fruit roll ups" are special treats we reserve for our hikes together.

Summer grazing sessions in the garden is a favorite snack time activity. Micah knows exactly where the most tender young bok choy or kale leaves can be found, followed by some cherry tomatoes and a carrot or two. Then we break off several dozen large kale leaves and some garlic scapes for a joint chopping and cooking session. When he's involved in the whole process, he usually eats an entire big bowl of the kale stir-fry (provided there's enough salty soy sauce on it).

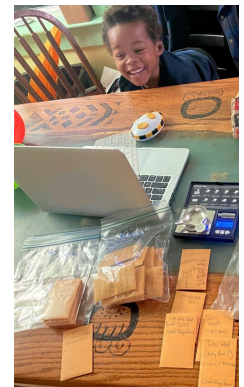
This past year, Micah also helped put row cover over the dormant kale plants, resulting in 90% survival and seed production the following July. Micah really got the hang of hand agitating and winnowing the tiny kale seeds after the long and slow drying period. He also enjoyed helping with the scale and packaging of the seeds in time to send to Ujamaa Seeds for wide distribution.

And thinking back, none of this farming would really have been very fruitful without all the work Micah and I did creating hundreds of yards of compost. Windrows takes regular turning. At our scale, it meant at least weekly work with the tractor,

especially when he was two and three, I'd walk out the door holding Micah's hand and ask him what he wanted to do. Nine times out of ten, he would respond, "Green Big Tractor!" So, I'd be motivated to do the compost work with him operating the loader bucket while listening to tunes on his headphones or hopping off and climbing on mountains of wood-chips. While we're out there, to keep it less monotonous, we would move logs around and build giant herb towers and hugelkultur beds, which is where we grow the anise hyssop for medicine and seed.

When Micah turned four he decided he wanted to join me in keeping the honey bees. Despite his rough experience with wasp stings in the high tunnel the year before, he was ready to get his own kid sized suit and help me look for the queen and keep them calm with some smoke. His gentle, slow movements when we open the hives is impressive and inquisitive facial expressions as he stands up close and personal with the bees never ceases to bring a smile to my face.

His mom is the main market gardener, and ensures spiritual and cultural connections to their African heritages. She and I mix in other aspects of our Guatemalan and Ashkenazi Jewish cultures through food, music, books and community. I hope someday we can connect him more directly to his Creek Nation and Black heritage by birth. As the cycles of life spin on, I make sure to hold several days a week for me and Micah time on the farm to soak up learnings from him, explore new polyculture combinations and seed saving techniques, and surround ourselves with community dedicated to social and ecological justice.



To learn more about the Global Village Farms visit:  
[globalvillagefarms.org](http://globalvillagefarms.org)





## UCFA Seed Farmer Profile

# A HEART 4 PEOPLE

Michele Coleman's Mission

Written by Kathy Anderson

---

**“This is life’s purpose for me.”**

---

### **What is the meaning behind your farm name?**

My name has the number 4. A Heart 4 people. That represents four of my ancestors—maternal great-grandmother who was always feeding people. She was described as having a heart for people. Both my maternal and paternal grandmothers, always looking out for people, and my great Aunt Barbara, she would cook and cook. She cooked for everybody. I named this farm for them. They had a love and compassion for people and were always feeding people, making them laugh, and I want to honor them. They are the cornerstones of this whole ministry, giving me the heart and desire to do this. I will follow in their footsteps. It’s my heart’s desire, that if they were alive, they would be proud of me. It’s what they gave me. It’s in my DNA. It all came from them. I’m so grateful that I came from a line of women that had so much passion for people.

### **What inspired you to start a farm?**

A love for nature and connection with the earth. I’ve always been an earth child...been moved deeply by creation...deeply fascinated with the earth and trees. What made me want to start growing food was the wonder of it all. Putting a seed in the ground and watching it become food to feed life... How the earth nourishes us is absolutely mind blowing. The first time I planted a cucumber seed and watched it become a vine, it was like, “Wow.” My grandmother had flowers in her garden. She could grow anything. She had a gorgeous garden. I used to watch how dedicated she was...with how much beauty she surrounded herself. She knew the names of the flowers and what they needed. I was amazed at how

gifted she was and how she could make anything beautiful. That woman was bad to the bone. Nana was incredible. She was the first person I saw growing things. It was years later that the thought came to me to start growing food. A client had a farm, offered me a space, and asked if I wanted to start growing food. I wanted to try it. I made some crazy mistakes, but...I grew food. I fell in love with it...grabbed a hold of my heart and wouldn’t let go.

