

# Land Sovereignty

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# Roots

## The Sacred Garden

*Collective Black self-recovery takes place when we begin to renew our relationship to the Earth, when we remember the way of our ancestors. When the earth is sacred to us, our bodies can also be sacred.*

—bell hooks

When I was first in conversations to be part of this project that is *Philadelphia Assembled*, I made a point of noting that, in this country, I believe we lose all sovereignty at birth. There can be no true sovereignty here. This, of course, is based on what I understand sovereignty to be. One of the beautiful things about collective thinking is that it leaves room for multiple perspectives. During the course of this project, I have been introduced to many ideas around sovereignty: personal—as in, the ability to claim control over our bodies; financial—as in, when community-based businesses produce and distribute products to help support cultural preservation and encourage entrepreneurship among residents; cultural—as in practicing and preserving ancestral ways through community, alongside others. For me, land sovereignty, which

is where this publication begins, is both about how communities reimagine abandoned spaces in their neighborhood and how they reclaim those spaces as their own. It is about ROOTS, RESILIENCE, REVIVAL, and RESOURCES, which is how we have collectively conceived of the chapters that follow.

As part of *Philadelphia Assembled*, we highlight four organizations that manage community gardening and farming spaces in North Philadelphia. These community spaces are in neighborhoods that are mostly inhabited by Black and/or Latino people. Land tenure, which is sustained ownership of property, in these communities has been tenuous over the last 30 years. In fact, Black land ownership has been on a steady decline since the 1980s.

And while Latino households haven't always experienced this steady DECLINE, they have experienced migratory shifts in the city due to the influx of white populations, or, what we know as gentrification. Other reasons for this decline include drugs, crime, and redistricting.

These spaces were chosen for *Philadelphia Assembled* because of their geographical location in proximity to each other as well as their stories of resilience. Our aim is to share their stories of community resistance and pride through various art mediums, including movement, documentaries, recipes, workshops, sculptures, paintings and plants. You will experience these stories through the eyes of our young people, the wisdom of our elders, the warmth of our kitchens and the healing in our soil.

When communities unify to reclaim land in their neighborhoods and put it back into production for the benefit of the people who live in these areas, THIS is a sovereign act! When these spaces begin to produce food for the hungry, save herbs for the sick, and provide safe havens for children to play, THIS is sovereignty!

When residents take stewardship over neglected, abandoned properties and create productive, safe spaces for their families and neighbors—THIS is sacred!

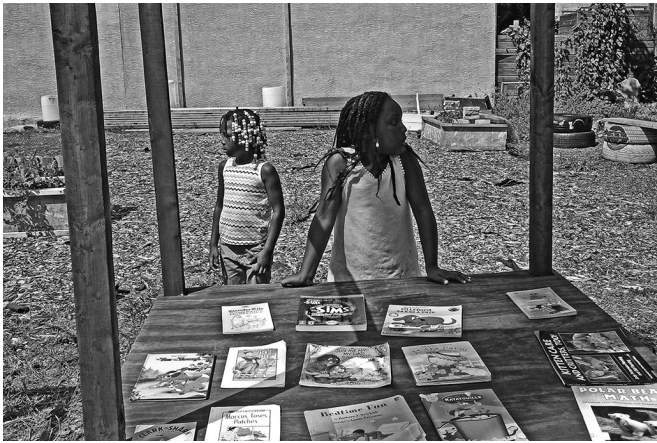
—Kirtrina Baxter

# Resilience

Profiled here are the four community gardens and farm spaces we are working with as part of *Philadelphia Assembled*. Each is accompanied by a seed or plant story that speaks to the organization and the ways in which they stay resilient in the midst of the city's change.







**North Central Philadelphia Susquehanna  
Community Development Corporation**

*1601-3 North 16th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19121*

Established in July 2014, NCPSCDC is a grassroots effort founded by Tinamarie Russell. In the beginning, the group focused on street cleaning initiatives, veterans, youth mobilization, and mentorship. During these early stages, the NCPSCDC started to transform vacant lots into public gardens and parks. Russell was also privileged to become the block captain of the 1600 block of West Susquehanna.

NCPSCDC opened the doors of its community/business center in 2016 and since has allowed

guests to take part in various information sessions, workshops, computer lab programs, after school activities, men’s groups, and much more. As helpers and examples for others, NCPSCDC aims to keep up the momentum of what has been built in these past years, to remain in good standing, and to develop wholesome relationships and service within North Philadelphia.

