

Treehuggers United = Invincible

Invincible: Too powerful to be defeated or overcome.

Think about it: What are you doing to and for our future?

Volume 8: July 12, 2023



Photos Courtesy RWAI

The program will restore over 60 hectares (148 acres) of community land under stress due to unsustainable land management. It will involve teaching local farmers agroforestry, supplying crop seeds, tree seedlings to farmers, tree planting and management techniques,

Creating Climate Resilient Communities

Submitted by Uche Isieke, Nigeria
(Rural Watch Africa Initiative)

Dear Partners,

I want to believe that you are doing well. It's been quite some time since you received an email from me. This is due to how demanding my job has become lately; navigating the most difficult-to-reach areas and giving help to the people that need it the most gives me less space for emailing.

One of these underserved areas is the Ijah community in North Central Nige-

ria. They are experiencing land degradation due to inappropriate land use, scarce resources, and climate change.

We are taking a holistic approach to address land degradation, which affects local land productivity, food systems, and the people's livelihood.

Upon our arrival to Ijah ancient kingdom yesterday, July 8, 2023, I went straight to the Zaki, the Traditional Chief of the area, to announce the commencement of the second phase of the RUWAI partnership with

the community to strengthen people's capacity to restore their nature-based assets and achieve sustainable living.

The program will restore over 60 hectares (148 acres) of community land under stress due to unsustainable land management. It will involve teaching local farmers agroforestry, supplying crop seeds, tree seedlings to farmers, tree planting and management techniques, alternative skills for women and youths, and entrepreneurship.

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The Go-Back Club: A Simple-Living Brigade

Our Motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.

Think and Act, Man/Woman, Think and Act

About 25 years ago, we had a Grassroots Coalition Board member who was a high school science teacher. One day she invited me to do my environmental lifestyles talk to her students. They were very attentive. When I was done, she asked her students, "What did you learn?"

I still remember one young man summarizing my half-hour talk in 7 words: "Think and act, man, think and act." Nobody could have said it better and I can still visualize this experience and hear his concise answer.

CONSUMER LIBERATION is my theme. Let us not be slaves to things. I repeat this motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without. Maybe you can memorize it like I have done, and then share it with everyone you know.

Please join my simple living brigade, a group of people who have something in common, who work together to put out fires, and in our case, to seriously fight global warming/climate change.



Cartoon by Jen Sorensen for June 28, 2023 GoComics submitted by Allen Hengst, Washington DC, USA.

Source: <https://www.gocomics.com/jen-sorensen/2023/06/28>

How to Subscribe

Dear Sister/Fellow Treehuggers,

If you'd like to receive future issues of my newspaper, please email me at grassrootscoalition@pa.net. Also, email me if you have good stories and photos you'd like me to consider publishing in future issues. In the past, I have published a Messages page similar to Letters to the Editor so if you'd like to share your thoughts, please do so.

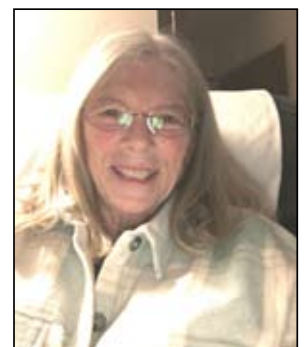
I'd like to see this become a team effort as it has

been in the past but we need time to develop this project and figure out ways to work together.

This is a labor of love but I always appreciate donations, which you can send to: Iona Conner, 157 Chambersbridge Road 4A, Brick, NJ 08723. If you use Zelle or PayPal, please reach my bank account directly via dosomething@pa.net. Cash is OK, too. Thank you!

For the Earth and the Trees,

Iona



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Section 107 of the Copyright Act pro-

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Fair Use Logo



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Our Director of Restoration, Food Systems & Livelihoods, Bala Haruna, a seasoned environmental resource manager with 35 years of experience, coordinates this program.

We are grateful to our technical partners at ARDS-FCTA and those who support us in several ways.

The indigenous people of Ijah are known for their ancestral heritage, which is a source of identity and pride for the community.

