

free



RIGHT
TO
FOOD
ZINE

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Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House
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 Unceded Coast Salish Land & Waters

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
 Community Engagement

folding momos
 Shreetika Singh



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Right to Food Zine's mission is to promote the human right to food that is healthy, nutritious, affordable, and presented with dignity.

Our voices reflect the diversity that is the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Our articles, research, and recipes speak to the DTES residents, social justice groups, and beyond. We inform our readers, while fostering the desire to know more and to become more engaged. As part of the DTES community, we strive to be a tool for community-building.





by: Sarah Bradshaw

Those who save seeds for a long time are experiencing the joy of seeing their passion becoming increasingly popular. What was growing faster each year has now exceeded the exponential rate of growth we all predicted. The 2 year “lockdown” response to Covid-19 resulted in an increased interest in gardening, with a focus on food production and food security.

Seeds of Diversity, a Canadian Charity which has existed for decades decided to waive membership fees in response to this growing community of gardeners. The result is that their member directory contains over 1000 new members, all of whom are both seeking heritage seeds and offering their own for trade. This rate of growth was a surprise and resulted in an increase in funding and donations.

Aside from maintaining an annual directory of seeds available to members, SoD sponsors many programs which further the breeding of open pollinated seeds and the continuation of heritage varieties. This increase in membership will have a ripple effect throughout the entire organization.

Despite the lack of live events local communities have maintained seed libraries and methods of exchanging seeds. The Shuswap Seed Library doubled the varieties of seeds which they offer in the past 2 years. The number of people who were interested in beginning a garden often created long wait times for resources available to them.

The Seed Swaps return this year and there will be ample opportunities for gardeners to acquire the seeds they need to grow a productive garden. However, in order to save the resulting seeds and to ensure they remain true to type will take more planning than many home gardeners are aware of.

This is the time of year one must plan their garden and put the time into deciding what to plant and where to plant it. This can be tricky enough with the considerations of sunlight, wind direction, space available, and individual preferences. Adding the considerations for seed saving truly takes it to the next level and can often become complicated enough that it can take a while to get it right.

Keep in mind that our food crops were largely developed from wild plants which were hardy and well adapted to their environment, but were seldom the tasty, delicious producers we are striving for in our gardens. If left to randomly cross pollinate they will ultimately revert to these hardy survivor progenitors and will not be the food crops you desire.

Planning for seed saving means one has to consider how many plants one needs to make sure there will be genetic diversity among the seeds. Having only one or two plants will result in a very limited gene pool. The plants must all be grown from seed, not taken as cuttings from one or two plants. These cuttings are clones of the parent plant and will not offer genetic diversity at all.

One must also consider cross pollination distances. The distance one needs between

crops to ensure seed purity is called “isolation distance” The range of this distance varies widely from species to species. In theory, self pollinating plants like tomatoes and beans need a few yards, but they will be assisted by helpful pollinators and if planted too close they will cross and the resulting seeds will carry traits from both. This is not the result you want. So even they should be planted in separate gardens, or in beds far removed from each other. Insect pollinated plants can be isolated from each other by distance, and also by “block planting”. Block planting is planting one variety in a very large patch so the insects will tend to settle into the patch and load up on pollen and return to the hive without going into other beds of blossoming plants.

Wind pollinated crops like corn have such large isolation distances that they can be very difficult to grow out while maintaining seed purity. We have all heard stories of generous farmers giving their special corn seeds to all their neighbors, so good corn would be available to all. It also ensured that the farmers corn would get the correct pollen for maintaining it.

One must also be aware of closely related plants which will cross with your crops. Orach will cross with Lamb's Quarters, Amaranth will cross with Red-rooted Pigweed, Broccoli will cross with Cabbage, and vine plants can be really hard to contain in pollination.

It's a lot to take into account, so I encourage you to start small...Grow your favorite lettuce (and no others) and let it go to seed. Grow only one type of pepper and collect the seeds. Learn one or two ways to do it right this year. You can add to your knowledge and grow it along with the gardens you plant. Each year you will do more.