Presently NCPSCDC has grown in membership and has elected a board of directors, which plays a pivotal role in the group’s

development. As time progresses, NCPSCDC is becoming popular for many community activities such as holiday giveaways, where neighbors share gifts, games, and home-cooked meals. There is also a great buzz about the weekly food distribution for neighbors to take home.

The NCPSCDC gardens live as sites of resilience against the violent and oppressive forces active in this neighborhood of West Kensington. From a deadly drug culture pushing from the north, to the displacement of

gentrification moving in from the south and east, these gardens are a unique haven. The lands are sacred ground, where people across generations join together to sing, celebrate, dance to Bomba, and plant seeds of community and nourishment - moving in harmony toward the more just world we all believe in.

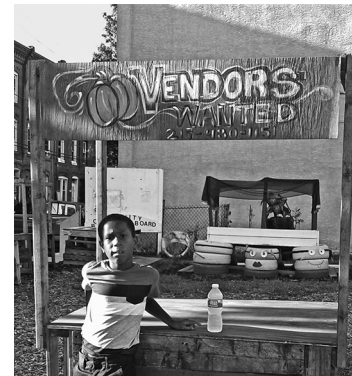






Illustration: Eric Battle

## Seed Story

# Milkweed

*Milkweed, because our theme is the monarch butterfly. Milkweed are planted in a pattern. Just like the enslaved Africans on the underground railroad, we had a path that we followed to get to freedom. This still holds true today; we need that road to sovereignty for our communities. I feel like both monarchs and working-class Blacks are endangered for some of the same reasons—concrete, asphalt, and water.*

—Tinamarie Russell



## Historic Fair Hill Burial Ground

2901 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19133

Fair Hill Burial Ground and its surrounding neighborhood are located on Germantown Avenue, a street that was once a Lenni-Lenape trade route. When Europeans colonized this land, it became a major thoroughfare between Philadelphia and outlying rural areas.



The land that is now Historic Fair Hill was part of a large territory given by William Penn to his friend George Fox, the English founder of Quakerism. On his death in 1691, Fox left this plot to American Quakers for use as "a stable, a Meetinghouse and burying place." At that time, the area consisted of farmland and woods outside the Philadelphia city limits.

In 1703, the original Meeting House was built. In the years that followed, the land saw great change as the city grew around it. The Quaker burial ground was

used from 1703 until the 1960s. It was one of the first racially integrated cemeteries in Philadelphia. Among those buried are many prominent women's rights activists and abolitionists from the 18th and 19th centuries.

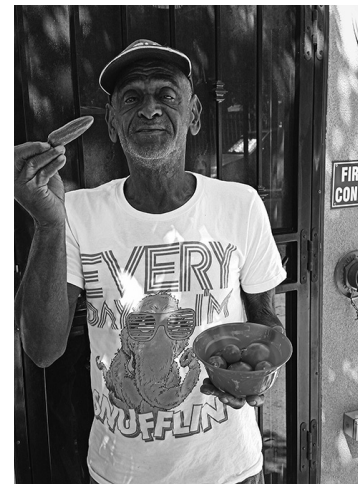
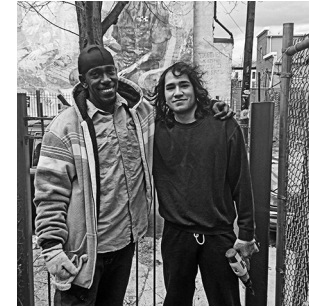






Illustration: Eric Battle

## Seed Story

# Bindweed

*I spent the last four years digging up bindweed at Historic Fair Hill Burial Ground in North Philadelphia.*

*Bindweed, *Convolvulus arvensis*, aka wild morning glory, aka Quaker heart breaker, is a creeping herbaceous perennial plant, with alternating inch-long, arrow-shaped leaves and quarter-sized white and pink trumpet flowers. Its vines strangle all it touches and its roots starve the soil of nutrients. Each plant can produce 500 seeds a season, and each seed can remain viable in the soil for up to 20 years. Worse still, bindweed has a deep, extensive root system that stores carbohydrates and proteins, which allows it to sprout repeatedly from rhizome fragments.*

*The trick is to get as much root as possible. Mindless, frantic pulling doesn't work - the roots remain just under the surface and new vines grow easily. Bindweed must be dug up as if you intend to get every last inch of it, even though you never will. This is the great paradox of bindweed: dig at it like you can get it all, but know that you probably can't. Any effort less than all your effort will result in bindweed spreading and spreading and spreading.*

*Eventually though, the bindweed does go away—but only if we are persistent and relentless, if we dig deep every time. There will come a time when the root systems are exhausted and seeds expire. And should we be lucky enough to raise our children without *Convolvulus arvensis*, we must still teach them how to spot bindweed and how to dig it up, so if it ever appears in their gardens they will know how to deal with it: deeply, constantly, carefully, patiently, and with friends.*

—Bri Barton





## Urban Creators, Life Do Grow Farm

2315 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19133

Urban Creators is a grassroots organization in North Philadelphia, transforming neglected landscapes into dynamic safe spaces that foster connectivity, self-sufficiency, and innovation. They are community organizers who utilize urban agriculture, interest-based learning, artistic expression, restorative justice, and celebration as tools for neighborhood stabilization and youth development.

