



# Food Studies Newsletter

Middlebury College

Fall 2023

Introductions  
The Knoll's 20th Anniversary  
Seeding Transformations Conference

More info about program: <https://www.middlebury.edu/college/academics/food-studies>

# Welcome from your new Food Studies Newsletter Editors!

Mary Nagy-Benson '24.5



My name is Mary Nagy-Benson and I am a senior Feb at Middlebury College from Weybridge, Vermont. I am an Independent Scholar in Regenerative and Just Food Systems, minoring in Education Studies. I have been passionate about the importance of regenerative farming as a solution to the climate crisis and to our food system since high school. It has been an honor to learn about our food system directly in Addison County through my time living and studying here. I have had the chance to create a documentary about the future of Vermont farming through a high school project. I have also worked on different farms in Addison County, namely Wild Roots Farm in New Haven, Elmer Farm in East Middlebury, and Understory Farm in Bridport. Additionally, in my second semester at Middlebury College, I joined a team through the New Perennials Project to research, design, plan, and present an agroforestry system for a parcel of Middlebury College-owned land west of the Knoll. During the spring of my junior year, I went abroad to Copenhagen, Denmark, where I studied a part of the international food system and urban agriculture. This year, I look forward to joining Leah Mowry as Food Studies Assistants. After I graduate, I hope to join the food studies educational field.

Leah Mowry '24.5



My name is Leah Mowry and I am a senior Feb at Middlebury College from Peru, Vermont. I am a Neuroscience major, minoring in Food Studies. During my time at Middlebury, I have become more and more passionate about regenerative food systems and the importance of finding sustainable alternatives in the face of the climate crisis. Growing up in rural Vermont, I've had the opportunity to be engaged with the places I get my food. Even before high school, I spent time volunteering at local farms and loved buying produce from the farmers markets. My time at Middlebury has been saturated with Food Studies courses, as well as more immersive experiences within the local food system. I've enjoyed time volunteering at the knoll, visiting/helping local farms, and learning about the larger issues affecting food justice in Vermont. This past summer, I was studying Sustainable Agriculture in Sweden and Denmark, which gave me a much broader perspective on food production and consumption. I am eager to continue learning about food systems issues and alternatives, and share my knowledge with those around me. As I look toward my future, I hope to find work focused around the outdoors, community, and creating solutions to the destructive patterns contributing to climate change.

# Reflections from Knoll interns

## Zoe Gieger '25 and Aisha Thapaliya '25.5

The Knoll has served as a space for empowerment, connection, and experiential learning. This is demonstrated by the twenty years of intergenerational service and devotion that have guided the Knoll, whose mission is based on the uplifting of diverse student voices and the celebration of connection (Aisha Thapaliya).



### About the 20th anniversary event:

**Aisha:** The 20th-anniversary event served as such a significant milestone, symbolizing the fruition of tremendous efforts, embodying the core values of inclusivity, commitment, and resilience that the Knoll nurtures. [It] truly felt like the perfect closing of the season.

**Zoe:** The Knoll X Dolci collaborative dinner [which finished off the festivities] on Friday night, celebrated the Knoll's 20th anniversary by doing what it does best — sharing thoughtfully grown food with students, faculty, staff, and community members.

### What the Knoll means to Aisha and Zoe:

**Zoe:** Working at the Knoll has given me such a solidified sense of belonging in Middlebury. The beauty of the role was how much we interfaced with so many facets of the greater community, both on and off campus.

**Aisha:** I am in awe of the Knoll's ability to uplift and connect students, staff, faculty, and the community while weaving together different stories, perspectives, and knowledge. I am so grateful and proud to be associated with the Knoll's rich history of reciprocity and dedication to the well-being of people and the environment.





## What Aisha and Zoe hope for in the future:

Zoe: I'm excited to see how the Knoll will continue to welcome new people into the space and evolve to incorporate new voices and visitors. Despite being a fairly small piece of land, the Knoll is an example of what is possible when multiple generations of people deeply care for a place and take care of the earth – a lot is possible if you open your minds and hearts!