ALIVE Indigenous Food Program

Grandview Park - Wednesdays, noon to 4pm
Oppenheimer Park - Fridays, noon to 4pm

*Meals are served up twice weekly
until the end of March.*

By Ian Marcuse

Guided by our values

Community based and community first
accountability

Youth Driven and Empowered to build healthy
young lives

Respect and honouring for our food cultures,
traditions, and ourselves

Self-determination in defining our food system
based on culturally adapted Indigenous foods

Giving and sharing our food is a means of
building community well-being and uplifting
Indigenous culture

Place and belonging through food that
connects all people to community and supports

Food as Sacred and a gift which in return
we have a responsibility to nurture a healthy
relationship with the land, plants and animals
that provide us with our food

Healing using good food to nourish our bodies,
spirit, emotions, cultural and social well-being

Food is healing, food is community building. Food not only nourishes our bodies, but also feeds our spiritual, cultural, emotional, and social needs and desires. Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement (ALIVE) along with Northwest Indigenous Council (NWIC) are currently working with an amazing group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in the building and strengthening

At the ALIVE Indigenous Food Program, these youth do all the food preparation and have been cooking up healthy meals including BBQ Coast Salish salmon and cod, fish soup, clams, bannock and chili, local seaweed, salads and fruits, and local plant teas and serving this free to all community members.

Reviving and strengthening our urban Indigenous food system is part of a larger strategy to decolonize from the dominant agri-corporate food systems that are so destructive to our community well-being.

The ALIVE community feasts are a way to both connect with the community as well as give back... Food builds community and as one of our youth said... this is about sharity not charity.

Rather, these feasts embody the full set of values expressed and which are central to a strengthening of an urban Indigenous food system. Along with the feasting is the opportunity for community to gather and share in cultural activities such as

drumming and lahal stick games.

In addition, the youth have many great food systems ideas. They are keen to help support improved access to traditional foods here in Vancouver including learning about barter and trade, sourcing of Indigenous foods and strengthening Indigenous food distribution, storage and preservation systems, learning to hunt, fish and gather, as well as engage in more political action that protects food sources, such as actions to ban of fish farms.

Secondly, the youth are keen to learn, build their food skills and share knowledge of many food and culinary traditions, i.e. fish canning and smoking, medicinal plant knowledge, nutrition, and traditional food recipes, and gardening, and finally, the youth are interested in building work skills and to explore entrepreneurship in food systems.

Towards this goal, we recently took over a café and commercial kitchen where the youth are learning food cooking skills and catering. This storefront space also could be used to help support other Indigenous food producers in marketing and selling their products... for example.

Moreover, participating in the ALIVE Indigenous food program for the youth has been a very positive experience. A number of youth have remarked that the food program is giving them a greater sense of purpose and meaning when previously they were just partying and not doing much with their lives. The youth feel they are contributing to the community and seem to be having fun.....

So, if you have not already checked out these community meals come on down! The food is delicious. Be sure to check the ALIVE Facebook page for all community feast updates and locations through 2022.

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER + CUCUMBER RAITA

By Mildred Grace German

Roasted Cauliflower:

- 1 cauliflower head, chopped to bite pieces
- 3 tbsp. garlic powder
- 3 tbsp. Olive Oil
- 1 fresh lemon
- salt & pepper to taste

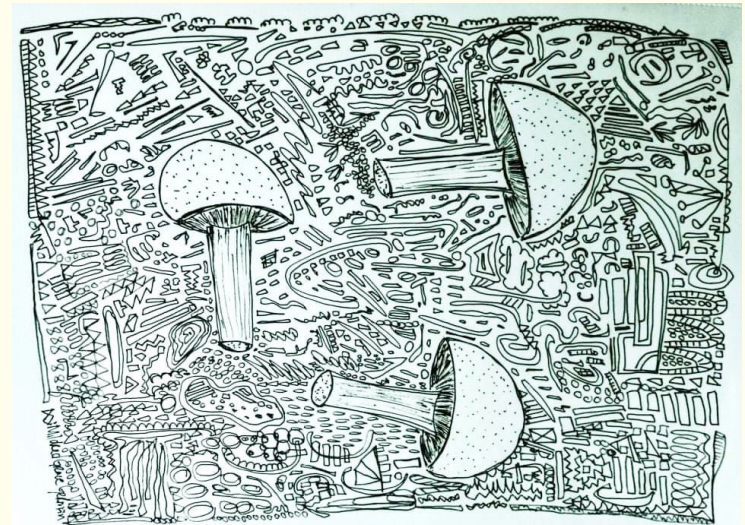
- 1) Preheat the oven to 350F.
- 2) Mix chopped cauliflower with garlic powder, salt & pepper in a bowl.
- 3) Drizzle olive oil to cauliflower mixture.
- 4) Put the seasoned cauliflower evenly on an oven pan.
- 5) Put in the oven, cook for 20 mins, or until golden brown.
- 6) Add squeezed lemon juice before serving. Serve hot.

