BECOMING KINDRED

Course Syllabus

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Meeting Times: TBA

Course Description

Centering afro-indigenous practices through hands-on learning that integrates the arts, sciences, mathematics, and history, participants will learn about agro-ecology through observation of the land and activities planned according to the seasons.

Lessons will focus on the importance of biodiversity, soil health, and plant identification for food and medicinal purposes.

Course Objectives

- To learn about what constitutes an ecosystem
- To learn about the importance of biodiversity in an ecosystem
- To learn about an agro-forest food system
- To learn about the importance of healthy soil
- To learn about regenerative agriculture

Supplies

- Sketchbook/Notebook
- Drawing pencils
- Watercolor paint set with brushes (optional)
- Sunscreen
- Sun hat
- Garden gloves (Optional)
- Reusable Water Bottle

Weekly Schedule

Spring Session (March, April, May)

Week One

Introduction to the land- Discussion of class procedures, Safer Spaces Community Guidelines. materials list. **Introduction to the High Tunnel Microclimate**. **Hugelkultur:** Layered Mound Gardens - Exploring Tilling vs. No-Till Gardening

Week Two

Soil is Alive!- Healthy soils are teaming with life. This lesson will explore the many organisms that call soil home. **Soil texture and Composition-** Learn about the different components of soil and ways to determine soil texture and composition.

Week Three

Compost Your Way- Exploration of the different ways to compost food scraps and the benefits of keeping food out of landfills and returning it to the soil.
Create a decomposition Observation Bag - Examine the process of decomposition and consider how living and once-living materials decompose to become part of the soil.
Earthworms- The good, the bad, and the bizarre. Earthworms as an indicator of soil health.

Week Four

Fungus Among Us- Learn about the importance of fungus in our environment. Take a hike to find different types of fungi in the forest. **Tree Identification** - Learn to identify types of trees by bark texture and leaf shape. Identify the types of trees certain fungi like to grow on.

Week Five

Transplanting and Direct Seeding. Exploration of the benefits of biodiversity and how it makes the garden ecosystem stronger by learning about a technique known as companion planting. Explore symbiotic relationships in the garden and design a garden that demonstrates biodiversity.

Week Six

Celebrating Diversity in the Garden- Exploration of the benefits of biodiversity and how it makes the garden ecosystem stronger by learning about a technique known as companion planting. Explore symbiotic relationships in the garden and design a garden that demonstrates biodiversity.

Week Seven

Growing Garden Companions - This lesson explores different types of garden companions and challenges learners to devise experiments to test the validity of the reported beneficial relationships.
Three Sisters Garden- Exploration of the benefits of companion planting by investigating the traditional Indigenous American planting of Three SIsters Gardens.

Week Eight

Plant a Butterfly Garden - Encourage a sense of connection to the natural world and invite butterflies into the landscape by planting a butterfly garden. A butterfly garden provides a colorful array of nectar-producing plants that not only attract butterflies (and often hummingbirds as well), but offers plants that feed the caterpillar stage of their life cycle. With appropriate plantings, a butterfly garden provides opportunities to explore the life cycle of a butterfly.
Plant a natural dye garden.

Summer Session (June, July, Early August)

Week One

The Plant - Soil Relationship- Exploration of how soil helps anchor plants and provides them essential elements of water and nutrients. Plants prevent soil erosion and provide organic matter.**Hugelkultur:** Layered Mound Gardens - Exploring Tilling vs. No-Till Gardening

Week Two

Dealing with Garden Pests and Diseases- Exploration of the types of pests and disease problems one is likely to encounter in the garden and development of a pest and disease control plan.

Week Three

Growing Garden Companions - This lesson explores different types of garden companions and challenges learners to devise experiments to test the validity of the reported beneficial relationships.
Three Sisters Garden- Exploration of the benefits of companion planting by investigating the traditional Indigenous American plantain of Three Sisters Gardens.

Week Four

Fruit Vs. Vegetable- Why are some fruits called vegetables? In this lesson, learners will explore the difference between the scientific definition of the fruit and the common definition of a fruit.
Safe Harvesting- Exploration of best practices to ensure a safe and positive experience eating from the garden. Development of some basic harvesting guidelines to reduce the possibility of food-borne illnesses.

Week Five

Edible Flowers- Exploration of the types of flowers that are edible and their origins.
Imperfect Flowers: A Design for Genetic Diversity - In this lesson, learners will explore plants that have imperfect flowers and learn how this characteristic can help ensure their survival.

Week Six

Art in the Garden- Using the garden as an art studio to hone observation skills by documenting the changes in the garden throughout the day and year. Learn to appreciate how nature is constantly changing. Discover the many ways we can use art to express what we see and feel.

Week Seven

Exploring Plant Dyes- Investigation of the use of plants to create natural dyes, experimenting with different dyeing methods and a variety of plant materials.

Week Eight

Photosynthesis Runs the World- Learn about the basic ingredients needed for the process of photosynthesis and discover its end products. Understand the importance of photosynthesis to all life on Earth.

Fall Session (Late August, September, October)

Week One

The Plant - Soil Relationship- Exploration of the benefits of companion planting by investigating the traditional Indigenous American plantain of Three SIsters Gardens.

Week Two

Exploring Plant Dyes- Investigation of the use of plants to create natural dyes, experimenting with different dyeing methods and a variety of plant materials.

Week Three

Fruit Vs. Vegetable- Why are some fruits called vegetables? In this lesson, learners will explore the difference between the scientific definition of the fruit and the common definition of a fruit. **Exploring Food Preservation -** Learn why and how fresh food can be preserved for later consumption.

Week Four

Safe Harvesting- Exploration of best practices to ensure a safe and positive experience eating from the agro-forest garden. Development of some basic harvesting guidelines to reduce the possibility of food-borne illnesses.

Week Five

Art in the Garden- Using the garden as an art studio to hone observation skills by documenting the changes in the garden throughout the day and year. Learn to appreciate how nature is constantly changing. Discover the many ways we can use art to express what we see and feel.

Week Six

Tree and shrub propagation- Participating in the planting, and propagation of fruit and nut trees and shrubs into the agro-forest food system. Demonstration and discussion of cloning and grafting techniques, as well as how and where to plant for maximum success.

Week Seven

Save your Seeds- Saving seeds from favorite plants.
Support Biodiversity by starting a Seed Library - Learn about the different types of biological diversity and investigate its benefits. Understand how seed production in nature contributes to biodiversity. Delve into how commercial seed production inhibits biodiversity. Learn about seed libraries.

Week Eight

Put your Garden to Bed- Exploration insect and fungal life histories and overwintering strategies. Learn about good garden sanitation, covering bare soils, and growing a Winter Cover Crop.