



DISPATCH 003 – Urban Agriculture as Protest

This edition of DISPATCHES looks into urban agriculture as a strategy for protest by marginalized communities. Globally, the promotion of factory farming and industrial agriculture under capitalism has left little space and resources for growing food in urban centres. In cities around the world the assumption is that we buy food, often from supermarket chains where we're left unaware of how this food is produced or where it's from. When competing with multinational corporations and city development strategies, the struggle to access land for urban agriculture is an act of resistance in itself. In North America, Black activists have led the way for creating urban gardens as a necessity for community building and establishing agency over their own food system, free of capitalist restraints. Below you will find resources that explore the relationship between urban planning and urban agriculture, and the fight for land in dense urban hubs. The selected resources demonstrate the motivations and structures of resistance depending on geographical contexts. In addition, we look at how grassroots urban gardens become spaces for political thought, education and activism that extends from food justice to housing, employment, and the environment. Our work together on *Ishtar's International Network of Feral Gardens* is rooted in a slow and meditative process, and it reminds us that sometimes the most effective forms of resistance are persistent, gradual and contemplative.

READ —

Sisters of the Soil: Urban Gardening as Resistance in Detroit

Monica M. White

“This article analyzes an overlooked innovative experience led by black women activists, who participate in urban agriculture as a way of reassessing their cultural roots and reclaiming personal power, freed from the constraints imposed by consumerism and marketing, on the supply of food in the city of Detroit. By farming, they demonstrate agency and self-determination in their efforts to build a sense of community. Using an ecofeminist perspective, this article examines the relationship between women's resistance and the environment. By focusing on women's urban gardening, the article broadens the definition to include less formal, but no less important, forms of resistance.”

[// Read more //](#)

Turning Food Into a Weapon in the Battle Against Colonialism

Missy Johnson

“Morrison describes Indigenous food sovereignty as ‘the ability of Indigenous peoples to respond to our own needs for food, for adequate amounts of healthy food, the way we have for thousands of years.’”

[// Read more //](#)

We Don’t Farm Because It’s Trendy: For Black Folks, Growing Food Has Long Been a Form of Resistance

Ashley Gripper

“Black farmers across the South created cooperatives largely in response to the anti-Black government and society; in response to supermarkets not serving Black customers; in response to White people terrorizing Black folks when they tried to register to vote. These cooperatives were a means of providing economic autonomy, political education, and collective agency to Black people in the South.”

[// Read more //](#)

The Intersection of Planning, Urban Agriculture, and Food Justice: A Review of the Literature

Megan Horst, Nathan McClintock & Lesli Hoey

“We draw on a multidisciplinary body of research to consider how planning for urban agriculture can foster food justice by benefiting socioeconomically disadvantaged residents. The potential social benefits of urban agriculture include increased access to food, positive health impacts, skill building, community development, and connections to broader social change efforts.”

[// Read more //](#)

Gender Perspectives on Periurban Agriculture in Nepal p.38

Kanhaiya Sapkota

“While rural agriculture in Nepal is predominantly subsistence oriented, agriculture in and around the urban areas is more market oriented. Although periurban agriculture has been practised for a long time in Nepal, there is no government policy in place to regulate it”

[// Read more //](#)

LISTEN —

Leah Penniman: Stand up to the beast

Take Away Only

“Soul Fire Farm's Leah Penniman grows food for people targeted by state violence and impacted by poverty and food apartheid. As those factors became more pronounced during the pandemic, Soul Fire Farm ramped up food production while also teaching an increasing number of people in their community how to grow food for themselves. Leah joins us to talk about her farm's activist mission, reparations, ending racism and injustice in the food system, her book, *Farming While Black*, the ways she fuses spirituality with social justice and what message the Earth is trying to convey to all of us.”

[// Listen now //](#)

WATCH —

Freedom Farmers: Building Sustainable Communities

Monica M. White

“Dr. Monica M. White teaches courses in environmental justice, urban agriculture and community food systems at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the first African American woman to earn tenure in both the College of Agricultural Life Sciences and the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. Her research investigates communities of color and grassroots organizations engaged in the development of sustainable, community food systems as a strategy to respond to issues of hunger and food inaccessibility.”

[// Watch now //](#)

Webinar Decolonizing the Land and Food System: Indigenous Resilience in Times of Crisis

Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm

“The compounded crises of climate change and COVID-19 have widened the inequalities that exist in our already unequal food system. Decolonizing the land and food system is thus a critical strategy for putting economies of solidarity into action. Join Dawn Morrison, Founder, Chair, and Coordinator of the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (WGIFS), Wilson Mendes, LFS PhD Candidate, Media Director of the WGIFS, and xʷčičəsəm Garden Coordinator, Angela McIntyre, CSFS Postdoctoral Fellow, and Alannah Young, former CSFS, LFS, and IRPPostdoctoral Fellow, for a panel and discussion on Indigenous food sovereignty and resiliency – during COVID-19 and beyond.”

[// Watch now //](#)

SUPPORT —

La Vía Campesina

“La Vía Campesina is an international movement bringing together millions of peasants, small and medium size farmers, landless people, rural women and youth, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world. Built on a strong sense of unity, solidarity between these groups, it defends peasant agriculture for food sovereignty as a way to promote social justice and dignity and strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture that destroys social relations and nature.”

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Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network

“Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network is an Indigenous-led nonprofit offering land, food and culture based programming in Toronto and the surrounding region. Ojibiikaan means “root” in Anishinaabemowin. Our roots connect us to the land and to each other. They are the lifelines that nourish and anchor us. Ojibiikaan works to strengthen our roots through knowledge exchange and land-based projects.”

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Sprout

“is an outreach program that unites non-profit groups with landscape architects to collaborate on community-led design projects. In addition to the initiation of single project partnerships, Sprout provides a platform to network, share ideas, and envision our common landscape.”

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Ishtar’s International Network of Feral Gardens is a playful, experimental food sovereignty initiative. Dedicated to encouraging the cultivation of feral gardens and building an international artists network of out-of-the-box food systems, Ishtar’s International Network of Feral Gardens is a long-term project that opens up new economies for growing, sharing and eating food. Playing with the discursive tensions between the wild (feral) and the domestic (garden), the Network invites artists, curators and cultural workers with thoughtful seeds, unusual tools, and ancestral intelligence to conjure up atypical spaces for cultivating fruits, vegetables, herbs and medicinal plants.