Cucumber Raita:

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tbsp. cumin, pan roasted
- ½ cucumber, shredded
- salt & pepper to taste

- 1) Grind the roasted cumin until coarse or powdered.
- 2) In a bowl, mix yogurt, cumin, and shredded cucumber.
- 3) Mix until combined.
- 4) Add salt & pepper to taste.
- 5) Serve cold, as a dip or condiment on the side.

Foraging Mushrooms by Mildred German



Valentine Grief

by Mary Rose Umali Lim

As time pass I know this pain will increase.
As time pass I know slowly I'll break down more.
It will sink in to me like quicksand.
With no where to go
But down.

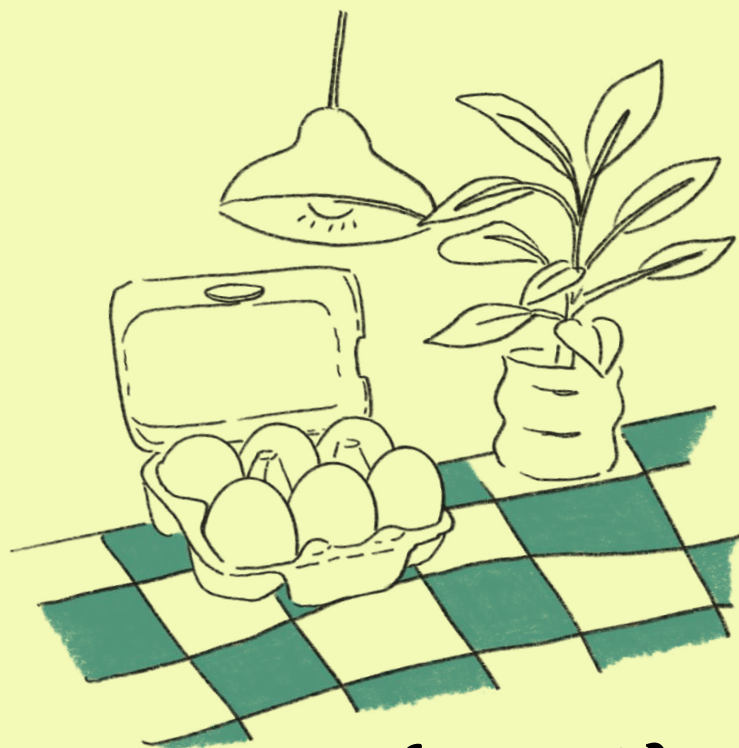
Pls hug me
I don't know how to go on.
I even don't feel like eating, drinking or
anything.
Pls hug me and I'll be ok

I'm happy for all other people I see in Facebook
that celebrate valentine's but for me I no longer
have anyone to celebrate it with.
Realizing this hurts so much
I guess that's why last night my dream was

I was in the middle a cloud
Like I was sitting on a Huge long cloud with
nothing in but me in the middle.
Just looking around.

I said hello
But no one answered.
I kept looking around.

The clouds were white
The sky was blue that was turning. Into black to
tell it was night
Darkness came
I was still alone in the now dark cloud
Hello I say
No one answered
Tears started to fall from my face. Darkness
governed my eyes and that's when I woke up



How do you like your eggs?

By Mildred German



It is indeed mind-blowing how an egg can transform to a whole functioning chicken. The inside of an egg contains all the nutrients an embryo needs to develop and hatch to its new life form. It is therefore not surprising eggs are considered a “superfood”.

Thank you for asking. I like my eggs sunny side up, runny to medium, please.

There are plenty of egg recipes to explore. There are endless possibilities in using eggs in cooking and baking. With the proper cooking techniques, safe storing practices, and food safe skills, eggs have become a very vital ingredient used in many culinary and pastry kitchens.

Eggs are used in many roles - ie. in thickening creams, curds, and custards, in making a firm quiche or frittata, in incorporating a rich texture in flans, buttercreams, and more other desserts, and in producing the golden brown color of breads and other baked goods.

Eggs are also essential in making pate a chou or chou pastry for Profiteroles and Eclairs. Eggs are also essential in making Creme Brulee and Creme Caramel, and also in making Pastry Cream (the classic filling in many of our favorite pastries and desserts such as Mille Feuilles). Meringues are also made with eggs. Eggs are indeed very significant in dessert and pastry making.