The RUWAI media team recently released a video documentary showcasing the rich culture of the Ijah

people. Despite their social, economic, and environmental challenges, they are happy and resilient.

Kindly see the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyxShwZ3LOg>. Share and Support RUWAI to help continue to help. Become an Ambassador. Sign up at <https://go.ruralwatchafrica.org/p/4b6dde39-ac8d-431d-9370-ae402c28c120>

We are creating Livelihoods for Over 20,000 people in 25 communities across Nigeria. Your donate will help equip more rural households.



I am using my birthday tomorrow, July 10, 2023, to ask my friends and partners of RUWAI worldwide to give \$5-\$20 gifts to support our tree planting effort and charity.

If you wish to get involved or learn more, please message Facebook profile at <https://www.facebook.com/uche.isieke> or email info@ruralwatchafrica.org. Donate through PayPal at https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=22XC3TXHGZYQQ.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Uche Isieke





Photos: Mukesh Pokhrel/Thomson Reuters Foundation

Women are planting trees at Mulpani Kathmandu, Nepal. July 2, 2023.

Trees Like Women Best: Nepal's Forests Thrive with Female Bosses

By Mukesh Pokhrel

Context: July 5, 2023

What's the Context?

A groundbreaking initiative to put women in charge of Nepal's vast forests has shown women do it better when it comes to planting trees and preserving the planet

- Pioneering community scheme promotes women foresters.
- Female bosses praised for happy workers, healthy trees.
- Experience on land propels more women into politics.

KATHMANDU – Put women in charge of cultivating forests and the trees grow stronger. That's the takeaway from a pioneering 30-year scheme that has elevated women to the top of Nepal's community forests – and paved their way into local and national politics.

Three decades of picking women for leadership roles has produced healthier forests and happier workers, according to Nabaraj Pudasaini, joint secretary of the government's Department of Forest and Soil Conservation.

“In comparison to other community

forests in the country, the ones managed by women are doing exceptionally well,” said Pudasaini. “Women spend more time in the forest than men, so they naturally have a deeper love and understanding of it. They are honest, transparent, and have good relations with villagers, so they became a success,” he added.

Apsara Chapagain is typical of this trend for top female foresters, as the first women to chair the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FE-COFUN), a national body that promotes

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Community Forest users demonstrating against the tax imposed by the government in the Udaypur district, Nepal, December 17, 2019.

community rights over local land.

With tropical and temperate forests covering about 40% of the Himalayan nation, the health of its trees is key to Nepal's prosperity and its roughly 29 million people.

Having run FECOFUN from 2010 to 2015, Chapagain is now deputy speaker of the assembly in Bagmati province, one of seven in the land-locked nation.

The 51-year-old credits her rise in local politics to her pioneering work with protecting trees and championing women. "We have worked to show the way for the state," said Chapagain, whose time with the forest movement taught her how to run teams, chair meetings, and take decisions for the benefit of the community at large. "Any institution of the state cannot ignore FECOFUN's contribution," she added.

From Forest Conservation to Political Leadership

Nepal's community forests were set

up in 1995 to use land more sustainably and help reduce local poverty. The country's forested area has since increased to about 44% from 29%, according to the Ministry of Forest and Environment.

FECOFUN now represents 3 million Nepalis working the forests in about 22,415 groups. Of those, 1,000 groups are female-led, and the rest are split equally by gender.

Popular Gentle, an expert in community forestry, said FECOFUN was a pioneer in Nepal in ensuring the equal representation of women, ethnic groups, and every caste.

He said the Nepali government had watched its success and followed suit, incorporating FECOFUN's policy to ensure that women take a third of roles running all aspects of the state.

FECOFUN was still more ambitious, safeguarding half of its jobs for women in a groundbreaking provision that began in 1996 and propelled many women into mainstream politics today.

Bharati Pathak, who stood down as chair of FECOFUN last month, said the program "has enabled female participation and empowerment for women who could not come out from home."

