

THE SEED CAST

DECEMBER 2023, VOLUME 1



COMING SOON! UJAMAA SEEDS CATALOG AND UJAMAA ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

NEWS BRIEF

USDA Unveils Updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map : USDA ARS)
[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 Morris Heading Collard.
[Read more...](#)

UCFA PROJECTS

The Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project is a collaboration of Princeton University, Spelman College, and the UJAMAA to collect oral histories
[Read more...](#)

Producer Profile

Little Harvests

The Germinator

Policy

Grandma's Hands

UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE (UCFA)

“

We work to provide more opportunities and support for growers from historically oppressed and marginalized communities. We strive to bridge the gap between growers and seed companies.

Steam Onward, a Maryland-based 501c3 organization operates UCFA. Our goal is to bridge the gap between growers and seed companies.

Heirloom seed farming can be a lucrative business opportunity for farmers, gardeners, and growers as demand far outstrips supply. Farmers and gardeners can make a profit from seed farming on just a small plot of land. Seed farmers grow crops in a way that enhances the quality and maximizes the quantity of plants for the purpose of selling the seeds to other farmers and gardeners. Growers of flowers, herbs, vegetables, grains, legumes, and fodder crops all rely on seed farmers for their planting material.

As a community of creatives, our members include growers, makers, teachers, and bakers. We host member value-added products and UCFA gear

on our **Gifts and Goods** page and promote these wonderful items on social media.

We see the need for increased diversity in farming in general, with a specific focus on increasing diversity in the \$15 billion dollar seed industry. We cultivate and distribute heirloom, and non-GMO, culturally meaningful seeds for food, healing, and textiles. [Read more...](#)



UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE

A collective of emergent and seasoned growers
www.ujamaafarms.com

DONATE

A Taste of Home

GARDEN FRESH FOR THE HOLIDAYS Thanksgiving has passed and the season of winter celebrations is just beginning. I am so excited to be celebrating the holidays with so much food from our own gardens and farm. We have enough collards, spinach, kale, arugula, lettuce, Chinese greens, cabbage, carrots, beets, and winter radishes for the holidays and to take us nicely through the “Persephone Days,” the period from November 21 through January 21 when the light is so low that plants don’t grow much here in Virginia.

We also have plants nestled under spun polyester row cover, tucked into cold frames, and cozy in our green-houses to keep our table well supplied if fickle weather gets the best of our outdoor crops. Let’s take a walk around the gardens and pantry to see what’s looking good for the Holiday table.

A mix of frost sweetened baby greens and lettuces is one of our favorites and will be the stars of many winter hoop house salads. A mixture of colorful, hardy kales stay tender, sweet and delicious under cover all winter if you keep the larger leaves harvested. We find that an easy task on our farm. Collards, Brazilian style, thinly sliced then quickly sautéed with olive oil and minced garlic .

Parsley and sage are evergreen in our herb garden and add great taste to homemade cornbread stuffing. We like to grind our own corns like Bloody Butcher corn or Looney Dent corn. People always ask about Egyptian onions in the summer when they are falling over with loads of topsets, but for eating they are best as green onions during winter and into the spring. We harvested our outdoor roselle with the first frost, but we

still have the red flowers, actually the calyxes, dried in the pantry for delicious healing tea all winter and frozen to make homegrown “Florida Cranberry” sauce. This southern alternative to cranberry sauce was common in Florida during the early 1900s before expanding rail traffic crashed the local roselle industry.

This year we have a number of dried beans, heirloom Kebarika from Kenya, Tiger Eye Bush, that make a beautiful and filling mixed bean salad. African Black-eyed peas make a great side dish, and can be mixed with cubed root vegetables like parsnips, carrots, or turnips, for an entirely seasonal dish. Mix two different colored southern peas like Rice Pea, Queen Anne Blackeye, or Iron and Clay with chopped red, yellow, and green peppers for an eye stopping side salad dressed with olive oil, vinegar and fresh chopped parsley or cilantro. Fresh roasted roots, baked sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie round out our fresh from the garden menu. Thanks for stopping by and we hope you’ll come back often to see what we’ve got growing and cooking.



MAMA IRA WALLACE



Thai Red Roselle



Florida Cranberry Sauce Roselle Hibiscus



Walking Onion

UCFA

With numerous individual members, institutional partners, and champions, we promote and advance food equity, and increasing the number of BIPOC growers of seeds.

Our endeavors also include conducting workshops, training, and special events hosted by subject matter experts in heirloom seed cultivation, collards, sorghum, and farm works. We partner with universities on culturally meaning seeds and food research, including the **Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project**, and we are collaborating on the **Heirloom Collard Project**. Our efforts include developing emerging farmers and advancing seasoned farmers nationally and internationally. We are also excited to provide adolescent and college age youth with training and experiences in sowing, planting, growing, selling garden and farm products, and developing community gardens as they develop to meet their education goals and requirements. Overall, we are committed to the collection, preservation, advancement, and dissemination of agricultural and environmental practices that will benefit and sustain current and future generations.