Urban Creators was founded in 2010 by a diverse group of young people, unified by a vision to bridge the gap between isolated

communities and to transform a two-acre garbage dump into a farm. They spent their first year organizing door-to-door to gauge the interest and ideas shared by community members and stakeholders, and designing a theory of change. They spent their second year clearing away debris and planting the first seeds of a movement to remediate the polluted soils of injustice in North Philly.

The third year saw the transformation of this land into LIFE DO GROW, an urban farm, community resource and innovation

center, and their home. Through this process, they are equipping a wide range of stakeholders with the skills, tools, pedagogy, and networks to take the health of their communities into their own hands, while igniting a generation of civically engaged growers, innovators, and urban creators.

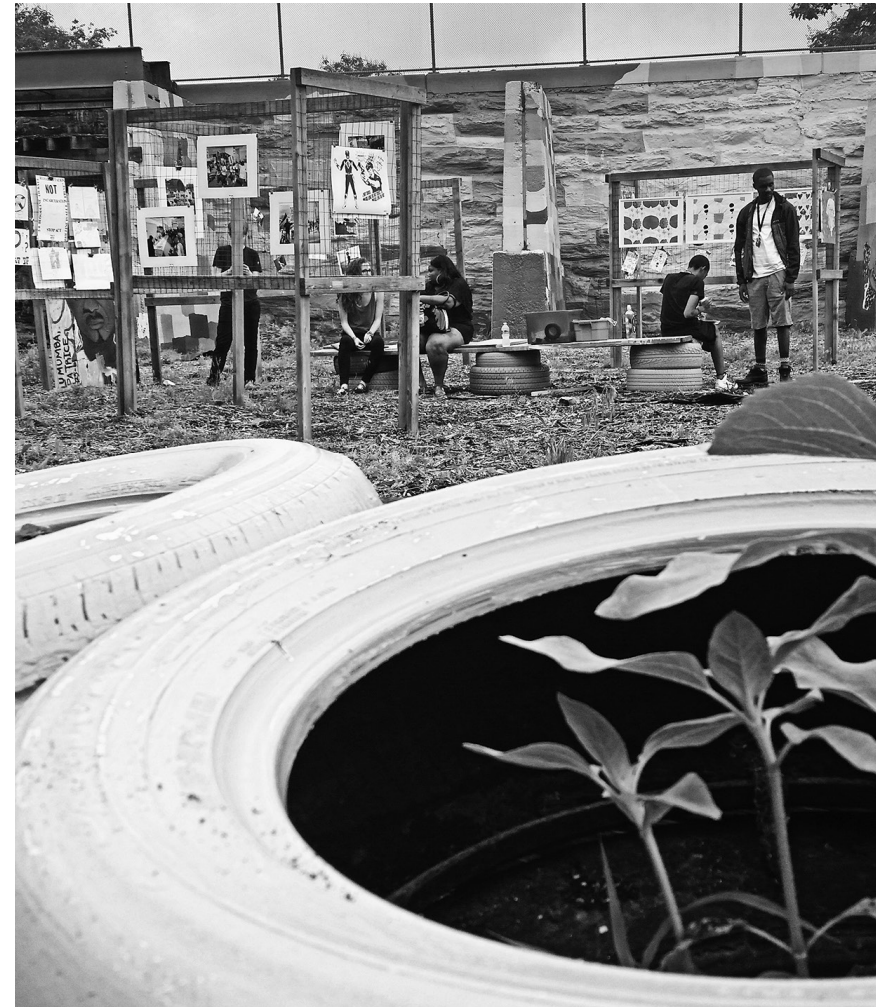




Illustration: Eric Battle

## Seed Story

# Sunflower

An hour across Lake Pontchartrain in the middle of the Louisiana boot sits a farm with trees dressed as Orishas (African goddesses/gods). Before the Urban Creators got its namesake, its creators were on a bus headed to meet Sunflower, an amazing spiritual farmer, healer, and chef. Upon our arrival to her farm she read our numerology chart and told us we were there as a movement to centralize our communities around food and freedom. Sunflower passed last year. We didn't get to say goodbye. But she lives through us at LIFE DO GROW farm. The plant that best symbolizes Urban Creators is a sunflower. Its soil remediation capabilities symbolize the work we do around community revitalization and youth violence prevention. Our space has attracted migratory birds, bees, and butterflies to feast on the huge sunflowers that surround our farm. Our smallest young person at two years old planted a 19-foot sunflower. Her legacy lives on in everyone that blooms around. When you turn the corner from Dauphin to 11th Street and you see the tall, bright yellow, orange, and black flowers, you know you're at LIFE DO GROW.

