

# THE SEED CAST

FEBRUARY 2024, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



CHECK OUT OUR UJAMAA SEEDS CATALOG

## NEWS BRIEF

The Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service was part of the interagency effort to update the NWPL list. [READ MORE...](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

From webinars on sustainable farming practices to virtual farm tours, we have a lineup that's sure to inspire and educate. [READ MORE...](#)

## FOR THE CULTURE

From the Southern Soul Garden is the Navy Bean. [READ MORE...](#)

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Ira Wallace Seed School. [READ MORE...](#)

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Policy

Grandma's Hands

## Henry Blair – Black History

Written by Kathy Anderson



Farmer Henry Blair of Glen Ross, Maryland invented improvements in the machines for planting corn and cotton. The horse drawn corn and cotton planter systems had hoppers, shovels, plow, and wheels for making furrows or splitting the ground, regulate the distance at which seed was to be dropped, covering the seed, and leveling the earth. His work enabled

farmers to more efficiently plant corn and cotton. Inventor Blair, born in 1807 in Saluda South Carolina, was listed in the Patent Office Records as a “colored man”, which was the only listing of race in patent records. Mr. Blair was not enslaved and operated an independent business.

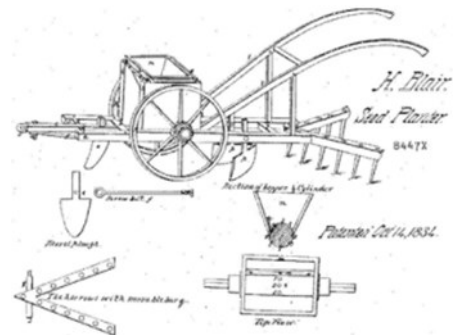
When Farmer Blair's patents were granted, United States law allowed patents to be granted to both free and enslaved men. However, in 1857, an enslaver challenged the courts for the right to claim ownership credit for an enslaved person's possessions and inventions. In 1858 patent law was changed to exclude the enslaved from patent eligibility. Inventor Blair passed in 1860. The law was amended in 1871 to grant all American men, regardless of race, the right to patent their inventions.

### Seed Planter

Patent No. X8447  
October 14, 1834

### Cotton Planter

Patent No. 15  
August 31, 1836



## UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE

A collective of emergent and seasoned growers  
[www.ujamaafarms.com](http://www.ujamaafarms.com)

CONTACT UCFA TODAY

NEWS BRIEF

**The final 2022 National Wetland Plant List (NWPL)**

The Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service was part of the interagency effort to update the NWPL list. The NWPL provides plant species wetland indicators used to determine a plant's probability to occur in wetlands or non-wetland areas as part of wetland determinations under the Clean Water Act. The rating categories are OBL—almost always occur in wetlands; FACW—usually occur in wetlands, but may occur in non-wetlands; FAC—occur in wetlands and non-wetlands; FACU—usually occur in non-wetlands, but may occur in wetlands; and UPL—almost always occur in non-wetlands. <https://wetland-plants.sec.usace.army.mil>



**African Gourd**  
Grown at the UCFA Demonstration Farm

**The Germinator - Lottie Collard**

Written by the Ujamaa Seed Collective

*Brassica oleracea*



While they have long been closely associated with Black culture in the US — a staple green in traditional Southern Black food-ways, and consequently popular in Black communities across the country. — the plant has its origins in Europe and the Mediterranean. It is generally considered the most cold-hardy of the cabbages (which also include broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, kale, and kohlrabi).

Collard greens, are probably the most culturally important crop for African Americans, as well as many who trace their roots to the American South. They're essentially open-headed cabbages (*Brassica oleracea*), with broad, smooth, almost waxy (and sometimes glossy) leaves that vary from green to blue-green to green-purple.

Visit <https://ujamaaseeds.com> for more on the Lottie Collard, and other collards.

Order seeds at [ujamaaseeds.com](https://ujamaaseeds.com)



**Grandma's Hands**

**CITRUS INFUSED CLEANING SPRAY**



- Place 3-4 citrus fruit peels in a glass jar.
- Fill jar with white vinegar.
- Cover with a plastic top.
- Set aside for 2 weeks and shake every 2 days or so.
- Strain and pour into spray bottle as a concentrate or dilute 1:1 with water into a spray bottle.

