



PRESS RELEASE

April 09, 2025

Bridging Continents, Inspiring Action at the Lloyd Library & Museum

Join us as we take you on an unforgettable journey from Madagascar to South Africa—and beyond! Our spring and summer programming celebrates the rich legacy of botanical knowledge and the importance of sustainability.

The Enduring Impact of the African Plant Diaspora exhibition continues through July 25, 2025. Co-curated by Mark Harris, the 2023 Lloyd Library Artist-in-Residence, this thought-provoking exhibit features Harris's original artwork alongside rare 18th-century botanical books from the Lloyd Library's collection. The exhibition sheds light on the often-overlooked contributions of enslaved and indigenous peoples to botanical studies, offering a powerful new perspective on African plant legacies frequently erased by colonial narratives.



BOTANY AND BOTANISTS IN MADAGASCAR: Studying Grasses and Grasslands

Saturday, May 10, 1-2 p.m.

Virtual Program

Registration Required

Join us as we explore the fascinating world of grasses with **Dr. Maria (Bat) S. Vorontsova from Kew Gardens**, focusing on their incredible diversity of grasses in tropical Africa, especially the lesser-known species and their role in shaping tropical grasslands and savannas. A key project involves creating a detailed guide to the grass family in Madagascar, combining ecology, plant history, and the practical uses of grasses. This program will also touch on the development of plant classification systems and the importance of naming plants correctly.

Dr. Maria (Bat) S. Vorontsova specializes in grasses, with a focus on tropical African diversity, poorly known lineages, and the evolution of grasslands and savannas. Her main research is a taxonomic treatment of Poaceae for the Flora of Madagascar, blending ecological, phylogenetic, and ethnobotanical studies. She also explores plant classifications and nomenclature and manages GrassBase, a global resource compiling taxonomic knowledge on grasses.

A TOUR OF AFRICA

Wednesday, June 11, Reception 6:30 p.m. Talk 7-8 p.m.

Lloyd Library & Museum

\$5 Ticket. Free for Members

Registration Required

Join Chef Gabi Odebode as she takes you on a tour through the diverse and rich regions of Africa, all through the lens of its incredible cuisine. Hear captivating stories, sample mouthwatering dishes, and savor vibrant flavors from across the continent and beyond. Experience the global influence of African ingredients and cooking techniques in a one-of-a-kind event that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Africa's culinary traditions.



Chef Gabi Odebode, originally from Koforidua, Ghana, discovered her love for food early on. After moving to the U.S. at age 9, she founded Afromeals to bring West African cuisine to the mainstream. Passionate about inclusivity and representation, she uses cooking classes across Ohio to share the vibrant flavors of African food with a wider audience.



CONSERVATION IN ACTION:

Empowering Communities and Protecting Kenya's Wildlife

Wednesday, June 25, 7-8 p.m.

In-Person Program

Registration Required

This program highlights the powerful link between community empowerment and wildlife conservation in Kenya. By strengthening local communities, we can create lasting change for both people and wildlife. Learn how initiatives that focus on education, sustainable livelihoods, and community-led efforts are helping to protect Kenya's biodiversity while improving local well-being. Discover how empowered communities are key to long-term conservation success.

Mark Fisher has been the Vice President of Facilities, Planning, and Sustainability at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden for more than a dozen years, where he is the driving force behind the Zoo's nationally recognized sustainability movement and goal of becoming the greenest Zoo in the world.

Brick by Brick:

Growing Community and Food Security

Saturday, July 12, 10-11 a.m.

Brick Gardens, Evanston

No Registration Required

Join us for a walking tour of Brick Gardens with founder **Domonique Peebles**! Brick Gardens is an inspiring urban community garden dedicated to combating food insecurity in Cincinnati. Discover how this innovative project transforms vacant land and buildings into vibrant urban farms and indoor vertical farmhouses. Learn about the mission to provide fresh, healthy produce to neighborhoods facing food deserts, and see firsthand the positive impact this green space has on the local community.



Plants that Nourish and Heal:

South Africa's Botanical Legacy in the African Diaspora

Saturday, July 26, 1-2 p.m.

Virtual Program

Registration required

In this presentation, Dr. Shaik will explore the vital role of South African plants in food security and medicine, focusing, respectively, on undervalued crops and plants used by local communities in primary healthcare. Drawing from her extensive research, she will provide a few case studies and highlight the impact of South Africa's botanical heritage on global agricultural and medicinal practices.

Dr. Shakira Shaik is a Plant Biotechnologist with a Ph.D. from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, teaches Plant Biotechnology and Scientific Writing. Her research focuses on stress-tolerant crops and cryopreservation for endangered plants, with collaborations in Brazil and India. She has supervised numerous students, published 30 articles, and serves on editorial boards like the *European Journal of Horticultural Science*. Dr. Shaik is also a grant reviewer and a member of several scientific organizations.

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.