—Jeaninne Kayembe





## Norris Square Neighborhood Project

2141 North Howard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP) was founded in 1973 by an elementary school teacher, a professor, and a group of Puerto Rican women activists named Grupo Motivos in the West Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. This group of women, all from different backgrounds, together sought to create a safe space for youth in the community and to reclaim community spaces at a time when their neighborhood struggled with violence linked to a deadly drug culture. Beginning in 1980, Iris Brown and Tomasita Romero, in partnership with the other women of Grupo Motivos,

and later the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, began fighting to reclaim vacant land and recreate it into garden spaces where community residents could grow their own food in their community. Over 26 years they created six gardens that reflected their homeland of Puerto Rico that they once left behind. At the same time, these women activists initiated a practice of intercultural learning, working with Natalie Kempner and Helen Loeb, as they educated community youth about gardening, the environment, and Puerto Rican culture. It is this grassroots activist work that grounds NSNP's

current programs. NSNP envisions a community where youth and adults can positively engage one another, promote cultural awareness and preservation, and advocate for a healthier future for their neighborhoods. We aspire to connect generations and use our space to enable youth and community members to be the change-makers in their lives and the lives of their families.







Illustration: Eric Battle

## Seed Story

# Gandules, or Pigeon Peas

*Gandules are a staple crop in Puerto Rican cooking and an essential ingredient in the traditional dish Arroz con Gandules. Puerto Rican gardeners across North Philly have been coaxing this seed to grow for decades. They often begin in February, pressing seeds into damp soil in their basements to get a jump on the growing season. As a tropical perennial of the Caribbean, gandules have to adjust to Philly's short growing season. Both their brilliant yellow flowers and delicious seeds are an inspiration of resilience, a symbol that immigrant communities and their cultures can survive and thrive on new land.*

—Marian Dalke

## Arroz con Gandules

- 3 tbsp oil (veg. corn, or olive oil)
- ¼ lb country ham, cubed (if desired)
- 2 tbsp sofrito\*
- 2 packets sazón
- 1 tbsp garlic, minced
- 2 tsp finely chopped fresh cilantro or recaó
- 1½ c medium grain white rice
- 1 can (15 oz) gandules/green pigeon peas
- 4 oz tomato sauce
- ¼ c manzanilla olives, sliced

\*Sofrito is a seasoning blend that is common in Caribbean dishes. To make your own sofrito, blend together:

- 1 white onion, peeled and chopped
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed and deseeded
- ½ lb ají dulce peppers, stemmed and deseeded (you can use Cubanelle peppers if you don't have ajíces)
- 1 bunch recaó/culantro (you can use cilantro if you don't have recaó)
- 2 tsp oregano (if fresh, double the amount)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 sp oil

## Directions

### One

Heat oil in a medium, heavy saucepan over medium-high heat. Add ham to pan; cook until brown, about 5 minutes. Stir the sofrito sauce; cook, stirring occasionally, scraping up brown bits from bottom, 10 minutes. Add sazón, garlic, cilantro or recaó. Cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

### Two

Add rice to pan. Cook, stirring frequently, until coated in oil and toasted, about 1 minute. Stir in pigeon peas, tomato sauce, olives and 1½ cups water; using a wooden spoon, stir once and bring rice mixture to a boil. Cook, uncovered until water is evaporated, about 10 minutes. Gently stir rice from bottom up.

### Three

Lower heat to medium-low and cook, covered, until rice is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat. Gently fluff rice with fork. Cover pan and let stand, 5 minutes.

Arroz con Gandules recipe by Evelyn Matos, adapted from <http://www.goya.com/english/recipes/arroz-con-gandules>

Sofrito recipe adapted from <http://delishdlites.com/latin-recipes/puerto-rican-sofrito-recipe/>

# Revival

## Personal Testimonies of Sovereignty and Survival

### Dusty Hinz

Perennial Tree Crop Agriculture and Sovereign Rural Hinterlands: an Exploration of the Possible  
*A Brief Polemic*

#### I. The Urban/Rural Dichotomy

In terms of what might be called our “material reality,” human civilization comprises the rise and growth of both cities and rural agriculture, in mutual conjunction. You can’t have more people in the city without more food being produced in rural areas to feed them. (I fully support urban agriculture, especially when it is inspiring young people and building community, but the amount of staple human calories produced inside of the city is miniscule).