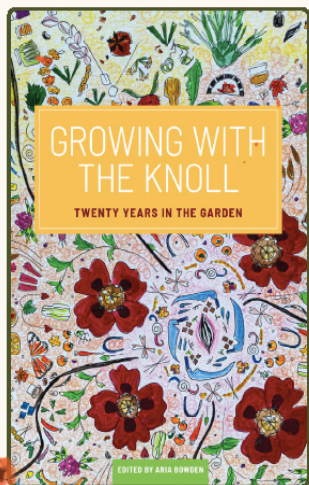
Aisha: I eagerly anticipate the next two decades, with the conviction that the Knoll will continue to evolve into a space that supports food sovereignty, becomes an integral part of the experiential educational experience, and, as its student founders intended, a place for all.

The Knoll recently celebrated 20 years of working with the land. Be sure to check out the new book "Growing with the Knoll" in the college bookstore!

*presenting*

### The Knoll's 20th Anniversary collaborative anthology

Featuring 50+ contributors, edited by Aria Bowden '23, & published by New Perennials Publishing



In the spring of 2002, a small group of Middlebury College students held an interest-meeting to discuss starting a campus garden. A year of research, geological surveys, help from community volunteers, and presentations to skeptical administrators later, a knoll of land just beyond campus became the Knoll: an organic garden, outdoor classroom, and sacred space for joyful gatherings, good work, harvesting, and healing.

Growing the Knoll is a celebration of the commitments of creative and tireless students, staff, faculty, and experienced community volunteers who saw the value and potential in creating a garden that would become much, much more than a garden. It is a story that can serve as a resource--and inspiration--for any group interested in creating a similar community space.

# LOVE THE KNOLL?

## Chip in!

Donations to support the Knoll's ongoing endeavors can be made at [go/knollgiving/](http://go/knollgiving/) or by scanning this QR code:



We appreciate you!





# SEEDING TRANSFORMATION 2023

**A GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SYSTEMS & AGROECOLOGY**  
HOSTED BY UVM INSTITUTE FOR AGROECOLOGY

On Monday September 18th, 2023, The University of Vermont's Institute of Agroecology hosted a global forum on agroecology and food systems called Seeding Transformation. This forum included scholars, organizers, and activists from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. Panels throughout the day discussed just transitions in the food system, food system transformations through multiple perspectives, and the role universities can play in transforming knowledge and the way in which they teach to shift these systems. The backdrop of this convention was a celebration of the recent launch of UVM's Institute of Agroecology led by Ernesto Mendéz and Colin Anderson whose mission is to move from our current food system to food systems that "confront inequities, foster human and ecological well being, and support dignified and meaningful livelihoods" (UVM Institute of Agroecology, 2023). Middlebury College sent a cohort of a dozen students led by Andrés Oyaga, Climate Action Coordinator '23, to this forum. He reflected that Middlebury "students are always thinking critically about climate action, so it was an exciting space to explore how the mission of food sovereignty, the right to food, and agroecological transitions connect deeply to addressing the climate crisis!" He was also left with questions like: How do we bring the global agroecology movement to our community? For more information about this forum and about the UVM Institute for Agroecology: [go/seedingtransformation/](https://go.seedingtransformation/).

Are you a scholar, activist, or organizer wanting to attend similar gatherings like this one?

Apply for funding through the Climate Action Program at [go/capfunding/](https://go/capfunding/)! As always, please feel free to contact Minna ([mbbrowne@middlebury.edu](mailto:mbbrowne@middlebury.edu)) and Andrés ([aoyaga@middlebury.edu](mailto:aoyaga@middlebury.edu)) with questions about CAP Funding!

# COMMUNITY FARM DAYS

A series of farm-tours, workshops, and music to celebrate Vermont agriculture at your neighborhood farm.  
 ▼All events free to the public▼  
 Visit each farm's website to find out more!

**OCT**  
 14-15, 21-22

*In partnership with Interlace Commons, Land Care Learning, and New Perennials. Sponsored by the USDA and Senator Bruce Sanders.*

- Oct 14 10-2 **DOES' LEAP** East Fairfield
- Oct 15 12-4 **LARSON** Wells
- Oct 21 10-2 **GREEN MTN GIRLS** Northfield
- Oct 22 10-2 **MAPLE WIND** Richmond

## Upcoming Opportunities:

### Fall 2023 Garden Volunteer Hours at the Knoll run until Friday, November 3rd!

Mondays: 1-3pm BIPOC affinity hours

Tuesdays: 1-3pm

Fridays: 9-11am and 1-3pm

### ABCs of Farm-Based Education

When: Sun, Oct 22 - Tue, Oct 24 2023, All day

Spend time in hands-on, activity-based learning while you explore Shelburne Farms' dairy, farmyard, garden, and forest classrooms.

