



PRESS RELEASE

March 04, 2025

The Enduring Impact of the African Plant Diaspora: A Symposium and Exhibition at the Lloyd Library & Museum

The Enduring Impact of the African Plant Diaspora, a groundbreaking symposium and exhibition, invites scholars, artists, and community members to engage in a profound exploration of the intersection of African heritage, colonialism, and the plants that shaped the Americas. The symposium is co-coordinated by 2023 Lloyd Artist-in-Residence, Mark Harris.

The symposium will feature a day of thought-provoking conversations, presentations, and participatory performances from a diverse group of international scholars, artists, and historians. Topics will range from ethnobotany and slave medicine to colonialism and cultural geography, emphasizing how African plant knowledge both survived and flourished in the Americas despite centuries of suppression.

The event will culminate in a community dinner, featuring dishes with deep African roots such as saltfish, fufu, and gumbo. Organized in collaboration with Cincinnati's Table and Wave Pool, the dinner will offer an opportunity for local communities to celebrate African food culture while reflecting on its ties to historical plant migrations and the resilience of African culinary and agricultural traditions.



Mark Harris and Carmel Buckley
Amaranthus viridis/Amaranth, acrylic paint and watercolor
pens on paper, 1993–2025

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, April 25, 5-7 p.m.
Lloyd Library & Museum
Free and open to the public
Light refreshments

We hope you'll join us as we celebrate at our Opening Reception!

A standout component of *The Enduring Impact of the African Plant Diaspora* is a three-month exhibition, opening April 25, 2025, and running until July 25, 2025. Curated by Mark Harris, the 2023 Lloyd Library Artist-in-Residence, and Lloyd librarians, the exhibition will showcase his original artwork, alongside rare 18th-century botanical books from the Lloyd Library's extensive collection.

These books—key to the colonial plant trade—have long overlooked the contributions of enslaved and indigenous peoples to botanical studies. Harris's artwork will highlight these often-unseen contributions and offer an artistic perspective on African plant legacies that have been concealed or erased by colonial narratives. Additionally, the opening reception will feature a film by Mark Harris, *Predatory Botany*, which offers a further exploration of these themes.



Alice Walker—In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens/Bambara Groundnut, watercolor on paper, 2025

SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, April 26
9:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.
Lloyd Library & Museum
Free and open to the public
Registration required

The Enduring Impact of the African Plant Diaspora Symposium aims to generate new scholarship and foster a community conversation about the horticultural knowledge of Africans and their descendants in the Americas. By exploring the history of plant shipments alongside the transportation of enslaved Africans, the event seeks to deepen understanding of the interconnectedness of these histories.

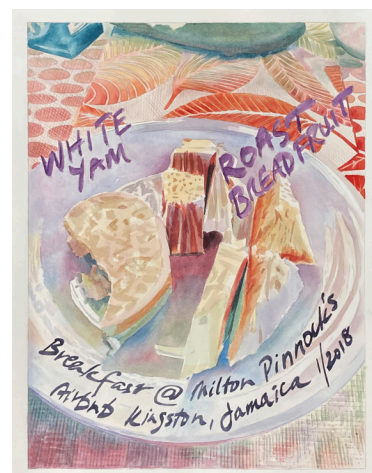
Organized as a series of presentations, discussions, and participatory performances, the symposium will provide an opportunity for attendees to engage in meaningful dialogue with scholars, community leaders, and participants. Refreshment breaks and a lunch will offer additional chances for connection and conversation. Featured speakers include Domonique Peebles, R. Alan Wight, Chandra Frank, Jayson Maurice Porter, Judith Carney, and Annalee Davis, alongside Mark Harris. Full symposium schedule.

COMMUNITY DINNER

Saturday, April 26, 6-8 p.m.
Lloyd Library & Museum
Free and open to the public
No registration required

In collaboration with Cincinnati's Table and Wave Pool we are thrilled to present a community dinner that celebrates African food culture. This gathering offers a unique opportunity to honor the rich traditions of African cuisine, while reflecting on the profound connections between historical plant migrations and the resilience of African culinary and agricultural practices. Chef Sabina Gharney will craft a menu designed to foster connection and education, highlighting the flavors and heritage of traditional African dishes.

In addition to the meal, the event will feature an interactive aspect, inviting community members to share their own family recipes and traditions, creating a space for storytelling and cultural exchange. This event is a tribute to the strength, diversity, and enduring legacy of African culinary art.



Mark Harris
Jamaican Breakfast-White Yam and Roasted Breadfruit, watercolor on paper, 2025

Carol Ann and
Ralph V. Haile, Jr.
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Located at 917 Plum St. in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Lloyd is open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and the third Saturday of the month. For more information or to schedule a visit, contact the Library at (513) 721-3707 or email contact@lloydlibrary.org or visit LloydLibrary.org.