Nepali society is male dominated, with women largely confined to caring for family and home. Nearly 29% of women are economically active – compared with about 53% of men – and female workers are much more likely than their male counterparts to be in precarious employment, according to World Bank data.

Pathak – who has spent 15 years on FECOFUN's central committee – has been treasurer, general secretary, and president.

Now serving as a member of the Bagmati assembly, she is one of a group of forestry trailblazers turned politicians.

In last November's election, more than 40 community forest campaigners – 30 of them women – won seats in the House of Representatives and the

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This event will be the 7th in a series of conferences dedicated to the study, awareness, and appreciation of the original forests of the Eastern United States and Eastern Canada. Since the last conference in 2004, advancements in the understanding of the distribution, dynamics, and values of these old forests have been significant and far-reaching. Hosted by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, the 2023 conference will provide an important and unique forum for the exchange of ideas and discus-

sion of numerous topics relative to the special role old forests have in today's world. Multicultural perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom will be infused throughout the conference experience. CEU credits will also be available for resource professionals. Field experiences will introduce participants to several old-growth forest sites in the area.

Conference Themes:

- Forest Dynamics, Ecology, and Biodiversity
- Balancing Preservation and Management
- Climate Change Implications
- Health and Wellness: Impacts and Benefits

Confirmed keynote and plenary speakers include:

- **Bob Leverett** – Co-founder of the Native Tree Society, co-founder and President of Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest, Chair of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Forest Reserves Science Advisory Committee, co-author of several books, and a co-discoverer of most of the known old growth in Massachusetts.
- **Bill McKibben** – Educator, environmentalist, Co-founder of 350.org, thirdact.org, and author of 18 books, including *Earth*, *The End of Nature*, *Deep Economy*.
- **Suzanne Simard** – Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia, research scientist, and author of *Finding the Mother Tree*.
- **Florence Williams** – Journalist, Podcaster, and author of *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier and More Creative*.

Register at <https://learnforlife.unh.edu/portal/events/reg/participantTypeSelection.do?method=load&entityId=341975358>

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seven provincial assemblies in Nepal. Overall, female representation in state and national politics stands at 33%.

Women in Charge

Women are vital to the cultivation and preservation of Nepal's forests – and also key to fostering greater inclusion across state institutions, said Sindhu Dhungana, joint secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Environment. "Nepal's community forestry program can serve as a model for the world," said Dhungana, whose ministry oversees the Department of Forest and Soil Conservation.

He praised women's role in conservation efforts, saying they had planted trees, stopped grazing, fenced forests, and educated villagers about land preservation.

One such woman, Nanda Kuwar, has

chaired the Madhumalati community forest in Kailali in western Nepal since 2014. When the 50-year-old took over, the forest was sparse, and the land was under direct threat from construction, cattle-grazing, and farming.

Kuwar's first task was to launch a campaign to get the community planting more vegetation in the forest - an initiative that opened her to attack by a developer armed with a sickle.

"Blood was flowing from my hand, and I immediately went to the hospital," she recalled. "Now there is greenery and big trees. Seeing the trees of my community forest makes me forget my pain."

Meanwhile, the Buddha Mangal Tal Women Community Forest in Nawalparasi district in the country's midwest has been hailed as a beacon of environmental rescue led by women.

Encroachment by villagers who cultivated paddy and reared cows had been a blight on the forest - and when local men failed to stop it, the women stepped up and took charge, said Kamal Pariyar, chairperson of FECOFUN in Nawalparasi.

A committee was established - managed by women - which fenced off the area and planted trees. Visitors to the forest must buy tickets, with the proceeds going towards poorer families, prioritizing female-led households.

"When the women took over leadership 15 years ago, they put a stop to encroachment," said Pariyar. "They made sure that every household understood the importance of the forest."

Source: <https://www.context.news/nature/trees-like-women-best-nepals-forests-thrive-with-female-bosses>



Photo: redcharlie | @redcharliel on Unsplash

Climate Forest works to protect mature and old-growth trees and forests from logging across America's public lands.