NEWS BRIEF

Plant Hardiness Zone Map
By Kathy Anderson

In November 2023, the US Department of Agriculture released USDA Unveils Updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map: USDA ARS a new version of the Plant Hardiness Zone Map. The map is used by growers and gardeners to decide which plants would thrive at a given location. The map can be found at this [link](#).

The new map has 13 zones which are divided into "a" and "b" half-zones in a geographic information system interactive format. It is noted that a paper version is not available and the map can be **downloaded**.



TOMIA MACQUEEN is an educator, farmer and master gardener who specializes in edible gardens. She produces organically and ethically raised pastured poultry, lamb, and vegetables with a focus on humane animal husbandry and policies on her farm.

Wildflower Farm also is host to educational sustainability and homesteading workshops for adults and children. Tomia is a farmer mentor and partners with local schools and organizations in youth and young adult programs such as the **Outdoor Equity Alliance Agrihood Programs** and **Princeton University Seed Farm**. She is also the Founder of Dance for LIFE (Love, Inspiration, Faith and Empowerment), Gardening for LIFE, and Founder of the Healing Waters Farming Project. Photo by Kathy Anderson

The Germinator - Njama Njama

Written by the Ujamaa Seed Collective



Photo Credit
True Love Seeds

PLANT DESCRIPTION: (*Solanum scabrum*) Most commonly known in English as "garden huckleberry," njama njama is the name used in Cameroon and other West, Central, and East African countries, as well as among many Africans in the diaspora, for this special plant in the nightshade family (Solanaceae). But while these plants are laden with berries, most African people grow them for their delicious and nutritious leaves. Indeed, for many people, njama njama (which is more or less pronounced "jahma-jahma") is a staple food. It has a long history of medicinal use as well, and its berries can also be used for dye.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE: Njama njama leaves are high in antioxidants, protein, beta carotene, vitamin E, folic acid, and ascorbic acid. It has medium values of calcium and iron.

FOOD PREP: In Cameroon, njama njama leaves are served in a stew with corn fufu, but many people prep and serve it in soups or as a stir fry green. It's a bitter green, but adds great flavor to many dishes and can be a replacement for kale or Swiss chard in recipes. The berries are used in preserves, jams, and pies. Only ripe berries can be eaten.

GROWING TIPS: Grow as you would tomatoes, starting indoors a few weeks before the last frost date, then planting out once the soil warms up. Leave plenty of space, because these can become sprawling plants four or five feet wide. These plants thrive in warm weather. Grow alongside clover as a companion to alleviate pest pressure. Days to maturity: 30-45

*Limited supply

We are thrilled to offer a special population of njama njama collected and grown by Ujamaa grower Ergibe Boyd, an Eritrean-American Immigrant farmer based in southern Maryland.



Harvested at the UCFA seed farm



Grandma's Hands



CLOVE MOUTH RINSE

Soak a tablespoon of cloves in a 16 oz. glass bottle of water overnight. Strain and store in a glass bottle. Use after brushing teeth.

UCFA PROJECTS

Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project

Written by Kathy Anderson



Princeton University interns Nathalie Charles (Oshun) and Justin Zhang interviewing Ira Wallace at Acorn Farm in July 2023 for the Oral History Project and The Heirloom Collard Project.

The Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project is a collaboration of Princeton University, Spelman College, and the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance to collect oral histories of people who have worked to preserve Black and Indigenous seed and foodways through the Southeastern United States and Appalachia. **Students and faculty** continue to work across six sites over two years with communities to interview and archive the stories of farmers, gardeners, chefs, community organizers, local historians and others who have been actively sustaining rich farming, culinary, and medicinal traditions. The project launched in the summer of 2023 and to date, approximately 70 successful interviews were performed. The project is supported by the Princeton Alliance for Collaborative Research and Innovation, an initiative of the Office of the Dean for Research at Princeton University.

Please enjoy this wonderful video for the **Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project**. The Project is looking to build resources to expand geographically and works through the Heirloom Collard Project to determine the future of the project and how it could better serve community work. We'd love to hear stories of people working to preserve Black and Indigenous seed and foodways in the Southeastern United States and Appalachia! Please reach out to us [here](#).



For the Culture

MORRIS HEADING CABBAGE

Bred by the Morris Plant Farm of Hasty, North Carolina, 'Morris Heading' was introduced around 1919 and is also known as Carolina Cabbage collards.



Farm Bill Notes

Written by Kathy Anderson

The 2018 Farm Bill is extended until September 2024.