Mouth-watering egg dishes

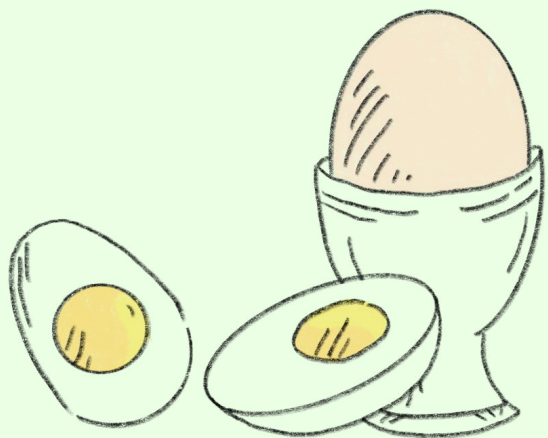
I grew up eating eggs: chicken, quail, fish, and duck eggs. Looking back then and until today, I still admire the hard work of my father who made salted red eggs back in the Philippines to make ends meet for his family. In my childhood, my father, as a strong and athletic man himself, used to carry me on his back as he scooped mud that he would use in brining the eggs with salt. The eggs would be soaked in mud and salt for weeks. And when these salted eggs were ready, they would be sold by my mother to the wet market stall owners and would also be delivered to the many best-selling “siopao” (steam bun) stores and restaurants in the city, whose establishments added salted eggs in their recipes.

I also enjoy eating salted eggs with sliced fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, with rice. The combination of these all truly are unforgettable with the yolk shiny, oily, and as golden as gold—my childhood favourite. However, such times and meals could also reflect the social realities and global economic difficulties—as uncracked salted eggs could last for days with its long shelf-life and were handy for when there was no electricity in the area to refrigerate food.

I also like eggplants with eggs, also called “Tortang Talong” in Filipino cuisine. It is a pan-fried eggplant dish, which typically is paired with rice and banana sauce. Meanwhile, other vegetables that taste well with eggs are bittermelons, tomatoes, and bean sprouts (ie. in egg foo yung). Grain dishes such as fried rice have scrambled eggs added too. As well, many noodle dishes are made with eggs such as egg noodles. Eggs can be added to soups too, such as in many ramen soups, “arroz caldos”, and drop-egg soups.

I enjoy Philippine Egg Pies, and Portuguese Egg Tarts, which are flakey and crunchy to bite. Filled with a velvety sweet vanilla egg custard, egg pies and tarts are indeed delightful as desserts, snacks, or treats. When it comes to savory dishes, quiches such as Broccoli and Cheddar Quiche, Spinach, Onion and Feta Quiche, and frittatas such as Vegetable Frittatas reign as classic favourites.





In cooking eggs

Hard-boiled eggs are one of my favorite snacks. Hard-boiled eggs, with mayonnaise and spices, can be made into a tasteful Egg Salad Sandwich. Handy, light, and packed with nutrients, boiled eggs never fail to satisfy.

When it comes to “hard-boiled” eggs, ironically I like mine “soft” or “runny”. Overcooking eggs produces the green ring appearance in the yolk of the hard-boiled eggs. It is caused by a chemical reaction involving sulfur (from the egg white) and iron (from the egg yolk) and occurs when overcooking eggs or when there is a high amount of iron in the boiling water. Although aesthetically unpleasant, the green ring is not harmful.

Overcooked eggs can sometimes be chewy and dry to swallow. As overcooking eggs affects the coagulation of the eggs’ proteins, it makes the egg firm and rubbery. This is noticeable when cooking pan-fried eggs sunny side up. As the sides of the egg whites cook longer, the color changes to golden brown and

the texture of the egg becomes chewy and forms a rubbery “crust” the longer and the hotter the eggs cook. Also, high heat cooking causes loss of some of the nutritional contents.

On top of everything, not only are eggs nutrients-dense, eggs (so far) are also affordably cheap. They are tasty, easy, and a delight to prepare. Rich in nutrients (such as Folate, Vitamin D, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B12, Vitamin E, Selenium, and other nutrients), eggs are considered a “superfood”. Some eggs are also enriched with Omega-3. Eggs also contain Lutein, an antioxidant that has major benefits for eye health.

As eggs have many health-promoting qualities (and are truly mouth-watering), I encourage you to speak with a trained professional dietitian or family doctor to determine how many eggs are safe for you.

Happy egg cracking. Happy cooking.