The Fight for Environmental Justice in Africa

By Nnimmo Bassey

Earth | Food | Life & DGR: July 10, 2023

DGR Editor's Note: *As a continent with abundant resources, Africa has been a target of colonial powers, who have plundered her land for centuries. This is not merely ecocide, but a violation of indigenous and human rights as well. Colonizers have destroyed Africa and continue to do so under newer guises, all in the name of, they say, advancing the lives of African people. People whose advanced cultures were destroyed along with their land. While Deep Green Resistance (DGR) believes in community control over decisions related to energy, we do not believe that renewable energy is the key to the ecological problems we are facing.*

This article was produced by Earth

| Food | Life, a project of the Independent Media Institute. This article is an edited version of a speech the author delivered at Health of Mother Earth Foundation's 10th Anniversary Conference with the theme 'Advancing Environmental Justice in Africa' held June 2023 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The struggle for environmental justice in Africa is complex and broad. It is the continuation of the fight for the liberation of the continent and for socio-ecological transformation. It is a fact that the environment is our life: The soil, rivers, and air are not inanimate or lifeless entities. We are rooted and anchored in our environment. Our roots are sunk into our environment and that is where our nourishment comes from. We do not see the Earth and her bountiful gifts as items

that must be exploited, transformed, consumed, or wasted. The understanding of the Earth as a living entity and not a dead thing warns that rapacious exploitation that disrupts her regenerative powers is an act of cruelty or ecocide.

We bear in mind that colonialism was erected on the right to subjugate, erase, or diminish the right to life and the right to the unfettered cultural expression of the colonized. In particular, the colonized were dehumanized and transformed into zombies working for the benefit of the colonial powers. Ecological pillage was permitted as long as it benefited the colonizers. This ethos has persisted and manifests in diverse forms. Grand theft by the colonial forces was seen as entrepreneurship. Genocide was overlooked

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as mere conquest. Slavery was seen as commerce. Extractivism was to be pursued relentlessly as any element left unexploited was considered a waste. What could be wasted with no compunction was life. So most things had to die. The civilizers were purveyors of death. Death of individuals. Death of ecosystems.

Thus, today, people still ask: What would we do with the crude oil or fossil gas in our soil if we do not exploit them? In other words, how could we end poverty if we do not destroy our environment and grab all it could be forced to yield? We tolerate deforestation and unregulated industrial fishing, and run a biosafety regulation system that promotes the introduction of need-less genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and by doing so, endanger our biodiversity and compromise our environment and food systems.

Plunder is presented as inescapable and desired under the cloak of foreign investment. Political leaders in despoiled regions offer ease of doing business, tax holidays, sundry lax rules, and other neocolonial governance policies.

The reign of exploitation and consumption without responsibility has driven Africa and indeed the world to the brink. The current *civilization of death* seeks ready investment in destruction through warfare and extractivism rather than in building resilience and adapting to the environmental changes that result from corporate and imperial misadventures.

We are in a reign in which condescension is the hallmark of multilateralism. The collective action needed to tackle global warming has been reduced to puny “nationally determined contributions” that add up to nothing. Rather than recognizing and paying a clear climate debt, we expend energy negotiating a loss and damage regime to be packaged as a humanitarian gesture. Pray, who negotiates what is offered as charity?

Today, Africa is facing multiple ecological challenges. All of these have resulted from the actions of entities that have seen the continent as a sacrificial zone. While the world has come to the conclusion that there must be an urgent shift from dependence on fossil fuels, we are seeing massive investments for the extraction of petroleum resources on the continent. And we must say that this investment comes with related infrastructure for the export of these resources out of the continent in a crass colonial pattern. A mere 1 percent of the labor force in the extractive sector in Africa are Africans. A mere 5 percent of investment in the sector is in Africa. More than 85 percent of the continent’s fossil gas infrastructure is for export purposes.