Legislators are considering the distribution of funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 that funded climate-smart agriculture and forestry, greenhouse gas mitigation, and carbon sequestration. Farm bills are generally reauthorized every five years and typically include safety nets, infrastructure, land conservation, health, nutrition, research, technology, and jobs.

On the table are prioritization of rural farmers and residents, forest management to reduce fires, reduction in utilization work requirement exemptions, limiting National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews, developing natural and energy resources, and digital asset market frameworks. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service has a listing of recent **research**, which may be helpful in crafting your thoughts on farm bill concerns.

Be sure to research various sources of in weighing the benefits or detriments to your farm and foodways community.

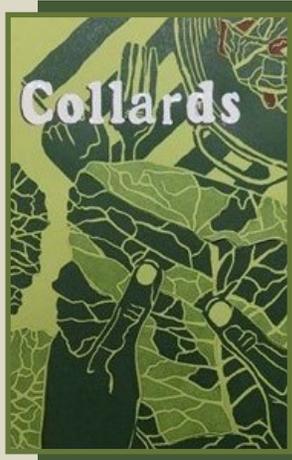
COLLARDS

Written by Kathy Anderson and Hasaan Adeeb

We are screaming collards! This 84-page compilation of collard knowledge, stories, and verses is the first issue of *The Utopian Seed Project's* series of zine publications. *Collards* is a beautiful collection of collard focused art, essays, poetry, and recipes. The cover is by Chicago's Alexandra Antoine.

Years of ancestral narration, farm and garden experience, and academic research are prepared in a neat green well-seasoned package of chapters including Cutting Greens, On the Hunt for Heirloom Seeds in the Collard Belt, Grief and Growing: An Immigrant Seed keeper's Story of Cultivating Connection, A Farmer's Learning Curve, and On Verse, Vegetable, and Rhetorical Violence.

Collards is an inspiration for new and experienced growers as well as those who enjoy the various family recipes for satisfying greens. Take in some History in Seed Catalogs, The Heirloom Collard Project, and the Purple Tree Collard. Read up, sit down, and enjoy *COLLARDS* with a hearty bowl of your forebears' ingredients and your modern twist on collards.



Purchase

RECENT HAPPENINGS!



UCFA was a partner in the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, Seeding Our Cultural Foods Gathering on December 9, 2023 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The event featured culture keeping, technical seed keeping knowledge, seed story sharing, and community building with seed keepers!

Members Bonnetta Adeeb, Christian Keeve, and Nate Kleinman conducted workshops on seed cleaning and provided opportunities for participants to clean sorghum, basil, collards, and mung bean. Also, Chris Keeve introduced the Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project and encouraged creating an oral history project in the Midwest while speaking about introduction of the project, implementation, and gathering the stories of farmers, gardeners, chefs, community organizers, local historians and others who have been actively sustaining rich farming, culinary, and medicinal traditions.

Little Harvests: Winter Gardening with Children

Written by Sonya Harris

Winter gardening with children can be a fun and educational activity for the whole family. It's a great way to get your kids outside and teach them about nature and the environment. Whether planting winter vegetables and herbs or just decorating for the season, there are plenty of ways to make winter gardening creative and educational. Here are some tips for getting started:



- Start with a plan. Before you begin gardening, sit down with your kids and discuss ideas for what you'd like to grow, which plants will do best in your climate, and what kind of decorations you'd like to add.
- Get creative. Winter gardening isn't just about growing vegetables. You can also get creative with decorations and items to add to your garden – like pinecones, winter berries, and even snowmen.
- Choose the right plants. Some vegetables and herbs can thrive in cold weather and make great additions to a winter garden. Some ideas include kale, spinach, parsley, and chives.
- Keep it interesting. Have your kids help research different plants, water and feed them, and keep watch for pests or diseases. You can also have fun making bird feeders or painting rocks to decorate your garden.

Winter gardening with children can be a great way to bring the family together and teach kids about nature and the environment. With a little bit of planning and creativity, you'll be able to create a winter garden that's both beautiful and educational.

The Front Porch

Written by Justice Madden and Christian Keeve

What seeds, real or metaphorical, did you plant this season? What did you harvest? What came to fruit in your life? As the seasons unfold, we at The Front Porch (TFP) engaged in a reflective journey, considering both the tangible and symbolic seeds planted and harvested. Throughout the year, we posed these questions to invite people in the space to think deeply and write freely about the seeds they sow and the harvest they were hoping to bring into fruition. The introspective exercise served as an opportunity to share the nuanced stories of our days, a blend of gospel and blues; an invitation to reflect together on our individual, often interior lives, listen, and affirm one another. Together, we responded to the prompt in various forms of prose and poetry. In its inaugural year, The Front Porch has become a sanctuary for creativity and community, fostering connection through the art of reading, writing and discussion. We delved into the realm of physical and metaphorical seeds, those representing our heart's desire and our mind's eye. Through this shared exploration, we were reminded that

our experiences spanning grief, joy, hopes, success, and failures are integral in contributing to our individual and collective development.

