



# SEEDS & CULTURE

Rural and Urban Agriculture United

20 UJAMAA COOPERATIVE  
26 FARMING ALLIANCE CONFERENCE

University of the District of Columbia  
March 6-7, 2026 Washington D.C



# SEEDS & CULTURE

## Rural and Urban Agriculture United

### UCFA's 2026 Conference



On behalf of STEAM Onward, Inc., I'm delighted to welcome you to the 2026 Seeds & Culture: Rural and Urban Agriculture United Conference. As the President of Steam Onward, Inc., and a Founding Member of the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA), it is a joy to gather with you at the University of the District of Columbia, in a space dedicated to community, culture, and the future of food. Your presence here reflects a shared belief that agriculture is more than production—it is heritage, education, healing, and economic opportunity.

Seeds & Culture 2026 is UCFA's first conference bringing together growers, educators, students, community leaders, seed stewards, and advocates from rural and urban communities who

understand that resilient food systems begin with relationships. We are here to exchange practical knowledge, strengthen partnerships, and celebrate the traditions carried in our seeds and our stories. Whether you are joining us to deepen your skills, connect with peers, discover new resources, or simply be inspired, we hope you feel welcomed, seen, and supported from the moment you arrive.

At Steam Onward, Inc. and UCFA, our work is rooted in the belief that seed sovereignty and workforce development go hand in hand. When communities gain access to training, land-based skills, and culturally meaningful crop knowledge, we build pathways to careers, entrepreneurship, and healthier neighborhoods. Today and tomorrow I encourage you to participate fully—ask questions, share your experience, visit exhibitors, meet presenters, and engage with the learning opportunities designed to strengthen your capacity and uplift your community's agricultural vision.

Thank you for investing your time and energy into this gathering at UDC. May this conference be a space where new collaborations take root, where ideas sprout into action, and where each of us leaves more connected to the land and to one another. Welcome to Seeds & Culture: Rural and Urban Agriculture United—we're honored to have you with us, and we look forward to growing together.



*This Citation Is Presented To*  
*Steam Onward Inc.*  
*Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance*

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*ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE INAUGURAL UCFA CONFERENCE "SEEDS & CULTURE:  
RURAL AND URBAN AGRICULTURE UNITED"*

*In recognition of its commitment to strengthening the continuum between rural food producers and urban growers, with appreciation for its efforts to bridge communities across geographic and cultural lines through the preservation of traditional farming knowledge, and with best wishes for a successful conference.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

*Chris Van Hollen*  
*United States Senator*

*On This Day,  
The Sixth of March,  
Two Thousand and Twenty-Six*

# TWO BRANCHES - ONE ROOT

## Symbiotic Relationships Between Rural & Urban Agriculture

Rural and urban agriculture form two vital halves of a sustainable food system. Together, they bridge the divide between producers and consumers, create mutual learning networks, and cultivate food sovereignty across both countryside and city landscapes.

### 1. **Economic Interdependence** ■

Urban markets fuel rural farms through farmers' markets and co-ops, while rural inputs sustain urban growers. Together they create shared prosperity and local jobs.

### 2. **Knowledge & Innovation Exchange** ■

Urban centers foster agricultural technology innovation adaptable to rural areas, while rural wisdom in soil health and biodiversity strengthens city growing practices.

### 3. **Environmental & Ecological Synergy** ■

Urban composting supports rural soil fertility, while pollinator corridors and green spaces link ecosystems for shared environmental benefits.

### 4. **Cultural & Social Connections** ■

Urban farms celebrate rural foodways and heirloom crops, while rural traditions are uplifted through urban advocacy for food justice and cultural preservation.

### 5. **Building Resilient Food Systems** ■

Urban agriculture ensures local fresh food supply in crises, and rural farms maintain staple crops and seeds—together fostering resilience and sustainability.

### **Conclusion: Unity in Growth** ■

Rural and urban agriculture are partners in a shared ecosystem. Their collaboration ensures equity, sustainability, and resilience for communities from city rooftops to countryside fields.