The shift to renewable energy brings the same old challenges to Africa. Extraction of critical minerals for renewable energy is done without prior consultation with and consent of our people. The continent’s environment is being degraded just as it has been with the extraction of oil, gas, gold, diamond, nickel, cobalt, and other solid minerals. The array of solar panels and wind turbines could well become markers of crime scenes if precautionary measures are not taken now.

Are we against renewable energy? No. They provide the best pathway toward ending the energy deficit on the continent. However, this should be pursued through discrete, autonomous, and socialized ownership schemes.

While the world knows that we must rebuild our biodiversity, what we see is the push towards more deforestation in Africa and for monoculture agriculture, all of which are against our best interest and that of the world. A sore issue, land grabbing has not disappeared with the coming innovations.

As Chinua Achebe writes in his classic 1958 book *Things Fall Apart* about Eneke the bird, “Since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching.”

For us, until the despoilers of our environment halt their destructive acts, we will intensify our resistance and never give in to their designs. We believe this conference will not only break the yoke of colonialism but will also puncture the hold of coloniality. Our book, *Politics of Turbulent Waters*, is one of the tools toward these ends.

Every African nation should:

1. Commit to issuing an annual State of Environment Report to lay out the situation of things in their territories.
2. End destructive extraction no matter the appeal of capital.
3. Demand climate debt for centuries of ecological exploitation and harm.
4. Require remediation, restoration of all degraded territories, and pay reparations to direct victims or their heirs.
5. Support and promote food sovereignty including by adopting agroecology.
6. Adopt and promote African cultural tools and philosophies for the holistic tackling of ecological challenges and for the healing and well-being of our people and communities.
7. Promote and provide renewable energy in a democratized manner.
8. Recognize our right to water, treat it as a public good, and halt and reverse its privatization.
9. Recognize the rights of Mother Earth and codify Ecocide as a crime akin to genocide, war crimes, and other unusual crimes.
10. Ensure that all Africans enjoy the right to live in a safe and satisfactory environment suitable for their progress as enshrined in the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights.

Nnimmo Bassey is the director of the ecological think tank, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), and a member steering committee of Oilwatch International.

Source: <https://dgrnewsservice.org/civilization/colonialism/the-fight-for-environmental-justice-in-africa/>

Mother Gaia's 13 Love Directives & Precepts

[Note from Mare Cromwell] In the spiritual downloading and writing of "Messages from Mother... Earth Mother" in the summer of 2012, I was *given* Mother's 13 Love Directives/Commandments and Precepts to put in the book. Mother was accompanied by a Spiritual Council of Ascended Masters also that late evening. These Directives are a profound compass to help guide us into the Brave New Earth birthing presently.

Finally, I am ready to offer an event on these Directives after many years of gestating on them with Mother and the Greater Teams behind the Great Mother Love Way. These Directives go deep and in no way can I claim that I completely understand them, as the levels of consciousness they touch upon expand far beyond my consciousness.

Within this ceremony and workshop, the story behind the Directives will be shared along ever-evolving personal insights and spiritual downloads about the wisdom within them. Then the event will broaden into a group discussion to tap the spiritual wisdom that each of us carry within ourselves, to collectively weave a broader understanding of what these Love Directives & Precepts mean.

Mother Gaia's Thirteen Love Directives & Precepts

Excerpt from *Messages from Mother... Earth Mother & The Great Mother Bible* by Mare Cromwell

1. I, Mother, gave the planet a song. Please come to know you are part of this song as one in the vast web of life, no greater, no less. All that you do affects the song, for better or for worse.