Take time to smell the flowers

*Classic books, rose gardens,
and fragrant teas*



By Mildred German

Throughout time, flowers continue to inspire and transcend voices in forms of themes, art, and symbols. Flowers remind us of life and many values to live by. Artists, authors, botanists, chefs, butterflies, bumble bees, and more have been drawn to the wonders and beauty of flowers.

William Shakespeare, known as one of the greatest playwrights in history, had addressed the beauty of flowers, particularly roses, in his writings. Thus Shakespeare's first sonnet beautifully begins with,

“From fairest creatures we desire increase
That thereby beauty's rose might never die.” (Sonnet 1, William Shakespeare).

He also had referred to the rose in his popular play, *Romeo and Juliet*,

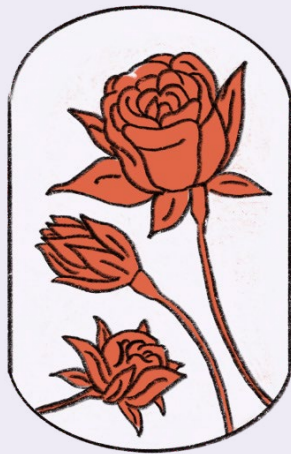
“A rose by any other name would smell as sweet” (Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare)

Leo Tolstoy, who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time, has also addressed roses in his writings and become instrumental in bringing a new kind of consciousness to his novel, *War and Peace*.

“He learned that suffering and freedom have their limits and that those limits are soon reached; that a man lying on a bed of roses suffered as much from one crumpled petal as he suffered now from sleeping on the bare damp earth....” (*War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy)

Another author that was captured by a rose is Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. A pilot himself, who wrote the best-selling book, *The Little Prince*, which also became one of the most translated books ever published.

I remember *The Little Prince* is the first English novel I learned in English as a child in the Philippines. The illustrations



and the story itself are wonderfully heartwarming. *The Little Prince* is a childhood favorite book of mine that continues to bring delight over the years, grounds me, and reminds me of how kindness can go a long way.



“It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important.” (The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)



As it is common knowledge that roses have thorns, these thorns have become a symbol of spite, might, or need of protection. The truth is no rose is without a thorn. With the roses' fragrance, many equate the sweet smell to ecstasy, in addition to being widely-known as an epitome of beauty.

With all these being said, it is not surprising how roses too have inspired numerous live performance acts and media, including audio recordings, film, theater, and opera.

In music, Guns N' Roses (an 80's rock band), Johnny Cash (singer of *Rose of My Heart*), Seal's "Kiss From A Rose" (which was included in the film *The Never Ending Story III* and as part of the *Batman Forever* film soundtrack) and Marie Osmond's classic hit "Paper Roses" have all references to roses. Tupac, Outkast, Edith Piaf, Bette Midler, and more other musicians drew inspiration from the beauty of roses too.

“Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else even cared. No one else even cared...” (The Rose That Grew From The Concrete, Tupac)

The musical play *Phantom of the Opera* also has its elements of the rose along with a mask- that such combination results in a mystique of storytelling. Meanwhile, Takashi Murakami's *Smiling Flowers* are colourful and jolly.

Noteworthy, there is a song and poem entitled 'Bread and Roses', which is a popular political slogan commonly associated with the 1912 women's strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Bread and Roses can be heard and sung as an anthem, or recited, during March 8 International Women's Day, May 1 International Workers' Day, various rallies, and political events. Bread and Roses aim to highlight that 'dignity and respect' must come along in the fight for fair wages and in the class and labor struggles; thus the call for 'roses', in pair with the 'bread'.

When it comes to food, roses can be paired more than bread. In the culinary field, roses can flavor ice creams, desserts, cocktails, teas, and honey. Rosé is also a popular type of wine. It is made from a wide variety of grapes, and is a blend type that is popular and found all over the world.

Roses have inspired many parents too, such as in choosing names for their children. Names such as Rose, Rosa, Rosie, Rosalie, Rosemarie, and Rosalinda are quite popular.

Memories are also easily remembered with the names of the flowers. I, myself, have a rose-named auntie, Tiya Rosa. I remember her from my childhood memories in the Philippines, when we traveled to Manila, we would stay at her place. She is a very lovely and kind auntie. When I got sick once and needed to stay in the city hospital, Tiya Rosa took care of me back then. These memories of care always remain fragrant.

