



Hello friends and neighbors,

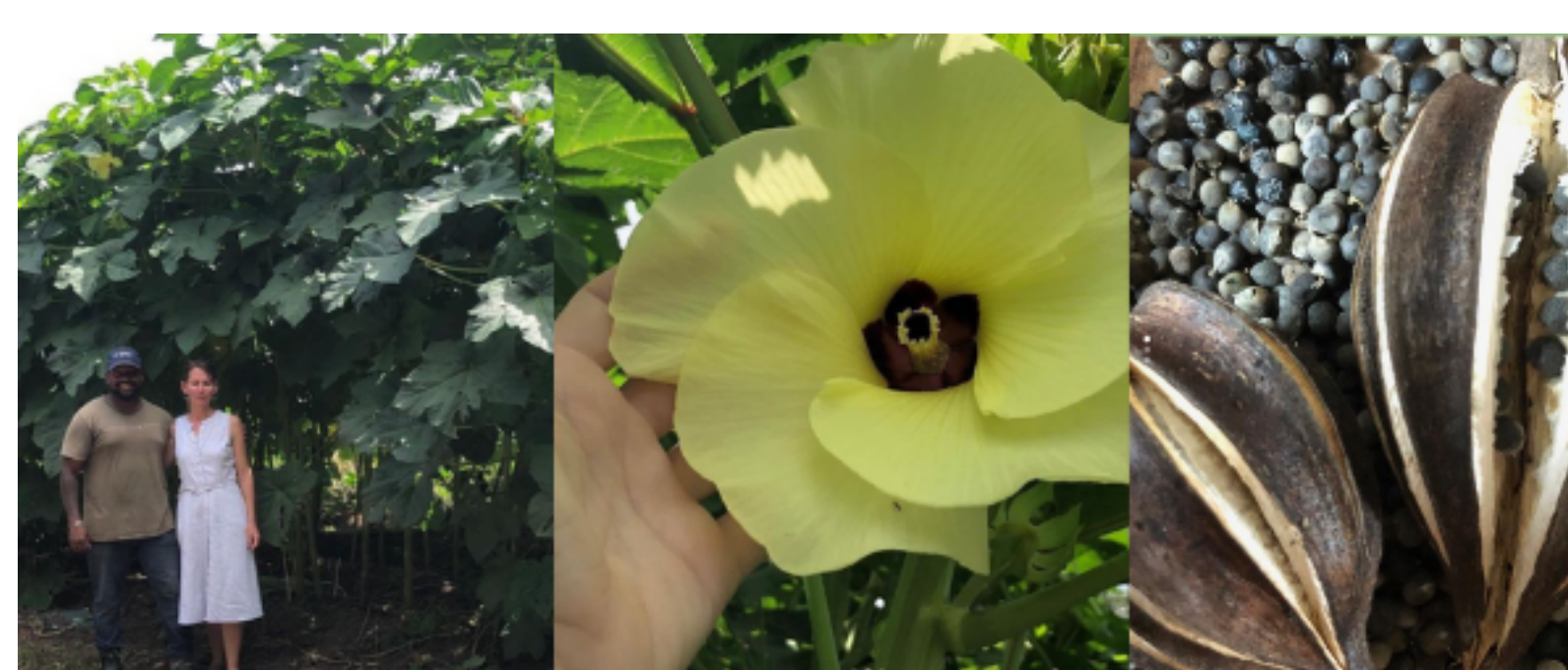
Spring garden planning and Black History Month incite action! In the face of injustice and deprivation inflicted on Black folks, let us deepen our commitment to planting seeds to nourish bodies, minds, and community. Let's grow equity, empowerment, and opportunity in our gardens, kitchens, and economies! Join us in celebrating springtime's energy, possibilities, and renewed hope for mutual flourishing. Together we'll learn, grow, and create shared abundance!