# Friday Sessions

**B** BREAK   **K** KEYNOTE ADDRESS   **O** OPENING   **P** PANEL DISCUSSION   **S** SESSION

## MARCH 6 • FRIDAY

10:00am – 11:30am	<b>O</b> Conference Organizers Arrive at UDC	
10:30am – 12:30pm	<b>O</b> EXHIBITORS ARRIVAL & SETUP	
<b>PINNED</b> 12:30pm – 1:15pm	<b>B</b> CONFERENCE BEGINS, Registration, Exhibitors Open, Snacks, Networking	TBA
<b>PINNED</b> 1:15pm – 2:30pm	<b>K</b> SEEDS & CULTURE OPENING PLENARY Keynote Address <i>Speakers: Brennan Washington</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
<b>PINNED</b> 2:30pm – 2:45pm	<b>B</b> BREAK - 15 Minutes	
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<b>S</b> Afroecology & 16 Street Greens Program <i>Speakers: Xavier Brown</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<b>S</b> Food Justice Undone: Book Talk <i>Speakers: Hanna Garth</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<b>S</b> Seed Story of a Southern Family <i>Speakers: Dail Chambers</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<b>S</b> When a Seed Lands, Shared Futures Grow: Lessons from Collective Land Tenure and Community Stewardship <i>Moderators: Nicole Jackson</i> <i>Speakers: Alma Rocío Segoviano Basurto</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<b>S</b> Winning Grant Proposals <i>Speakers: Kenya Nicholas</i>	ROOM 2 -(UDC Room 236)
<b>PINNED</b> 3:30pm – 3:45pm	<b>B</b> BREAK -15 Minutes	
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> Crop Rotation: Healthier soil, Plants, Produce and Seeds <i>Speakers: Tomia MacQueen</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> Hibiscus and Gullah Geechee Culture <i>Speakers: Alissia Matthews</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> Policy Pathways for Climate Solutions, Beginning with Seed <i>Speakers: Julie Dawson</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> Seed Sanctuary Toolkit: Hands-On Native Grassland Seed Collection, Cleaning, and Propagation <i>Speakers: Lotus Chaney</i>	ROOM 2 -(UDC Room 236)
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> Soup Is the Stock of the People: Cooking, Sharing, and Reimagining Black Foodways Together <i>Speakers: D'Real Graham</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
<b>PINNED</b> 4:45pm – 5:00pm	<b>B</b> BREAK - 15 Minutes	
5:00pm – 5:45pm	<b>P</b> Growing Seed for Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance and Other Seed Companies <i>Speakers: Edmund Frost, Ira Wallace, Nate Kleinman, Bonnetta Adee</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
5:00pm – 5:45pm	<b>S</b> Cultivating Equity in Agriculture: Advancing Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers through Comprehensive Research and Youth Empowerment <i>Speakers: Kenisha Thomas</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
5:00pm – 5:45pm	<b>S</b> Non-Binary Botany <i>Speakers: Reggie Blackwood, Chris Keeve</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
5:00pm – 5:45pm	<b>S</b> Reclaiming Ancestral Knowledge: Reconnecting with Wild Foods <i>Speakers: Candise Jordan</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)
<b>PINNED</b> 6:00pm – 6:45pm	<b>OPEN MIC</b>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor