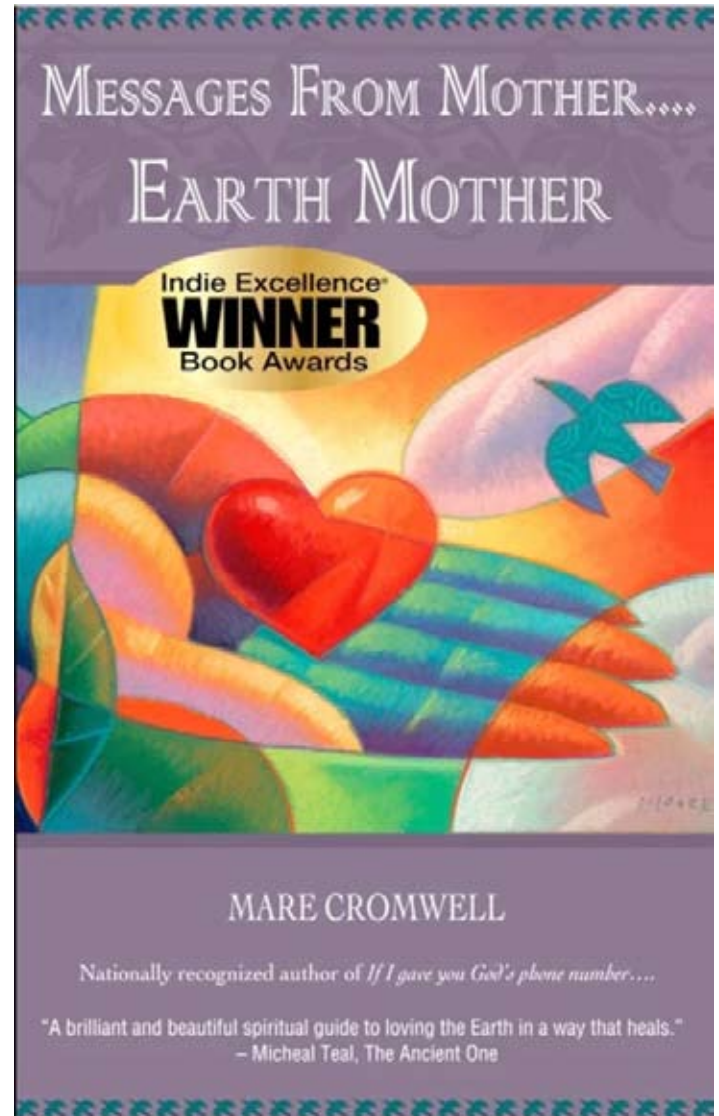
2. Your thoughts, whether from your higher self or lower self, affect the song as much as your actions, much as your Western culture has denied this for a long time.

3. Everything has consciousness, the stones, plants, even mountains, rivers and oceans – all join in the song. Know that your thoughts and actions are registered in the song and affect the stones, plants, mountains and all, to support the positive universe or not.

4. Developing silence of the mind and from this place – deep gratitude is one of the most positive things you can do for Mother and all others in the song, especially those very sensitive and intelligent ones such as the whales and the dolphins who are so closely attuned to the song.

5. Fear that comes from your head is an illusion. Fear that comes from your instincts is not. Learning to discern between the two will help in stilling your mind and being in the moment.

6. The song is most harmonious within an energy dance of authenticity, love, compassion, tenderness, patience and cooperation. It is good to learn this dance with all beings with whom you interact, whether two-legged, four-legged, winged or finned ones, standing ones (trees), or stone people.



7. Come to understand your shadow self and make bringing it to consciousness to heal it part of the dance and celebration.

8. It is all just energy – money, time, your job, your play, your love. Choose to make it as positive as possible and lose the illusion of fear within this energy dynamic.

9. Love is the foremost energy. A quality of love that transcends what most of you call love. Mother loves you. You all evolved from Quantum Divine Love. Evolution is an act of Love.

10. Know that the perception of perfection is an illusion. You are all the most beloved and delightfully flawed beings as two-leggeds and that is how it is meant to be—and it makes you all the more lovable. You are perfect in your imperfections.

11. Know and honor your Mother as you honor your Creator. And if you want to put an icon of me on an altar, that's fun. But any other graven images are not needed.

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Finding Equilibrium: Inside Look at a U.S. CSA

By Farmers Hannah and Joe. Cream Ridge, NJ. No longer rambling. Cultivating community and good food. Certified Organic produce at Ramblin' Sol Farm.