# Tapley Garden

Written by Sis Anna Gilbert-Muhammad, Northeast Seed Hub

The Food Access Team of NOFA/Massachusetts has worked with local community agencies across Massachusetts since 2016. Sis. Anna Muhammad, Food Access Director, has weaved tighter food security, food justice, soil health, and youth development into a vibrant community in Springfield. Those on the Food Access team live in the same community they serve, such as the Old Hill/Bay Street Community where Tapley Garden is located.

The Tapley Garden, located at the Tapley Court Apartments in Springfield, MA has been in operation since 2017. The garden serves as an experimental garden, a soil health demonstration site, garden store, and community gathering area where the families from the neighborhood discuss food, their families, and the latest neighborhood news. We use the garden to demonstrate how stewardship of the soil can change and improve soil and land conditions.

When the garden was first opened, the nutrient level was extremely low. Small insects, pollinators, and other animals were not present in the area. We developed the garden by mulching with leaves or aged wood chips;

focusing on what was naturally sourced so as not to pull too much from the local environment, as well as using no-till and bio-intensive growing. Over the next three years, the youth leaders, facilitated by NOFA/Mass staff, steadily increased the harvest. Youth working in Tapley Garden engaged with local experts and added mushrooms, plant ferments (weeds and fermented plants), indigenous micro-organisms, and compost. Subsequent soil testing results showed an increase in nutrients and the taste of the vegetables drastically improved.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many families that could not get to the grocery store or were experiencing financial struggles obtained their food from the local garden store. In five years, the garden has become a habitat for butterflies, bees, and multiple pollinators; a scene that was not in place when we started the garden. This past year, we harvested 2,700 pounds of food.



## UCFA Members at the 2024 Future Harvest Conference

Kathy Anderson and Bonnetta Adeeb  
Agroforestry, Agroecology, and Farming



## UPCOMING EVENTS

UCFA members will be participating in these upcoming conferences. Join us!

The District Department of Energy and Environment Rooting DC 2024 will be held March 9, 2024 at Anacostia High School. This is a free conference for urban farmers featuring educational workshops, networking space, and community building where local food-systems stakeholders will share knowledge and learn from one another.

[Rooting DC 2024 Tickets, Sat, Mar 9, 2024 at 9:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

Charles County Public Schools History, Industry, Technology and Science (HITS) Expo will be held March 9, 2024. This event with students and instructors will feature science and history projects and guests can take part in HITS-focused demonstrations, presentations, and activities. Steam Onward and Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance will participate.

**Coming Soon!:** Ujamaa Academy Workshops

## WWMND?

# What Would Mother Nature Do?

Written by Bonnetta Adeeb

**Have your heard of WWJD? Well, this is in that same vein.**

**Who:** Trudi Greissle Davidoff, developer of this modern strategy.

**What:** Planting seeds early during the winter months.

**When:** After Winter Solstice, any time after Christmas.

**Where:** Milk cartons or other plastic containers.

**Why:** Mimic Mother Nature by getting an early start in your garden. Seedlings started indoors can be problematic. On the otherhand, Nature drops her seeds at the end of the season and they re-appear as sprouts in the Spring after stratification which is a period of cold temperatures.



Trying to get my grandson, Jabari back to sleep at 4:30 AM, my mind reverted back to an online workshop I took during the Covid lockdown. It was taught by Linda Jones, of Elements of Nature, LLC and a Master Gardener extraordinaire, and who was brought to us by Prince George's Soil Conservation, District of Maryland.

## WINTER SOW - Here are the steps in a nutshell:

1. Select the right seeds. (Think about what plants are the 1<sup>st</sup> to sprout. Peas, herbs, flowers, shrubs. Golden snow peas, Broad Windsor Fava beans, Tall sugar snap, Arugula, Mustard, chard, beets, turnips, lettuce, etc.
2. Select the plastic growing container, one gallon milk jugs, prep and punch drainage holes.
3. Fill 1/3 of way with seed starting soil
4. Sow your seeds and place outside in a south facing location and snow is no hinderance
5. Wait for your sprouts to appear, then transfer them directly into your garden. They come ready and not a minute too early.
6. Voila! No more need for hardening off your seedlings. Mother Nature took care of it for you.

## For the Culture NAVY BEANS

Navy beans boast a fascinating lineage, tracing back to ancient periods when Indigenous peoples in the Americas first cultivated them.



## The Ira Wallace Seed School

During the Fall 2023 UCFA Convening, held in Accokeek, Maryland, UCFA members surprised founding UCFA grandma, known as Mama Ira Wallace, with an announcement of forming "The Ira Wallace Seed School".