Constantly, every single day, all cities require the perpetual importation of resources from outside of the city. This means food, building materials, energy, and other supplies—all for consumption in the city. In a globalized economy, this means receiving products from all over the world. Beginning with

this basic premise, and in the spirit of a healthy discussion about what sovereignty embodies, I would ask the reader to grapple with these questions question: Is true sovereignty achievable inside the confines of a city? Is true sovereignty achievable when one is dependent upon the vast intricacies of the global economic system?

Total community sovereignty can only exist if there is direct, profound control and ownership over the land and the local food system that provide all necessary human calories.

Inside of this definition, is there room for a larger “bioregional” food system and trading? Yes, but food sovereignty begins with the autonomous community that presides over a land base and their local food systems, and then they

decide what their relationship to neighboring communities and the larger region will be.

#### II. Annual Staple Crop Agriculture and Synthetic Nitrogen Fertilizer

Annual staple crop agriculture (in the United States this is primarily corn, soybeans, and wheat) degrades soil health and fertility. Annual means that the crop is planted and harvested all in one growing season. Annual tillage (using a tractor to break up the soil and prepare it) damages soil structure and also leads to massive amounts of top-soil run-off, whereby our precious soil flows into waterways.

The element nitrogen is critical for robust plant growth. To supplement this loss of fertility in our soils due to annual staple crops, nitrogen fertilizer is added to agricultural fields. In a natural farm system, this can come in the form of decomposed cow poop.

However, in 1909, the scientists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch developed a way to produce “synthetic” nitrogen fertilizer, a process that requires high pressure and high temperature. This discovery changed the course of history by dramatically

increasing agricultural production, and led to the 20th-century explosion in human population. “Now, roughly a third of all the protein (animal and vegetable) consumed by humankind is derived from synthetic nitrogen fertilizer.”

To feed the global demand for synthetic nitrogen fertilizer, three to five percent of the world’s natural gas production is burned in the manufacturing process.

Let that sink in. Food for thought: How sovereign can the human species really be when such a huge portion of our caloric intake is directly dependent upon the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer? The production of which requires vast amounts of natural gas, a non-renewable, finite resource.

Not to mention, the massive amount of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer doused on agricultural fields spill into waterways, which creates a toxic imbalance, and causes “dead zones” in our rivers.

So we are up a creek, but is there a paddle?



### III. Perennial Staple Tree Crop Agriculture

Humanity needs staple food crops to survive. Vegetables are not what we define as “staple crops,” though they do provide important nutrients to the human diet. Staple crops (corn, rice, wheat, potatoes, cassava, soybeans, sweet potatoes, sorghum, dry beans) provide a significant portion of essential human calories.

Unfortunately, all of the above are annuals, and have the aforementioned problems.

However, in the plant world, “perennial” plants also exist, which can live for many years, decades, and sometimes centuries. Bushes and trees fall into this category.

To avoid the pitfalls of annual staple crop agriculture, there is an emerging agricultural philosophy that proposes the development of perennial, staple crops to feed humanity critical calories.

Philip Rutter is 67 years old. He completed his coursework for a PhD in evolutionary biology from the University of Minnesota in the 1970s. Instead of writing his thesis, he elected to buy a 160-acre farm in southern Minnesota and began his life’s work of breeding and growing hazelnuts and chestnuts.

He foresaw the unsustainable nature of annual corn and soybean agriculture long ago, and he decided to try to do something about it.

Rutter’s vision has always been to make these perennial nut trees into serious staple crop contenders. His breeding process is rigorous and scientific, and he has gone through multiple rounds of selection over the past 35 years. He has selected for disease and insect resistance, productivity, particular growth habits, drought resistance, and more.

Chestnuts are erect trees that grow to 30 to 40 feet tall. They can be made into a flour, which is comparable to corn meal, but much healthier for humans. Hazelnuts are a perennial bushing plant, with many wooden shoots that branch out from the crown (the crown sits atop the roots right below the soil surface). Hazelnuts are 60 to 70 percent oil; soybeans, an annual staple that is to comparable hazelnuts, also have high oil content. Though again, the hazels are much healthier for humans.