This Week is CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) WEEK 5A: Weekly and Week A members, please place your order by Sunday at 5 pm, otherwise we will pack a box for you. Harvest List: Lettuce Mix, Baby Swiss chard, Baby Fennel, Scallions, Garlic, Turnips, Kohlrabi, Summer Squash, Cabbage, Cucumbers, Carrots, Beets, Green Beans, and an assortment of herbs.

IT IS AN ADD-ON WEEK!

If you registered for add-on items and eggs, they will be automatically added to your share. *You can choose multiples of most items to fill your share, however, some items may have limits so that we make sure everyone has the opportunity to try everything!

Lunchbox share: choose a maximum of 3 items Personal Share: choose a maximum of 5 items Family Share: choose a maximum of 8 items

Please refer to your orientation email for pick up instructions

Farm News

Ok so we know it is wrong to complain about this but OMG, we can't get this bounty out of the field! We have come to dread harvest days, but we know in the long run it is a good prob-



Photos Courtesy Ramblin' Sol Farm

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12. Have fun! Life is a celebration! Life is an adventure!

13. The more you celebrate life, the more you help your Mother to heal all over the planet, and encourage the whales and dolphins and all others in the song to sing more harmoniously with you!

And here are Mother's Precepts:

- Touch me, your Mother everyday. Touch my skin, my earth. Let my healing energy come into you to calm you and heal you. Send your love energy back into me also... I yearn for you to consciously do this.

- Do not gouge my, your Mother's, skin [surface of the Earth] or break into my bones [rock layers].

- Do not create compounds that will last longer than the very short-term out in nature.

- Honor the forests and replant trees.
- Honor the wetlands and restore them.
- Do not waste.
- Clean up your rooms. Big and small.
- Live in community. All are part of the community. Everyone's needs should be taken care of by the community. Share.
- Listen with an open heart.
- Speak with an open heart.
- Be lean of judgment and speech.
- Be open to the mystery that lies in people and the world around you.
- Be compassionate with yourself.

Please visit Mare's website at <https://www.greatmother-love.earth/>

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lem to have! It seems that our little farm now needs a few more hands.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Solstice Dinner last weekend, and thank you to all of our helpers who made it happen! It was the first of our dinners during which we actually sat down to eat. Emmylou was thrilled to be a part of the “harvest feast” as she called it. Often we feel like we are running in circles as we attempt to balance a growing business, stretched finances, family time, mental health, being environmentally and socially responsible, and general sanity. We’ll let you know when we figure all that out, but it certainly keeps things in perspective for us to sit around a community table passing dishes of home cooked food to our neighbors. Our next dinners are September 17th and November 11th and tickets are currently available on the website (<https://ramblinsolfarm.com/>).

When we’re not harvesting, feasting, or contemplating this crazy thing we are doing...we are in maintenance mode out in the field! Broken mowers have been fixed so all the mowing is top priority. We are relieved that our preventative weed control methods of stale bedding and tarping have reduced our need to actually weed, but tomatoes all need pruning and Fall bed prep is on the horizon!

Lastly and most importantly, we were reminded last weekend of how we came to be rooted in this particular piece of fertile soil. It took just one beautiful person who loved food and all things that grow to create an opportunity for others to thrive. Let’s keep passing that on my friends and create some positivity in this world.

Recipe

It’s always grilling season on this farm, but it’s time to step it up! With so much summer squash around we are always looking for something new to try. Also, we love any dish that adds those scallions! Hope you enjoy!

Grilled summer squash with a miso glaze! Yum! <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023319-grilled-zucchini-with-miso-glaze>
[Note from Iona: I had trouble getting this recipe even though I’m a subscriber so I’ll wish you either good luck or have fun creating your own recipe.]



Messages from Our Friends

(For many, English is not their native language.)

Thanks, Iona! I haven't read it all yet but I especially liked the book excerpt from *Strangely Like War* and the Mongabay article on the Miyawaki forests. There is hope out there, isn't there?

And your focus on trees and forest issues is genius. Keep up the good work!