Warmly,

The Working Food Family



We honor Black Americans who've shaped our agricultural and culinary traditions and give thanks for crops and dishes that originated in Africa. Motherland okra is a superstar! We're offering seeds that are only four years from their source in Liberia where Jon Jackson of [Comfort Farms](#) gathered them on his mother's land. This tree-sized okra is grown for her delicious leaves, a much-needed source of greens during our hottest months. She also provides a shady respite from Florida's summer heat!



Since we're at the height of collard season, we have to give a shout out to this cultural treasure. Inviting you to take part in the [online collard fest](#) Working Food helped create where you can indulge in recipes, stories, learning, and connecting with all kinds of collard goodness - enjoy!



**Hooray: spring and summer seeds are now available in our [online store](#)** with so many new varieties, like these [velvet beans](#), Brazilian starfish [sweet peppers](#), and [callaloo](#)! We have a very limited supply of some varieties like the amazing [West Indian burr gherkin](#) - shop now so you don't miss out! And be sure to explore our new [African heritage seed section](#) -



**UF/IFAS February Plant of the Month is potato!**

Check out [this fascinating article](#) from the International Potato Center to learn about potato biodiversity!



Students in both the George Washington Carver Science Club and Duval Community Garden of EatIn' are learning about herbalism this month. Herbalism is a great way to connect with traditional folkways and learn chemistry, botany, and ecology along the way. As Robin Wall Kimmerer reminds us, children's deep attention to plants and the earth is the doorway to gratitude, wonder, and reciprocity. Last fall, students grew, harvested, and dried calendula in their gardens. This past week, they processed the flowers and made an olive oil infusion to use in making their own, homegrown healing salve. Calendula salve connects with the amazing work of Soul Fire Farms whose goals resonate with us: "to uproot racism in the food system and seed community food sovereignty". Learn more about [Soul Fire Farms mission](#) and [help support their work](#) while experiencing the wonders of healing salve!



Students in all our gardens planned and began planting their spring crops - joyfully preparing for sunny days ahead! This is our first year growing youth gardens throughout the summer; we're sowing seeds for a full season that includes all our favorites, like corn, beans, squash (loofah, too!), tomatoes, and peppers. A dozen teenagers in the Greater Duval Neighborhood Association's Summer Sling program will tend the gardens during the summer, harvesting produce to use in weekly, in-person Young Chefs classes. We're so excited about this collaboration! Communally preparing a meal made with plants you grew from seeds you saved months before, plus ingredients purchased from a farmer you know, builds a trust in each other and in the earth that supports us. This year's youth programs exemplify Working Food's mission to build a more resilient local food community. We work in reverence of the science club's eponym [George Washington Carver](#) whose mission was to sustain southern Black communities through regenerative agriculture, healing land and people.

If you'd like to be a part of this work, please consider sponsoring our first-ever summertime garden extension and our Young Chefs classes. Email [wendy@workingfood.org](mailto:wendy@workingfood.org) for options and details!



Counting down to March 5th when kitchen partner **Flavorful** will be open for your orders! Be sure to follow Aisse and Awa on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to be second in line (we'll be first!) for their super yummy Afro-fusion delights!



Turmeric, collards, and lemongrass - oh, my! In her book [In Pursuit of Flavor](#) queen of Southern cuisine [Fina Lewis](#) wrote, "When I was growing up, we ate only what was ripe and fresh at the moment." Working Food kitchen partner Chef Amadeus took this to heart, bringing his UF Culinary Arts students to [GROW HUB](#) where our SeedEO Melissa helped them harvest bunches of garden-fresh delights: [watch here!](#)



If you're interested in sponsoring our seed collective, youth gardens, and culinary programs, please contact [Wendy Free](#) who will be delighted to talk with you about options - thank you!

Working Food is a [501 \(c\)\(3\) non-profit organization](#) (registered as Forage) that works to cultivate and sustain a resilient local food community in North Central Florida through collaboration, economic opportunity, education, and seed stewardship. To support our work, please click the button below. Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you!