With the proper economy of scale, harvesting machinery, and processing equipment, Rutter believes hazelnuts could replace soybeans today.

The tree cropping system that he has developed does not use pesticides (which kill insects) or herbicides (which kill weeds). In addition to the issues with annual staple crops previously discussed, the corn and soybean growing methods in the United States use immense amounts of chemicals to kill insects and weeds, and are essentially “anti-nature.” Rutter’s agro-ecological method of growing hazelnuts and chestnuts works with nature, and develops hardy plants in a quasi-wild ecosystem. Farm animals can graze on the grass that grows between the rows of trees and bushes, and the manure they drop feeds natural nitrogen to the trees.

The potential impact of these perennial staple tree crops is huge, but Rutter claims that it will take the dedication of small farmers learning, organizing, and rallying around each other to make it happen.

### IV. Perennial Agriculture and Climate Change

Climate change is also very relevant here. Philip Rutter’s book on growing Hazelnuts has the subtitle: “The New Resilient Crop for a Changing Climate.” Simply put, annual staple crops are much more vulnerable to drought and other freakish weather events.

There have been years where Rutter’s neighbors’ corn crop has died because of lack of rain, but his hazelnuts still put off a good harvest. These tree crops are tough, robust, and stand a good chance in our volatile times.

Below is an important quote from an assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

*A large fraction of anthropogenic climate change resulting from CO<sub>2</sub> [carbon] emissions is irreversible on a multi-century to millennial time scale, except in the case of a large net removal of CO<sub>2</sub> [carbon] from the atmosphere over a sustained period.*

Basically, this means that the greenhouse gases that humanity has burned over the last couple hundred years, which are causing global warming, must be removed from the atmosphere to halt catastrophe. Where can these gases go? Well, perennial tree crop agriculture actually sequesters carbon (same thing as greenhouse gases) in the soil as well as the wood and roots of the plants.

So in addition to these plants being more resilient, we can actually be fighting climate change with greenhouse gas-sucking tree crop farm systems! Bam!

It is also important to note that tilling soil actually releases carbon into the atmosphere.

### **V. Connecting the Dots**

Philip Rutter's grand vision has been about replacing corn and soybeans with chestnuts and hazelnuts: he has sought to accomplish this by proving to existing farmers that they can make money by switching over to these perennials.

Even in the absence of a complete farm paradigm shift, these tree crops can undergird sovereign, alternative communities.

In the rural hinterlands there exists the opportunity for autonomous communities to build sovereign, hyper-local food systems, on a land base that they control and own. A truly sovereign food system cannot rely upon outside inputs, like synthetic nitrogen fertilizer, for soil fertility.

With the myriad reasons presented in this piece, hazelnuts and chestnuts have the potential to be perennial, staple crops that are resilient and sustainable for the long haul.

Environmentally, socially, and politically, the times we live in are turbulent. Philip Rutter chose these two tree crops in part

because, as he told me personally, "they can survive war." Hazelnuts and chestnuts coppice very well, which means they can be cut or burned to the ground and they will grow back—they are difficult to kill. In an unstable world, these are stable, durable plants.

Our society is largely predicated on corporate efficiency and the bottom line, and from this many and far-ranging hierarchical and exploitative relationships persist. With the development of new, perennial staple crops, there is an opportunity to build social models based on cooperation and communalism that flow directly from them. This is exciting!

To achieve radical community sovereignty, let's build communal homesteads with hazelnuts and chestnuts. We can fight climate change, build healthy farm ecosystems, and feed humanity.

I'll see you in the shade.

### **Amanda Spitfire**

Supporting people in reclaiming their voices, power, control and authority over their lives, narratives, thoughts, bodies and actions is a central aspect of all the work I do. From trauma informed narrative therapy to trauma informed anti oppression work and everything in between—this is the main focus of the work I share with others and try to realize daily for myself. The people I surround myself with—those I call loved ones, comrades, family and community—are just as important as the work. Our shared struggle, resiliency and strength in our lived work, makes life motivating, eclectic and shared.

Aspects of Sovereignty which are mindfully and presently attempted in my work and life often or consistently include: Self-governance. Community. Solidarity. Autonomy. Support. Being seen. Being heard. Taking back things that have been taken from you. Protection. Reclaiming, reasserting, or strengthening the capacity and necessity of physical, mental, emotional,

energetic, and spiritual health. Control and power over health, wellness, home, land, and food. Strategizing for freedoms to walk through the world as we are without being targeted, stigmatized, or infringed upon for who we are.

### **Take Back the Night**

Merging space, body, movement and voice sovereignty through reclaiming voice, safety, space, community and language. Creating space for the testimony of violence and resiliency. Knowing survivors have a right to be seen, heard, and heal.