### **In what type of farming do you specialize?**

I specialize in vegetable farming to give to seniors first and families in need. My crops are selected based on what these generations are accustomed to eating. I also grow foods to introduce them to new foods... colorful ones to combat disease that plague our communities. Grandma’s eat collards. I gave them Swiss chard. Let them try options, educate them. I grow things that I won’t eat. Okra...you will not see that on my plate. The seniors like okra. I grow for them...presenting things that they are familiar with and introducing things they are not familiar with so they have balanced nutrition. Foods have healing properties. “You gotta share that”. Food is medicine.

“At least donate a portion.”

-

“Can you set aside a little something for people struggling trying to put food on the table.”

-

“You don’t lose anything; you gain so much more.”

### **If we visited your farm, what would we see you doing?**

This time of year, you would see me battling bugs and weeds. You would also see the attention I give to my plants. I baby them. I pay close attention to what is going on with them. Energetically, the plants thrive when you take special care. If I was a full production farmer, I would miss those moments that I give to my plants. If I pour into them, they would pour into the people.

### **What are some of the unique challenges that come with farming to feed elderly and underserved populations?**

That there is not going to be enough. This ocean is so big and my boat is so small and there are so many people who need this. I am perplexed by the sheer number of people in need. How do I feed them all? How do I grow enough food to meet the need? That's

always the challenge. How to do it. I feel alone in this. I don't know any others who are doing this. OurSpace-World does this.

There are organizations that are throwing away food instead of giving it to people. This breaks my heart. They are getting hundreds of thousands of dollars. I've seen it with my own eyes. I've seen them throw food away...money, attention, notoriety.

Let's just go along and do it quietly. Let's do God's work. This brings me so much joy. Even though I'm tired a lot of times, there is a joy that wells up in me when I see the farm. This food is going to fill someone's stomach that would otherwise be empty. It's worth it!

“

People just keep popping up to help me. I know I'm on the right path.

## **CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHORS**



Inspiring nature play!

**Buy our books today...**

**Present your book to the world through our tailored publishing services.**

- **Consultations**
- **Line-by-line editing**
- **Writing**
- **Layout and cover design**
- **Illustrations**
- **Identifier numbers**
- **Printing**

**Reach out to us if you want a book written and published for your organization.**

### **Karen Bowlding**

Author, editor, graphic designer,  
Publishing consultant, book coach,  
writing instructor  
[karenbowlding@gmail.com](mailto:karenbowlding@gmail.com)  
[www.karenbowlding.net](http://www.karenbowlding.net)



### **Kathy Anderson**

Author, book coach, writing instructor  
[kathy.anderson.author@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.anderson.author@gmail.com)  
[www.awisquad.com](http://www.awisquad.com)





# TAYMAN FIELD

## Demonstration Seed Farm & Training Ground 2024 Growing Season

Written by Kathy Anderson



Tayman Field is located on the grounds of St. Thomas Episcopal Parish in Upper Marlboro Maryland.

### Ultracross Collards

From the winter of 2023 to spring 2024, we intercrossed 21 heirloom collard varieties and recently harvested about 4 bins of seed pods. Despite an aphid infestation, groundhog intrusion, and extreme weather conditions, we ensured survival of over 95% of the seed plants.

### Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage

On June 22, 2024, UCFA hosted visitors, gave tours of the farm, presented informational storyboards, handed out brochures, and held conversations about seed farming and UCFA. We received appreciative words and praise for the work we accomplished at the farm.

### Farm Activities

UCFA Farm Managers Kathy Anderson and Rick Carter spent 2 to 4 days each week preparing beds, planting, watering, mowing, site maintenance, and managing youth community service and adult volunteer days. Currently, there are over 20 different crops in the ground.