Through the Ujamaa Academy and the Ira Wallace Seed Farming School, UCFA is providing instruction in seed farming and seed saving via online classes as well as on site face-to-face learning.

The inaugural class entitled "Introduction to Ethical Seed Farming," will take place online from March 2024 to November 2024. Please see more information at [ujamaafarms.com](http://ujamaafarms.com).

**Currently, applications are closed.**

# PRODUCER PROFILE

Written by Kathy Anderson

**Christian KEEVE** is a chaotic gardener, seedkeeper, and grower for UCFA. As a PhD Candidate in Geography at the University of Kentucky, they do work focused on agrobiodiversity conservation—the things that people do with seeds and the things that seeds may or may not do on their own.

Christian’s research and plant work has focused on historic seed collections, on farm conservation, and seed keeping, especially through local and regional geographies of seed grower networks and community breeding projects. Christian has also served on the leadership team for The Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project, a collaboration of Princeton University, Spelman College, and UCFA to collect oral histories of people who have worked to preserve Black and Indigenous seed and foodways through Appalachia and the Southeastern U.S. Their most recent publication is in the *Journal of Political Ecology*.

Along with Mark Rhodes, they co-authored "More-Than-Human Heritage: The Political Ecologies of the Paul Robeson Tomato," which analyzes the memorialization of Paul Robeson and this heirloom variety tomato. Having spent the past few years in Lexington, Kentucky, they have especially enjoyed working with local organizations including [Seedleaf](#), the [Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition](#) (KSEC), [Kentuckians for the Commonwealth](#) (KFTC) and [KY Tenants](#).

## Della Sorghum Patch



Photo Credit: Emmanuel Fields

# Little Harvests: Winter Gardening with Children

Written by Sonya Harris

If your climate has temperatures that average 50° and below your littles will love sowing our Izmir Turkish poppies and our Hungarian Blue Breadseed poppies which need approximately 2-4 weeks of cold weather to break dormancy (if your climate is warmer, you can refrigerate packs before planting).



**Encourage your young gardeners to keep a journal, weekly monitoring the growth of their poppy seeds and seedlings.**

Select an area for your seeds to grow near a window or doorway where children can observe growth. Work together with your child(ren) to clear an area of grass/weeds. Once clear, hand your child some seeds and let them surface sow or sprinkle the seeds. This even works great on a snowy day.

After selecting an area, let your children sprinkle seeds on top of the snow. They will settle on the soil after the snow melts. (Just be mindful of the area so you know where to expect the plants).

Journaling their observations can enhance their critical thinking skills as they document their hypotheses and results. It’s also important for youth to assess gardening “failures” with encouragement to evaluate their former attempt, reevaluate necessary changes for a new attempt, and the ongoing results.

Journaling is also a great way for children of all ages to develop their creativity and self-expression by creating stories, poetry, and drawings. This will provide an amazing way for them to connect with nature and grow their love of gardening while spending quality time together.



# UJAMAASEEDS.COM

Check Out Some of Our New Seeds for 2024



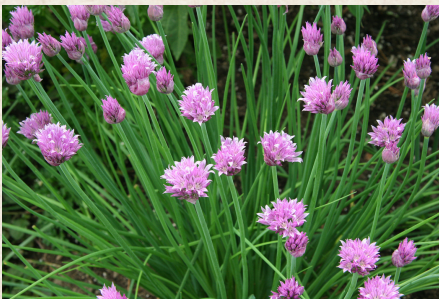
**YARROW**  
Summer Berries



**STRAWFLOWER**  
Copper Red



**SQUASH**  
Nanticoke



**CHIVES**  
Wild



**JICAMA**  
Thai



**SWEET PEA FLOWER**  
Cupani



**PERSIMMON TREE**  
Japanese



**BROCCOLI**  
Piracicaba



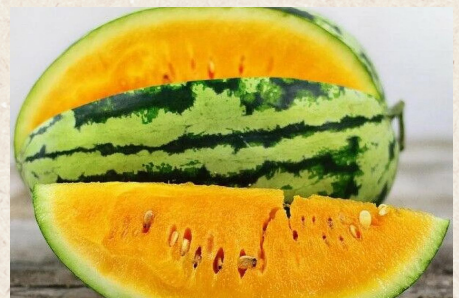
**ROSELLE**  
Thai



**JAPANESE GREENS**  
Norabouna



**PEPPER**  
Early Jalapeno



**WATERMELON**  
Orangeglo