Contemplating with the journey of the seed is an acknowledgement that we are not alone. Many have come before us, paving the way for our endeavors, just as we strive to do for those who will touch the Earth well after our time. Conversations held within The Front Porch highlight the power in archiving the everyday, emphasizing why our stories matter. We extend an invitation to our Ujamaa Community to visit us at The Front Porch, not only share our stories, creativity, and ideas but to preserve that wealth of knowledge, ensuring it is passed to others. Now, we turn to you to ask these questions: What seeds would you like to plant with us? What you would like to read, write, and discuss on The Front Porch?

We offer this haiku as an expression of values:

deep in fertile soil,
seeds brave the harsh world,
thriving—
collective wholeness.

To stay in the loop about future gatherings, and share any ideas, schemes, or plans that we can collectively nurture into fruition, reach out to Justice via email jmad10@vt.edu.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Future Harvest 25th Annual Conference will be held January 18-20, 2024 in College Park, Maryland. The conference features keynote speakers and special sessions by Kevin Atticks, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, Erika Allen, Urban Growers Collective, and Julia Shanks, The Farmer's Edge, intensive workshops, tradeshow exhibitors, networking, and facilitated farmer meetups. UCFA members Bonnetta Adbeeb and Kathy Anderson will be presenting.

The Virginia Association for Biological Farming and Small Farm Outreach Program Summit/Annual Conferences will be held January 19-21, 2024 in Roanoke, Virginia. The conference features keynote speakers Jean-Martin (JM) Fortier and Niaz Dorry, intensive workshops, author book signings, and tradeshow exhibitors.

Coming Soon!

Ujamaa Seeds Catalog and Ujamaa Academy Workshops

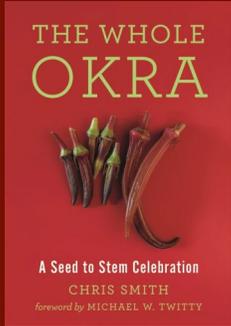
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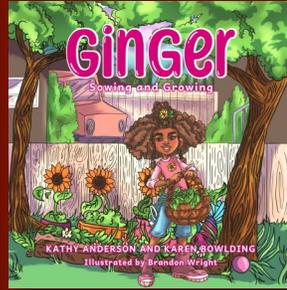
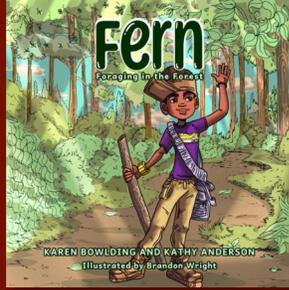
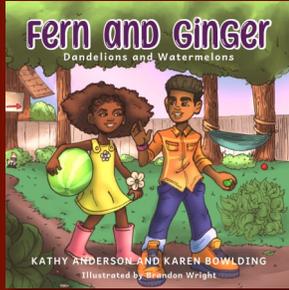
Happy Holidays

VALUE ADDED GIFTS AND GOODS MADE BY UCFA MEMBERS

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A Seed to Stem Celebration



CHILDREN'S BOOKS
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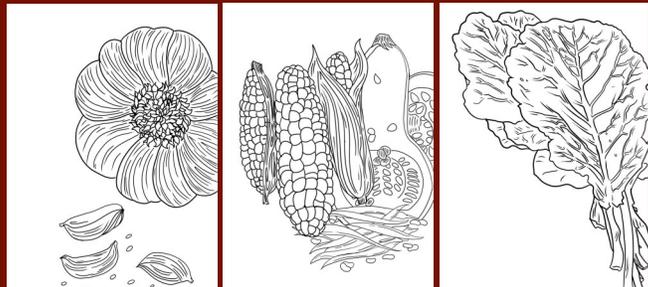


UJAMAA SEEDS
GIFT CERTIFICATE



HAND-CARVED LINO PRINT CARD

UJAMAA LONG T-SHIRT



BLANK NOTE CARDS (CHILDREN CAN COLOR)



TOPSY TURVY DOLL
KENTE-BLUE



UJAMAA
HOODIE

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Hurry, these discounts expire on 12/32/23.



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TINCTURE - DON'T BUG ME!
Soothing Plantain Oil



TINCTURE
WAS THAT POISON IVY?
Jewelweed Vinegar



TINCTURE - COMFREY
CALENDULA SALVE



TINCTURE - MUSCLE
SOOTHER OIL

TINCTURE - MUSCLE
SOOTHER OIL