### 13th Annual Farm to Plate Gathering

When: Thu, Nov 16 - Fri, Nov 17 2023, All day



## Who is Molly Anderson?

Molly Anderson is the Director of the Food Studies Program and is a Professor at Middlebury College where she teaches classes about food systems, food justice and sovereignty, and sustainability. Molly has a B.S. and M.S. in Natural Resource Management as well as a certificate in Latin American Studies from Colorado State University. Molly has a Ph.D. in Systems Ecology from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Molly has worked with food system reform and planning in New England, has been part of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, and has authored key articles and reports on agriculture and the food system. Molly recently received a part-time Visiting Scholar appointment at UVM through the Gund Institute for Environmental Studies, which is giving her the opportunity to work more closely with the new Institute for Agroecology.

Molly is on sabbatical for Fall 2023 and Winter 2024. During this time she has been working on a book about narratives of food system transformation which includes all the ways that people talk about transforming our food system into a more regenerative and just form. She will be attending a conference on Social & Solidarity Economies in Portugal in November, to find out how people envision a post-capitalist food system, as well as a conference in Oaxaca about agroecology and self-sufficiency for Mexico. Finally, she will be going to Puerto Rico in January to arrange student internships there, in conjunction with our new School Abroad. Molly will return to Middlebury College to teach Food Power & Justice (FOOD 281) and an advanced seminar on Hunger, Food Security & Food Sovereignty (FOOD 380) in Spring 2024. While Molly is out, Michael Sheridan in Anthropology is at the reins of the Food Studies Minor and can help with any questions you may have.

# Interested in Food Studies courses?

Here's what's coming in 2024...

## Upcoming intro courses:

ANTH 0211 Environmental Anthropology  
ENVS 0112 Natural Science & Environment  
FOOD 0281 Food Power & Justice  
GEOG 0208 Land and Livelihoods

## Upcoming Electives:

AMST 0265 Devouring Difference: Race & Food  
BIOL 0140 Ecology and Evolution  
BIOL 0323 Plant Community Ecology  
CHEM 0270 Environ. Chem & Health  
ECON 0234 Economics of Africa  
ECSC 0355 Water Resources & Hydrogeology  
ENVS 0112 Natural Science & Environment  
ENVS 0118 Toxic World  
ENVS 0210 Social Class & the Environment  
ENVS 0215 Contested Grounds  
ENVS 0230 Environmental Health  
GEOG 0208 Land and Livelihoods  
GEOG 0428 Geog of Climate & Development  
GHLT 0257 Global Health  
INTD 1243 Climate Action for All  
ITAL 0299 Literary Feasts  
PSCI 0304 International Political Economy  
SOCI 0201 Sociology of Labor

## Upcoming Upper-level Seminars

FOOD 0380 Hunger/Food/Sovereignty  
INTD 0426 Critical Frames Social Changes

## J-term Courses 2024:

FOOD 1004: Natural Fermentation:  
Engaging Wild Microorganisms that  
Surround Us  
ANTH/FOOD 1023: Anthropology of Meat:  
Why Humans consume other animals  
FOOD 1044: Vermont Farms, Food &  
Future



## Upcoming Event on Campus:

Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op in collaboration with the Middlebury Conservation Commission is excited to host Abe Collins of The Land Care Cooperative in Bicentennial Hall room 220 on Thursday, November 9th from 6-8pm for a presentation and round-table discussion. This is a perfect opportunity for our community to come together to educate and organize ourselves as we begin a new chapter of cooperation with our farming neighbors to engage in the work of growing topsoil, increasing biodiversity, infiltrating every possible drop of rain, increasing the water-holding capacity of our soils, increasing groundwater recharge, practicing economic democracy, and beginning the long journey of effectively healing our watershed homes. Light snacks will be provided. The event is free and open to the public.

We'd love to see you there!



Interested in submitting art for the newsletter?

[go/FSart](https://go.FSart)