### **Up Against the Law**

Merging land, political, body and community sovereignty through the education and unlearning of oppressive laws, empowering politicized and stigmatized bodies and fighting for legal justice. Fighting for freedom of movement and life, and against the restrictions slammed down on expressions of life.

### **Red Umbrella Alliance**

Merging education about laws, policies, and DIY activities for increasing autonomy and safety in marginalized and targeted communities of sex workers. Increasing confidence, safety, community building, and power building.

### **Eclectic Trauma informed Narrative Therapy practices**

Merging reclaiming narrative, health, safety, communication capacity, capacity for self-care and getting needs met. Creating space for voice, healing, growth, insight, reflection and power building to change the way people are seen, heard and experience the world.

The varied and constant obstacles of oppression that stand in contrast to sustainable, holistic living are endless. From capitalism to white supremacy to rape culture to ableism to homophobia and transphobia – the constant struggle that people live under – just by living – makes supporting and increasing capacity for sovereignty and self-governance the central goal of my work and life. I believe that in order to understand the systems and relationships around us – and our role in them and

narratives we have been raised under. The need to unpack, unlearn, re-learn, and understand our pasts, present lives and future goals and desires, requires control, safety and power over and within our own selves and those we share our worlds with.

### **Kamau Blakney**

*Capoeira de Angola can only be taught without forcing the person's natural expression. The important thing is to take advantage of the free and individual movements of each person. No one fights like me, but in my students' games is all the knowledge that I learned.*

—Mestre Pastinha

Capoeira Angola is an African-Brazilian martial art carrying origins from various regions of Central Africa, including the Kongo and Angola. Capoeira further developed in Brazil with the arrival of several generations of Africans (few free and millions enslaved) who traveled west to what is now known as “the Americas”. The roots of Capoeira survived more than 400 years of Euro-Asian enslavement to become one of the most authentic cultural expressions of the African diaspora in South America.

Here in Philadelphia, the International Capoeira Angola Foundation – also known as FICA Philadelphia – has worked to share Capoeira Angola with local communities for roughly twenty years. Located at the Martin

Luther King Community Center in the heart of North Philly, FICA Philadelphia holds weekly classes for active spirits of all ages. Our organization frequently gives demonstrations, workshops, and holds annual conferences in an effort to make Capoeira Angola visible and accessible to local communities.

FICA Philadelphia has held classes all over the city. We began training behind the Nile Cafe on Germantown Avenue. In the mid-1990s, journeyed to 4th and South Streets to the KumQuat Dance Studio (now a post office), moved temporarily to Temple University, and finally settled into the King Center almost fifteen years ago.



Our organization is and has remained a nonprofit through all of these transitions, offering low-cost monthly, classes or scholarships to consistent students of all ages. This past June, FICA Philadelphia celebrated its 20th anniversary of performing authentic Capoeira Angola (inviting practitioners and masters from Brazil and around the world) on the streets of the Odunde African Street Festival.

For class and information schedule visit [www.ficaphiladelphia.org](http://www.ficaphiladelphia.org)

# Resources

## A select directory of Sovereignty in Philadelphia

### **African American United Fund**

est. 1982  
*2227 North Broad Street*

The mission of the African American United Fund is to improve the quality of life for the disadvantaged, to contribute to the social and economic stability of the African American community, and to encourage cooperation with other organizations within the area that have similar goals.

### **Community Farm and Food Resource Center at Bartram's Garden**

est. 2011  
*54th and Lindbergh Streets*

This organization seeks to develop local and national models that provide tools for organizing for food sovereignty; mentor and empower young people from our community; support and connect with elders; nurture culturally engaged community gardening; and, of course, increase access to fresh, organic, nutritious food in the historically underserved parts of the neighborhood.

### **Earthskeepers**

*5100 Kingsessing Avenue*

This organization is dedicated to promoting food security for all people, starting in West Philadelphia. They believe that eliminating poverty involves the production and supply of an adequate quality and quantity of healthy food. For Earthskeepers, improving access to this healthy food begins from the ground up and joining the food sovereignty movement being waged by peoples all over the world.

### **East Park Revitalization Alliance**

est. 2003  
*1737 North 31st Street*

East Park Revitalization Alliance seeks to build a healthy community in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, focusing on environmental improvement and health promotion. They turn vacant land into community gardens, operate programming to connect neighborhood residents to the adjacent park, have planted

over 700 trees in the community, and run the successful Healthy Choices Youth Program – an after school and summer program for neighborhood youth ages 6 to 18 at a local recreation center that gives young people the skills to make healthy choices that will help them become healthy adults

### **Garden Justice Legal Initiative, Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia**

est. 2011  
*United Way Building  
1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway*

This project provides pro bono legal support, policy research, advocacy, and community education and organizing to community gardeners and market farmers in the Philadelphia region. GJLI provides direct representation to clients.