Flowers are a symbol of life, love, and grief. Of emotions. Of our deepest soul.
Do we ever deserve flowers, do we? In sickness and heartaches, flowers are both well-given and well-received—flowers in a vase in many hospital bedsides, memorials, lobbies, as home decorations, or in a well-tended garden for everyone to enjoy.

Life is very short. Let's take time to smell the flowers. Because if not now, when? That once more allows ourselves to be reminded, what a wonderful and beautiful world. As flowers attract you and me, and all the bumblebees.



HUMAN, BEING, SPRING

By Anushka Azadi

The politics of the world is madness. You have lived through 3 winters of a global pandemic, and still you rise again, with the sun, daily. You welcome Spring again, with joy and relief. The cold is waning and the ground is begging for your bare feet to meet it. Winter's grief sinks into the softening ground to Mother the seeds you are planting with a song and visions of a brilliance of flowers and the warm sweetness of ripening fruit. The sounds of love leaving your heart and hands joins a chorus of kindness in an orchestra of life celebrating itself. A hummingbird is bathing in the sunflower leaf next to you, the bees are buzzing manic over just flowering raspberry canes, a black cat is napping under the fruiting trees and your hands are black with soil, light and heavy at the same time. The politics of the world is madness. You have lived through 3 winters of a global pandemic, and still you rise again, with the sun, daily. You welcome Spring again, with joy and relief. The cold is waning and the ground is begging for your bare feet to meet it. Winter's grief sinks into the softening ground to Mother the seeds you are planting with a song and visions of a brilliance of flowers and the warm sweetness of ripening fruit. The sounds of love leaving

your heart and hands joins a chorus of kindness in an orchestra of life celebrating itself. A hummingbird is bathing in the sunflower leaf next to you, the bees are buzzing manic over just flowering raspberry canes, a black cat is napping under the fruiting trees and your hands are black with soil, light and heavy at the same time.

You are a human, being.

You are in good company. In the garden, running through the forest, swimming the lake or ocean, the being-ness of everything meets you and does it's very best to welcome you. The rose bushes can't help themselves, there are thousands of blush pink buds in the few bushes your eyes can perceive in front of you. The water waves onto the shore gently and here, you walk into the water with the same rhythm. The cold meets your feet, then your knees, your bellybutton until you are ready to dive into the feeling. You swim far enough out and jump up, now you're floating in an endless bathtub. Dragonflies mistake your chin for mating grounds. Your breath slows as you move in and out of the layers of reality

others have built out of their own fear. The dirt road you drove to get up here rumbles with it. Is there enough gas in the tank? Will we have enough money to last the season? Did you water the plants enough? Did your sister know you loved her?

There are snakes in the water, turtles and leeches too. The forest around your favourite place is home and highway to bears and cougars, deer and moose. You make it back to the shore. Your long night hair is soaking heavy. You wring out what you can and lay down on the warm ground and let the butterflies sip the last of the lake still clinging to you. The brightness of this year's spruce tips shine out of the corner of your eye. The unmistakable newness of their green reminds you that ***this whole world is made of medicine. Soon, the wild roses will open and the first deer will be born. A forest floor's worth of arnica flowers will bloom a yellow to rival the sun.*** Fireweed shoots will offer themselves to your hunger and devil's club will bloom and berry before the spiked woody stems are ready for your hands.

Across the hills, through the season and every year, the lake calls you up the mountain. You watch the waves of blooms spill over outside and inside too. You become the flowers, the medicine, everything is always moving. You are human so you have the added burden and benefit of choice.

You choose life. You choose clean water outside so the water inside is clean too.

You choose medicine, you choose the love of the flowers and fruit, the love given away freely by the sun in the day and the moon at night. You choose, you choose, you choose. You stop making excuses for the lies that fear brings and for the liars that speak them, that is not human. You make no more room to tolerate brutality and mistreatment of your body or your Mother's body. You call the ground to your feet and the water into your dreams. You are human.

Down the mountain and across the river, there is a town. 45 minutes down the highway either way, there is a city. In the city there are politicians and police, offices and buildings, all this under the auspices of a pale, sick Queen. Everyone is in a hurry.

The city is a maze, the city worships a death cult, every Church's origin story is death. Life struggles here.

The lights obscure the stars at night. You don't stay long. You make a choice. You are human, the animal. It is Spring in the valley. There are seeds for planting. The children to come are waiting. You take anyone that will return to life with you. You punch a hole in the pipeline, you spread spores at the mine, you lay down offerings for the living suffering and you leave.

You are human, being.

