



2023 ANNUAL REPORT
THE PLANT INITIATIVE

BUILDING A MOVEMENT TO
INCREASE RESPECT FOR PLANTS



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2023 was the third full year of The Plant Initiative and we experienced a lot of growth in our programming this year as is described in this report. This included online events, grants, our monthly e-mail newsletter, podcasts, a report, social media, and collaboration with Networking with Plants in the Anthropocene.

We have made some real progress toward our mission of building a movement to increase respect for plants through advocacy, collaboration and partnerships, and education and outreach. Many more people are starting to take the issue of how we relate to plants seriously and thoughtfully.

As an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff, we have done a lot with a modest budget. Thank you for all of the support and interest you have shown over the past year and look forward to more progress in 2024!

Paul Moss
Executive Director



Board members as of December 2023

Giovanni Aloï

Sue Fager

Walter Furness

Mya Hummel

Craig Miller, Treasurer

Paul Moss, Chair & Executive Director

Laura Pustarfi, Secretary

August Stolba, Vice Chair

2023 Financial summary

Income

Income from grants & corporate giving \$2,500.00

Income from individual donors \$6,294.01

Total income \$8,794.01

Expenses

Bank charges and transaction fees \$63.23

Grants \$6,500.00

Internet and online services \$1,206.52

Minnesota Charitable Registration \$25.54

Post Office Box \$113.00

Postage \$13.20

Printing \$137.77

Total expenses \$8,059.26

Assets

Total cash balance December 31, 2023 - \$6,931.23

2023 Donors

Names of Individual Donors

Individual names omitted for online version

Foundations & Corporate Donors

On Shore Foundation

The PAJWELL Foundation

Whole Systems Foundation



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In the past year, the organization has really grown! Here are some highlights:

- The Plant Initiative sponsored three free online programs: *Understanding Plant Intelligence with Paco Calvo and Natalie Lawrence* (April 19, 2023), *Vegetal Entwinements: Giovanni Aloï and Michael Marder in Conversation* (September 19, 2023), and *The Plant Thieves: A Conversation with Prudence Gibson* (November 29, 2023). Registration for these events totaled over 1,500.
- The Plant Initiative sent out 12 informative and comprehensive monthly e-mail newsletters full of listings of events, resources, opportunities, and action items to over 2,000 subscribers.
- We recorded two podcast episodes which are posted on The Plant Initiative's YouTube channel. On June 23, 2023, board member Sue Fager had a conversation with Joan Maloof of the Old-Growth Forest Network. On October 13, 2023 she interviewed Mari Margil of the Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Plant Initiative awarded 13 grants of \$500 each in October 2023** to organizations working to increase respect for plants, encourage ethical behavior toward plants, and/or to support development of an effective movement toward these goals. Grants were provided to:

Center for Biological Diversity (Tucson, AZ) to support the Center's efforts to protect Florida's endangered ghost orchids, which are being rapidly wiped out due to habitat loss, poaching, and a changing climate, with the grant supporting litigation and advocacy for this plant and the swamp ecosystems where this orchid lives.

Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights (Spokane, WA) to support the Center's work with Tribal Bands in Minnesota to protect the Rights of Nature, including the rights of manoomin (wild rice), by contracting with an Ojibwe attorney who will conduct legal research and legislative drafting involving the White Earth Band and other Tribal Bands.

Earth Law Center (Durango, CO) to create a model law concerning the rights of culturally significant plant species, which would be uploaded to the Earth Law Portal hub, including draft model text that can serve as a starting point for any community, NGO, or government looking to recognize the rights of plant species.

Fungi Foundation (Brooklyn, NY) to facilitate the Foundation's participation in the 2023 More Than Human Rights (MOTH) Conference in Chile through covering essential travel and accommodation expenses, which will help to foster more profound integration of fungal conservation into the broader Rights of Nature movement, as well as to amplify awareness and advocacy for the symbiotic relationship between fungi and plants thereby strengthening the nexus between fungi and plant advocacy.

Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (San Francisco, CA) to support GARN's work to protect the Amazonia Shihuahuaco tree in Peru, which faces imminent extinction, with GARN's International Tribunal for the Rights of Nature raising the alert for violation of the rights of this tree and calling for the Peruvian government to update the CITES list so that its timber extraction can be regulated or prohibited.

The Kerulos Center for Nonviolence (Jacksonville, OR) to promote respect for plants through developing a four-part webinar tentatively entitled *Plant Voices: Guides to Understanding Nonviolent Living* to be held in 2024, as well as creating a short educational video illustrating how vegans can put respect for plant agency and sovereignty into practice in everyday living and activism.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

The Land Institute (Salina, KS) to support the Institute's foundational work in perennial grain crop research and education, which furthers the transition to diverse, polyculture cropping systems that hold the potential to bring grain crop agriculture to a level of ecological function on par with native grasslands and other natural ecosystems, sustaining human and plant needs within an ecospheric context.

Native Seeds/SEARCH (Tucson, AZ) to support the distribution of free packets of rare and endangered native crop seed varieties to Indigenous individuals and families living in or belonging to tribes from the US Southwest Region and/or northwest Mexico through the Native American Seed Request Program, which helps to conserve and promote the arid-adapted crop diversity of the Southwest in support of sustainable farming and food security.

Old-Growth Forest Network (Easton, MD) to help support the creation of a *Choices in Forest Management guide*, which will educate forest owners on the different forest management practices they can prescribe to their woodlands, including describing management options that qualify a forest for recognition in the Old-Growth Forest Network, with the grant helping to support costs of researching, designing, editing and printing the guide.

Re:wild (Austin, TX) to protect Jamaica's critically endangered Grey Birch of which there are believed to be fewer than 50 individuals left, with the grant helping to support costs associated with mapping and recording the locations of the trees, contributing to the ultimate goal of developing a species conservation action plan with local stakeholders.

Seacology (Berkeley, CA) in support of Seacology's seagrass project on Sucia Island in Washington State, which aims to replant 0.12 acres of native eelgrass while including Indigenous youth in eelgrass education and long-term restoration, with the funds helping to cover the expense of collecting seeds and storing them over the winter.

WildEarth Guardians (Santa Fe, NM) in support of WildEarth Guardians' Forest Fungi campaign that is working to bring forward the importance of mycorrhizae in forest resiliency, and ensure that the US Forest Service adopts policies and practices that restore and protect the mutualistic associations of fungal species in forest ecosystems.

The WILD Foundation (Boulder, CO) to help provide permaculture planning and implementation support to the 15 communities living within the Yawanawa Indigenous territory in the state of Acre, Brazil, with the grant specifically covering the cost of a permaculture expert and plan with one of the communities, which can lead to increased protection of the rainforest as Yawanawa communities actively participate in traditional, sustainable cultivation practices.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Initiative continued our collaboration with Networking with Plants in the Anthropocene to create a broader network internationally of those working for a future that is more respectful of plants. In 2023, we held two free online networking events with a total registration of over 200 as well as helping to support a new online plant networking site on Hylo.
- Our site on X (Twitter) grew to over 2,500 followers and our Facebook page and YouTube channel continue to grow. We also added an Instagram site this year.
- We published our first report, the 20-page *Toward a Plant Advocacy Movement*, available for free download online.
- Eight talented members are serving on the board of directors as of December 31, 2023
- We raised close to \$8,800 to support our work from both individual donations as well as foundations.

Thank you again for your support and interest in The Plant Initiative!

We are grateful to Betsey Crawford of The Soul of the Earth (<https://thesouloftheearth.com/>) for generously allowing us to use her photographs in this report

Cover Page Catalina Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus catalinae*) Malibu, California

Page 1 photo - Oregon checkerbloom (*Sidalcea oregana*) Sierra Nevada Mountains, California

Page 2 photo - California mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) El Sobrante, California

Page 3 photo - Fairy lantern (*Calochortus albus*) California

Page 6 photo - Leopard lily (*Lilium pardalinum*) with Monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*) California

Page 7 photo - Baneberry (*Actea rubra*) Settlers Grove of Ancient Cedars, Idaho

Design Donated by Mya Hummel

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