### **Historic Fairhill Burial Ground Garden**

\*see page 10  
est. 1703  
*2901 Germantown Avenue*

### **Jewish Farm School**

est. 2006  
*5020 Cedar Avenue*

The Jewish Farm School is dedicated to teaching about contemporary food and environmental issues through innovative

trainings and skill-based Jewish agricultural education.

### **Mill Creek Farm**

est. 2005  
*4901 Brown Street*

Mill Creek Farm is an educational urban farm located in West Philadelphia dedicated to improving local access to fresh produce, building a healthy community and environment, and promoting a just and sustainable food system.

### **Norris Square Neighborhood Project**

\*see page 18  
est. 1973  
*2141 North Howard Street*

### **Nyambi Naturals**

*facebook.com/Nyambi-Naturals*

Nyambi Natural offers eco-friendly, high quality beauty skin care products. Our handmade products are created with organic locally sourced plant based ingredients. As a continued commitment to you and the environment all products are packaged with recyclable materials.

### **One Art Community Center**

est. 2001  
*1431–39 North 52nd Street*

One Art Community Center invests in the heart of the

community, with a mission to inspire people to creatively heal and express themselves through various forms of art. This organization offers teachings in the musical, visual, holistic, culinary, martial, cultural, literary and performing arts, as well as the art of gardening and sustainable design. They provide authentic, real-life experiences that teach the 21st-century skills of communication, literacy, leadership, and problem solving through technology and the arts.

### **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**

est. 1829  
*100 North 20th Street, 5th floor*

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society connects people with horticulture, so that they can, together, create beautiful, healthy and sustainable communities.

### **Philadelphia Orchard Project**

Est. 2007  
*The Woodlands  
4000 Woodland Avenue*

POP works with community-based groups and volunteers to plan and plant orchards filled with useful and edible plants. POP provides orchard design assistance, plant materials, and training in orchard care.

Community organizations own, maintain, and harvest the orchards, expanding community-based food production, environmental benefits, and opportunities for nature education. Orchards are planted in formerly vacant lots, community gardens, schoolyards, and other spaces, almost exclusively in low-wealth neighborhoods where people lack access to fresh fruit.

### **Philadelphia Urban Creators**

\*see page 14  
est. 2010  
*2315 North 11th Street*

### **Philadelphia Urban Roots Collective**

est. 2015  
*229 West Thompson Street*

This Philadelphia Urban Roots Collective is a community organization composed of farmer-educators dedicated to creating a stronger network in the food system and culture of Philadelphia. They envision a stronger vitality in the holism and local food system in neighborhoods with limited food access. They envision their efforts creating a self-sustaining community of interdisciplinary resources for Philadelphia residents.

### **Sanctuary Wholistic Arts**

737 Cambridge Street

This organization offers creative safe space for personal contemplation and community engagement.

### **The Masters Garden**

2502-6 West Master Street

This organization is dedicated to growing community on the 2500 block of Master Street.

### **The Table Spread**

est. 2011  
PO Box 4921

The Table Spread Community Garden was started in 2011 by a few individuals with a love for nature, gardening, and a desire to help the community. The garden is located in the Mill Creek area of Philadelphia, where they grow natural and organic foods. They are a nonprofit organization, incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania, whose purpose is to serve all the communities of Philadelphia with the need for fresh quality foods and household goods.

### **Urban Tree Connection**

est. 1997  
c/o First African Presbyterian Church  
4159 West Girard Avenue

The Urban Tree Connection (UTC) works with residents in Philadelphia's historically marginalized urban communities to revitalize their neighborhoods by transforming abandoned open spaces into safe and functional places that inspire and promote positive human interaction. UTC works with residents of West Philadelphia's Haddington neighborhood to develop community-driven greening and gardening projects on vacant land. Their aim is to cultivate community leadership, improve community health, and develop a local sustainable food system.

### **VietLEAD (Vietnamese Leadership & Advocacy)**

est. 2015  
1211 East Lycoming Street

VietLEAD is a grassroots organization based in Philly and South Jersey that cultivates, inspires, leads, and creates community. Their vision is to build an organization that focuses on sustainability, and self-determination for the Vietnamese and Southeast Asian communities in the region.

## **Further Reading**

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