Between Eastern Africa and South Asia: Migration and Food

Félix Landry Yuan

Over the past millennia, the migration, exchange, and spread of African plants and animals have come to shape much of the world's traditions, landscapes and livelihoods. While within reach by land to Western Asia, or across the Mediterranean Sea to Southern Europe, contact between Eastern Africa and the Indian subcontinent was far reaching, and has had a lasting influence on both sides. This occurred via an extensive network of maritime trade routes probably beginning as early as 3000 BCE, and lasting through to the sixth century. Occasionally called the "Monsoon Exchange", Indian Ocean trade routes allowed merchants and travelers to move between the Horn of Africa and Southwestern India, with extended access to the Arabian Peninsula and as far as Southeast Asia. The result was a cross-pollination of cultural and ecological processes with lasting modern-day implications shaping the natural landscapes and food traditions we experience today.

Many staple foods that are continuously eaten throughout sub-Saharan Africa would have arrived from South Asia by way of this ancient trade network, including bananas and plantains (*Musa* spp.), taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), mangos (*Mangifera indica*), cinnamon (*Cinnamomum* spp.) and jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) among many others.



plantain



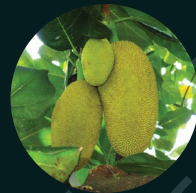
taro



mango



cinnamon



jackfruit

This exchange is also believed to have seen the arrival of some domestic animals, such as Zebu cattle (*Bos taurus indicus*), and invasive wild plants, including black horse purslane (*Trianthema triquetra*), into the African continent. Yet, several native African species have also found their way across the Indian Ocean to impact the other side.

Many domesticated crops that were first found in the Central and Western parts of the African continent have come to be prized and depended upon by Asian cultures for thousands of years. Indigenous to and first domesticated in the East-African highlands, finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is believed to have already arrived in South Asia 5000 years ago. It has grown to become a widespread staple food valued for its health benefits and cultural significance. Still, to this day, it is consumed in Nepal, where it is known as kodo, and in South India, where it is known as ragi, much in a similar way to how African communities eat sadza in the South, ugali in the East, or fufu in the West. Native to modern day Sudan and Chad, sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) has a similar story. While a staple food in parts of India and Southern Africa, it is now also considered as one of the world's most important cereal crops.




The cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*), also known as the black-eyed pea, is native to West Africa, and is key to a variety of traditional dishes. Yet since its arrival in Asia in ancient times, it is prepared in many ways in India, China, and Southeast Asia. The hyacinth bean (*Lablab purpureus*) is native to Africa, but has a long history as a vegetable in South Asian cooking. Originally from the highlands of Eritrea and Ethiopia, Noog oilseed (*Guizotia abyssinica*), is also commonly cultivated for various uses in India.

In addition to field crops, many African tree varieties have come to populate South Asia. For instance, tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) originated in Africa, and its fruit has a long history of being used in both food and medicine throughout tropical Asia. Native to the African continent and Madagascar, clusters of Baobab trees (*Adansonia* spp.) can also be found in parts of India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

The migration of African plant species has thus been of significant importance with its export of cornerstone crops that have had a lasting effect on the evolution of many South Asian traditions. In their culinary versatility and wide range of health benefits, these crops carry the potential for an expansive global influence and are valued for their millennia-old heritage rooted in African soil.

Overall, migration and exchange across the Indian Ocean has been in existence for thousands of years. These years of maritime trade between Eastern Africa and South Asia have allowed for the parallel yet interconnected development of food, economic, and cultural trends across the Indian Ocean. While both regions carry their own, unique historical legacies, many similarities in traditions and livelihoods are still noticeable today, potentially as a result of this uninterrupted relationship.



A PERSONAL REFLECTION

BY CATE WIKELUND

Nature was and is my first love and always will be. As a tiny child I was enraptured by flowers and any species of bees. I would stand enthralled in front of tall spectacular spikes of pink foxgloves as large bumble bees nestled up into each soft speckled flower throat and at other times watched them disappear into highly scented snapdragon bodies.

Decades later, in garden-rich Vancouver I had a garden box growing herbs, tomatoes, radishes and flowers, the stunning centres of my huge poppies - each petal a sheen of deep red and black surrounded by pollen-dusty stamens - were alive with dozens of honeybees from Hives for Humanity's onsite hives. While on my fifth floor east-facing balcony nasturtiums, calendulas, tomatoes, chives, violets, geraniums, mints, fuschia enticed honeybees, bumble bees, striped hovering bees, wasps, butterflies, beetles, spiders, flies, other flying insects I could not identify and both resident and migrating birds, to visit. My little balcony was an oasis of greenery and a source of delight for me.