David Hunter Bishop, USA

Hopefully, I'll have time to dig into TH #7 later this weekend.

In the meantime, I just received the Old-Growth Forest Network's 2023 annual report in the mail and noticed on page 9 that **two new** New Jersey forests were added in Salem (Game Branch Preserve) and Burlington (Red Lion Preserve) counties. I'm curious whether you've ever heard of the one nearest to you in Burlington County called "Bear Swamp."

Allen Hengst, Washington DC, USA

[Iona's answer: *Nope, had not heard of them; thank you, Allen!*]

Do any of your issues (I didn't get to review this latest yet) deal with the science of tree communication? I had an epiphany when I learned about underground 'microbiome' for lack of a better understanding of how to talk about it, that develops for hundreds of thousands (?) of years, and which 'restoration' after strip mining and other insults can never replace.

With the recent burning and smoke we noticed the local trees seemed to release more pollen, out of synch with the time of year. I wondered if there was a kind of 'distress call' being released.

MaryAnn Sorensen Allacci, New Jersey USA

Hi Iona – good issue! I have been meaning to write about our motto. I met you years ago when I was leading the group Simplicity Matters. It was a bit of a failure because people are too busy to simplify! But it is crucial now that Climate Change is bearing down on us.

I just finished reading the *Story of More* by Hope Jahren, which has been called "an essential pocket primer on climate change." I got it from the library. If we are to get out of this mess, curbing consumption of Earth's resources, restraint and long-term thinking is required. We must "**Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.**" And this includes traveling! Airplane travel is the worst and I shudder when I see the crowds at airports nowadays. People need to wake up and start taking care of our environment. Earth will survive but the human race may not.

I forgot to mention that the article "New Trees **No Substitute** for Old Trees" was great. This is what I have been trying to convey to our local government because they allow developers to plant new trees (or pay to have them planted) when they destroy established habitat with old trees. Not a substitute at all!

Marney Bruce, Maryland USA

Thank you very much! I missed out on the contribution of articles. It is a great piece!

Tugumisirize Bairo Frances, Uganda

Hello Mum Iona. (excerpt)

Thank you to spread the word for fossil free campaign.

Here in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we are also involved in another fossil free Virunga campaign https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/petitions/end-fossil-fuels-in-drc?source=rawlink&utm_source=rawlink&share=c9cdbf87-2ef9-4735-acb9-1d883cac6130

We are campaigning to promote renewable energy projects in our country, DR Congo.

To: *Le gouvernement et les banques*

End Fossil Fuels in DRC

Why is this important?

First of all, I would like to say thank you to everyone for standing in solidari-

ty with campaigns across Africa fighting for climate justice. With your support, we support each other to continue to defend an Africa without fossil fuels.

On April 8, 2022 – just months after signing a \$500 million deal with donors at COP26 in Glasgow – the government of the DRC approved a plan to auction off 16 new oil blocks, including some that are located in the Congo Basin – the world's second largest rainforest and one of the world's largest carbon sinks and most environmentally sensitive areas. Opening the DRC's forests to oil drilling would be an unimaginable disaster for the climate, biodiversity, human rights, and local livelihoods.

This is why activists in the DRC are calling on Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi to ban this toxic auction. Add your name to the petition at <https://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/petitions/end-fossil-fuels-in-drc>.

Nowadays, I'm concentrating my efforts to set up a Faith Plans for faith communities, in partnership with these we are seeking for investors or fundings for these plans <https://www.faithplans.org/>

I've also started a Carbon project Initiative that aims to Identify, regroup, and catalyze all activities, community, business, and individual projects that can generate carbon credits in our region and mobilize fundings for these projects from private sectors, entrepreneurs, investors, and from different carbon markets. Most projects are located around protected areas (National parks and biodiversity reserves) and focused on community forestry, reforestation, sustainable agroecology, land use, conservation,... With a big vision to HELP PEOPLE SO THEY CAN HELP THEMSELVES.

Hope to contribute for better world.

Leon Simwerayi, Climate Actions Congo, Green Brigade, DR Congo