# Saturday Sessions

**B** BREAK   **K** KEYNOTE ADDRESS   **P** PANEL DISCUSSION   **S** SESSION

## MARCH 7 • SATURDAY

8:00am – 8:30am	<b>B</b> <b>OPENING: Conference Organizers &amp; Exhibitors Arrive</b>	
<b>PINNED</b> 8:30am – 9:00am	<b>B</b> <b>Continental Breakfast - ROOM 222 - Please eat only in areas designated for food and drinks. No food or drink is allowed in the Auditorium or in rooms with carpeted floors.</b>	ROOM 222- BREAKFAST & LUNCH PICK-UP ROOM
9:00am – 9:45am	<b>P</b> <b>PANEL: Issues in Pest Management</b> <i>Speakers: Nate Kleinman, Antonio Brazzelton, Julie Dawson, Tomia MacQueen, Elenor Lopez</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
9:00am – 9:45am	<b>S</b> <b>Farming in Ubuntu: Collective Land Stewardship, Food Sovereignty, and Community Care</b> <i>Speakers: Henrietta Isaboke, Brennan Standel</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
9:00am – 9:45am	<b>S</b> <b>Floriculture Is Food System Work (Even When It Isn't Edible)</b> <i>Speakers: Dee Hall Goodwin</i>	ROOM 2 -(UDC Room 236)
9:00am – 9:45am	<b>S</b> <b>From Fire to Fertility: Biochar, Soil Healing, and the Wisdom of Our Ancestors</b> <i>Speakers: Dr. Florence Anoruo</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
9:00am – 9:45am	<b>S</b> <b>Higher Education Opportunities in Agriculture</b> <i>Speakers: Alexis Yamashita, Eric Bishop von Wettberg, Antonio Brazzelton</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)
<b>PINNED</b> 9:45am – 10:00am	<b>B</b> <b>BREAK - 15 Minutes</b>	
10:00am – 11:15am	<b>P</b> <b>The Imperial Presumptions of Patents: Intellectual Property Regimes, Crop Diversity &amp; Habitual Colonizers</b> <i>Speakers: Chanda Robinson Banks, Garrett Gaddy-Lovelace, Alexis Yamashita</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
10:00am – 11:15am	<b>S</b> <b>Farm to Postpartum: Reclaiming the Seeded Lineage Between Land, Birth, and Nourishment</b> <i>Speakers: Femeika Elliott</i>	ROOM 2 -(UDC Room 236)
10:00am – 11:15am	<b>S</b> <b>Herbs 101: Rooted in Resilience, Flavor, and Tradition</b> <i>Speakers: Nyema Clark</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)
10:00am – 11:15am	<b>S</b> <b>Practicing Collective Economics in the Food System: The Ujamaa Bartering Market</b> <i>Speakers: Alicia Batts, Thomas Ruggles, Kalil White</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
10:00am – 11:15am	<b>S</b> <b>The Return to African Indigo: The Story of a Sacred Blue</b> <i>Speakers: Bernard Singleton</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
<b>PINNED</b> 11:15am – 11:30am	<b>B</b> <b>BREAK - 15 Minutes</b>	
<b>PINNED</b> 11:30am – 12:30pm	<b>K</b> <b>SATURDAY PLENARY Keynote Address by Vivien Sansour</b> <i>Speakers: Vivien Sansour</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
<b>PINNED</b> 12:30pm – 1:30pm	<b>SEED SWAP - LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED</b>	TBA
<b>PINNED</b> 12:30pm – 1:30pm	<b>B</b> <b>LUNCH - ROOM 222 Please eat only in areas designated for food and drinks. No food or drink is allowed in the Auditorium or in rooms with carpeted floors.</b>	ROOM 222- BREAKFAST & LUNCH PICK-UP ROOM
1:30pm – 2:15pm	<b>S</b> <b>Government Seedbanks: Their Importance, Accessibility, Problematic Nature, &amp; How to Make Them Better</b> <i>Speakers: Nathan Kleinman, Vivien Sansour</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
1:30pm – 2:15pm	<b>S</b> <b>Kool Kids Grow - a youth perspective to farming small and dreaming BIG.</b> <i>Speakers: Kendall Rae Johnson</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
1:30pm – 2:15pm	<b>S</b> <b>Microgreens as Medicine: A Practical Urban Growing Workshop for Community Health &amp; Resilience</b> <i>Speakers: Quandra Gray</i>	ROOM 2 -(UDC Room 236)
1:30pm – 2:15pm	<b>S</b> <b>The West End Free Market: Creating Access and Abundance in Durham, NC</b> <i>Speakers: Abijah Gattis</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
<b>PINNED</b> 2:30pm – 3:30pm	<b>P</b> <b>Keynote Panel: Strengthening Rural and Urban Agriculture Connections</b> <i>Speakers: Bonnetta Adeeb, Karen Washington, Nyema Clark, Collie Gradlick, Tomia MacQueen, Moderator</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
<b>PINNED</b> 3:30pm – 3:45pm	<b>B</b> <b>BREAK - 15 Minutes</b>	
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>P</b> <b>PANEL: Land Access</b> <i>Speakers: D'Real Graham, Alma Rocio Segoviano Basurto, Leah Penniman, Femeika Elliott</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<b>S</b> <b>Building a Black Natural Materials Economy: A Visioning Lab</b> <i>Speakers: Tobi Clement, Yoshi Jackson</i>	ROOM 1 (UDC Room 235)