I was very fortunate to be able to work with Hives for Humanity whose focus is on bees, sustainability, teaching, employment and connection between very divergent communities. Their basic philosophy reflects some of my own personal values. And unlike most workplaces I have experienced, the atmosphere was supportive and flexible, focused on collective satisfaction and continual learning. This was and is important to me. Hands-on experience encouraged by patient instructions enabled stress-free learning and participation.

Whether I was outside with the bees learning beekeeping or watering pollinator garden boxes or inside with others working with the products, it was rewarding. What was surprising to me was how the simple tasks of labelling jars of amber and golden honey, hand-rolling blissful scented honeycomb patterned sheets of beeswax into tapers, waxing cotton squares for sustainable food wraps was such a meditation for me. A soothing, 'gathering' and grounding feeling would fill my being as I worked. This is exactly what I needed at that time in my life. It also meant a lot to me that these products were and are of high quality.

In noisy and stimulus-burdened Vancouver for some people nature in ALL its forms whether the stupendous cloud formations, birds, untamed 'weedy' places or garden plots are what sustain them. A singular blazing dandelion flower, its tough mineral rich plant cracking through pavement provides uplifting (and to be honest for me, great joy that in the end Nature WILL win). Then for others it is the only more structured green spaces and gardens which give satisfaction, renewal and for some, solace.

Teaming with life, plots no matter the size have a quietness about them yet radiate a healing energy. Citizens of any city benefit on every level and in every way including sight, scent and sound from green spaces and gardens. It is my belief a city is only as vibrant and healthy as its total acreage of these places provided that flowering plants actually have pollen and nectar and so draw life to them. This health is also reflected in how these living eco-systems are distributed across a city. We are rewarded with not only food and flowers but birds, insects, beauty, peace and fulfillment. And Nature is then respected and nurtured.

Where I live now, regardless of the dynamic weather – lots of rain, fog and mist then sun then back to fog again within minutes - and despite the continual clear-cutting of stunning mountains that ring this

village and beyond and 2021's drought and especially despite the lack of visible gardens, flowering plants and shrubs, I have seen a wide variety of insects here. Except for a few winter days of minus 17 degrees, delicate insects still fly around outside.

On summer days and well into October grasshoppers and crickets are everywhere with their sound. Beetles, some clicking, wing about as do huge colorful dragonflies and moths. And in the short months of warmth that I have lived here, I have seen more species of butterflies than in decades of living in Vancouver, Victoria and Port Alberni combined. Possibly up to fifteen in almost every color imaginable and having a variety of shapes, sizes and markings. Only in one area have I seen dusty blue butterflies and on one stretch of highway, dark chocolate almost black butterflies. And everywhere there are three species of swallowtails. Without hesitation I purchased John Acorn and Ian Sheldon's Butterflies of British Columbia – identification a must. Mentioning how many butterfly species I had seen, most people I talked to looked amazed – and they have lived here twenty, thirty or forty years!

And yes, there are honey bees. My first summer here I was delighted to see dozens and dozens of honeybees feasting on heather plants at our village's entrance. The scent of heather blossoms, the hum of bees and the chortling of a stream nearby was idyllic.

No matter where they live, I do hope as we slip into spring then summer, more and more people will stop and truly see and appreciate Nature. Will start a garden. And even if they do not have bee hives themselves when they see a group of white garbed and face-netted people around stacked boxes who are moving slowly and speaking softly they will stop and watch and then approach and say "What's going on? Are you beekeepers?" Then that is when the conversation starts: about pollinators, gardens, sustainability, nature, about our place in the web of life. And that is what Hives for Humanity is all about. Community. Connection. Nature.

As humans we can all learn from the honeybee – we live in a community sustained by a myriad of other communities outside ourselves. I believe as Earth's custodians even though we are only her guests, our duty and privilege is to nurture, respect and protect our planet. After all this beloved Earth is our life-support. And oh, what a stunning living jewel!

Interested in contributing your ideas, articles, poems, artwork, photography, social media skills or something else to Right to Food Zine?

As a community partner, we are deeply interested to hear from you and what you feel is important. Get in touch with us by emailing rtfzine@gmail.com or connect with us on Facebook or Instagram. We are our own media and completely volunteer-led.

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A recipe for two



By Rachel Cheang and Rémi Landry Yuan

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