#### Harvested

- Collard seeds
- Shallots
- Garlic
- Turnips

#### Growing

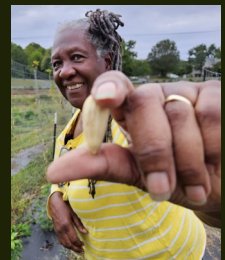
- Amaranth
- Asparagus
- Basil (3 varieties)
- Buckwheat
- Drum Gourd
- Eggplant
- Garden Egg
- Groundnut
- Malabar Spinach
- Mammoth Sunflowers
- Mbombo beans
- Mung bean
- Okra
- Peanuts
- Peppers
- Plai
- Promiscuous Peas

- Runner beans

- Sage
- Sesame
- Sorghum
- Squash
- Taro
- Tomatoes
- Turmeric
- Walking Onions
- Watermelon
- Whippoorwill Pea

#### Saplings:

- Osage orange
- Persimmon
- Red oak
- White oak





# BLACK FOOD

## Black Futures Tour

### Cooperative Principle 6 In Context: Urban Cooperative Food Systems | OurSpace World

Written by Kathy Anderson

**The first of October**, during a beautifully cloudy and drizzly day, Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA) hosted the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA) conference attendees as part of the OurSpace World (OSW) Black Food Black Futures Tour. The NCBA CLUSA Project Director Teia Evans and OurSpace Squad members MJ, Sessina Dani, and Aitalohi Amaize organized a food ecosystem tour that showcased the work of Black and Brown farmers, chefs, and food waste recovery specialists. The tour event was all about meeting the people shaping and sharing the future of food justice, approaches to urban agriculture, food networks, land stewardship, earth healing, and food sovereignty.

[www.ncbaclusa.coop](http://www.ncbaclusa.coop)

[www.ourspaceworld.org](http://www.ourspaceworld.org)



The Demonstration Seed Farm at Tayman Field in Upper Marlboro, Maryland was the last stop and about 25 to 30 attendees engaged in a variety of activities at the farm. Bonnetta Adeeb taught participants how to harvest Mbombo Bean and

Promiscuous Pea seeds from pods and led excited conversations about seeds, food history, culturally-significant crops, and more. Ebony Malone led the work to prepare the future herb garden, mulch the perimeter, and seed the area with cover crop.



Rick Carter and Kathy Anderson showed groups how to separate garlic cloves, prepare the planting holes, and plant the cloves and Rick led the way to install an experimental trellis system for Whippoorwill Peas and Red Malabar Spinach. Some in the bunch tasted basil, spinach, and sesame seeds and others turned their faces away from the scent of African Drum Gourd leaves.

Overall, we stayed relatively dry, enjoyed fun, fellowship, laughs, and smiles, as well as experienced some of the processes involved in working at a seed farm. UCFA extends appreciation and gratitude to NCBA CLUSA, OSW, and the 2024 Cooperative IMPACT Conference attendees for visiting with us and laboring at Tayman Field. [www.whova.com](http://www.whova.com)



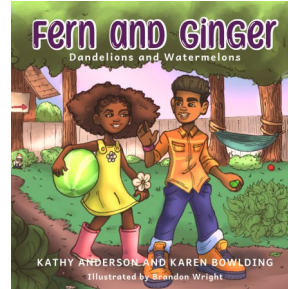
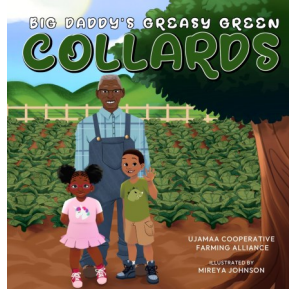


# Gifts & Goods

Exclusive value added products crafted by UCFA members



**Apparel**  
Sweatshirts and Tees



**Juvenile Books**  
Excite your young ones with books about gardening, foraging, and farming.



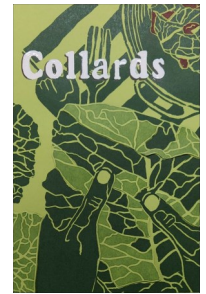
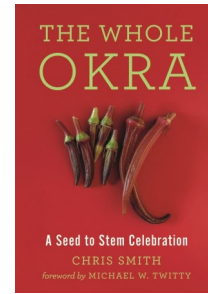
**Children's Toy**



**Mushroom Grow Kits**



**Herb Infused Natural Salves and Tinctures**  
Cats and Cardamom, gardening scientists



**Agricultural Reading**



**Seed Saving Packets**



**Cards**  
Hand crafted



**Gift Certificates**  
Gift a seeds coupon to your gardener or family member. Denominations range from \$10 to \$100

# UCFA SUPPORTERS



SCHOOL of  
INTERNATIONAL  
SERVICE

SOW  
TRUE SEED



CHESAPEAKE  
EDUCATION, ARTS  
& RESEARCH  
SOCIETY  
CHEARS !