3:45pm – 4:45pm	S <b>Putting Up the Harvest</b> <i>Speakers: Yvonne Muse Brown</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
3:45pm – 4:45pm	S <b>Seed Farming 101</b> <i>Speakers: Tomia MacQueen</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
3:45pm – 4:45pm	S <b>STEM in the Garden</b> <i>Speakers: Antonio Brazelton, Anna Gilbert Muhammad, Diane Fisher</i>	ROOM 2 - (UDC Room 236)
<b>B BREAK - 15 Minutes</b>		
<b>PINNED</b>		
4:45pm – 5:00pm		
5:00pm – 5:45pm	P <b>PANEL: Plant Fibers, Dyes &amp; Pigments</b> <i>Speakers: Zaneta Trent, Kathy Anderson, Bernard Singleton, Yoshi Jackson, Tobi Clement</i>	AUDITORIUM - First Floor
5:00pm – 5:45pm	P <b>PANEL: Youth Farming Education</b> <i>Speakers: Kenya Nicholas, Tomia MacQueen, Dara Cooper, Neshima Vitale-Penniman</i>	ROOM 4 - (UDC Room 238)
5:00pm – 5:45pm	S <b>Black Seed Keeping as Cultural Preservation, Resistance, &amp; Innovation</b> <i>Speakers: Bonnetta Adeeb, Carla J. Thomas McGinnis</i>	ROOM 2 - (UDC Room 236)
5:00pm – 5:45pm	S <b>Diversifying Your Farm Income and Offerings</b> <i>Speakers: Taykiera Hyman, Afraka Yates</i>	ROOM 3 - (UDC Room 239)
<b>BREAK</b>		
<b>PINNED</b>		
5:45pm – 6:00pm		
<b>CLOSING PLENARY</b>		
<b>PINNED</b>		
6:00pm – 6:30pm		AUDITORIUM - First Floor

## Visit the SEEDS & CULTURE EXHIBITORS & VENDORS

- ZForm
- UJAMAA SEEDS
- Rural Coalition
- Agri-Market-Tracker
- American Farmland Trust
- Common Wealth Seed Growers
- Prince George's Soil Conservation
- UMES – University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- MarketLink, Farmers Food Assistance Bureau
- RAFI-USA Rural Advancement Foundation International
- Center for Engagement Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH)

## Thanks to our Conference Steering Committee

Laretta Miles  
 Hassan Adeeb  
 Fatimah Hasan  
 Nate Kleinman  
 Kathy Anderson  
 Tomia MacQueen  
 Diane Fisher  
 Sharon Mallory  
 Cara Loriz  
 Anna Ellis Gilbert  
 Alma Seguviano  
 Garrett Gaddy Lovelace  
 Rick Carter  
 Bonnetta Adeeb  
 Karen Bowlding



## Introducing Our Keynote Speakers



**Brennan Washington**  
Phoenix Farms  
Southern SARE

Brennan Washington, co-owner and founder of Phoenix Gardens (<https://phoenixgardens.net>). Brennan and his wife, Gwendolyn, built Phoenix Gardens as a diversified, Certified Naturally Grown farm and education hub—grounded in sustainable production, community learning, and farmer-to-farmer support through workshops, field days, and training.

Brennan's leadership is a powerful match for our theme, "Rural and Urban Agriculture United," because his work bridges the full ecosystem that makes "unity" real: farms, markets, universities, and farmer-serving organizations. As the 1890 Land-Grant Liaison and Southeastern Outreach Coordinator for Southern SARE, he has helped connect limited-resource and minority farmers to research-backed tools, funding opportunities, and regional networks—

exactly the kind of cross-regional collaboration that strengthens both rural producers and urban growers. 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 was the principal architect and visionary behind Southeastern Regional Food Business Center. Mr. Washington had a long career in information technology management prior to starting his agricultural career.

His partnerships and service across organizations such as Georgia Organics, the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG), and farmer-market leadership efforts reflect a career devoted to growing practical pathways—from production to markets to mentorship—so communities can thrive on locally grown food



**Vivien Sansour**  
Palestine Heirloom Seed Library

Vivien Sansour is the founder of the Palestine Heirloom Seed Library. Vivien's work is internationally recognized for recovering threatened heirloom seeds and safeguarding the cultural stories they carry—returning seeds, memory, and foodways to the people who have long stewarded them.

Vivien Sansour's seed-saving work is a powerful fit for this conference because it demonstrates—at a global scale—how agriculture is inseparable from culture, and how seed stewardship strengthens community resilience in the face of disruption. The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library (<https://viviensansour.com/Palestine-Heirloom>) is dedicated to "recovering" heritage seeds and their

stories and putting them back into people's hands, affirming seed sovereignty as both a practical agricultural strategy and a living cultural practice.

Vivien's message resonates especially deeply: seed protection depends on relationships across landscapes—farmers, gardeners, seedkeepers, and educators sharing knowledge and seed across rural fields and urban growing spaces.

Vivien's example reminds us that resilient food systems are built when rural and urban communities collaborate to steward seed, preserve heritage, and keep local adaptation alive—one variety, one story, and one growing season at a time.

2026 SEEDS & CULTURE Breakfast  
provided by

# DREAMING OUT LOUD

INC.

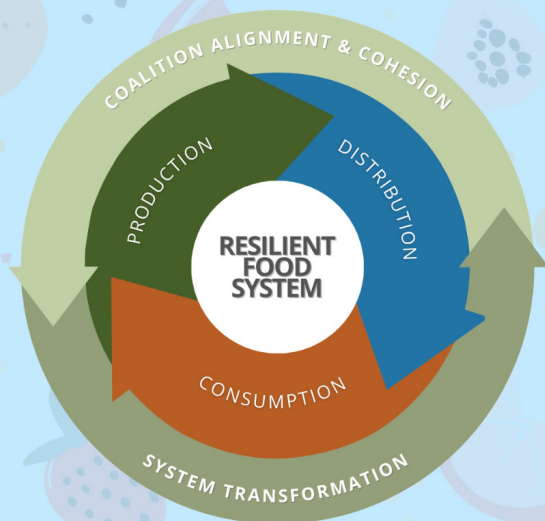
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# Union of Concerned Scientists



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<https://wwwcp.umes.edu/extension/small-farms-program/>

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# Ten years in. *Our legacy continues.*



For a decade, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture has preserved, shared, and celebrated the fullness of Black history.

From powerful stories of resilience to moments that shaped the nation, the museum stands as a place where history lives and where every visitor can see themselves reflected in the American story.

As we mark our 10th anniversary, we invite you to experience the journey.

*Join us in celebrating ten years.*

**[nmaahc.si.edu](http://nmaahc.si.edu)**



# CEEJH

Center for Engagement  
Environmental Justice  
and Health



## LocalHarvest



## SOUL FIRE FARM

ALL REVOLUTION IS BASED ON LAND



*coalición*

# RURAL

*coalition*



4DaSoil Collective (4DS) is a Black women-led Just Transition project that provides **fiscal sponsorship** and **technical assistance** through a holistic care lens. Growing the ability of food producers, land stewards and our climate cousins, to thrive through strengthened administrative infrastructure support, financial assistance, education, and connectivity.

Our technical assistance and workshop offerings are designed to reimagine infrastructure development, strengthen collective and community power, and shift efforts and systems toward a shared Just Transition experience. We meet you where you are by using storytelling, radical imagination, collective wisdom sharing, and participatory engagement.

Contact us!

✉ [info@4dasoil.org](mailto:info@4dasoil.org)

🌐 [www.4dasoil.org](http://www.4dasoil.org)



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# UJAMAA SEEDS



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