



EARTHSEED LAND COLLECTIVE

ANNUAL REPORT: 2024



VISUALS: For a photographic year in review, please [**GO HERE**](#)

CONTEXT & REFLECTION (by Zulayka Santiago):

On October 28th of this year, as my small dog and I began our early morning walk at Earthseed, we spotted two coyotes actively chasing deer just behind the pond. We both froze, gripped with a mix of terror and amazement. Although we had found coyote scat several times on the land, and heard them howling on certain nights, I had never actually seen one so close and in pursuit of prey. It was a sobering moment of romance becoming reality and a reminder that wild predators still roam the land.

Fortunately, this is the case: wild predators are still roaming freely at Earthseed and other places across this earth. With the dramatic loss in both wild spaces and increasing species extinction, this is indeed a blessing. Especially when considering that [coyotes are keystone carnivores](#) and are essential to the balance of our ecosystem.

We often refer to Earthseed as a sanctuary for humans and the countless other species that visit/live on this land. We need coyotes to help maintain the balance in this community of living beings, and yet... in that moment as I witnessed the exhaustion and sheer panic in the deer's bodies, I was gripped with fear. Would this mark the end of our off-leash freedom walks at Earthseed? Would I now have to be more vigilant and on guard, especially at dusk and dawn?

This moment came to mind again as a group of us gathered together around a fire at Earthseed the night after the presidential election. Our hearts weighed heavy with the many implications of what the results revealed (or affirmed) about our country and dreading the impending darkness of a return to blatant fascism.

There is in my heart a clear connection between this moment and my encounter with our coyote kin. We all have a choice to make, every minute of every day: will we allow ourselves to be gripped, immobilized, rendered numb by fear and the possibility of suffering/death/destruction? And/or... will we choose to put fear in its rightful place, understanding that it too belongs, and move forward bolstered by courage, community and a much greater understanding of the ecosystem we are born from and belong to?

I keep choosing love. I keep choosing freedom. I keep choosing us.



CULTURAL ARTS:

We embrace cultural work as healing, decolonizing practice. Earthseed serves as home and practice space for community members to honor the beauty and resilience of the African diaspora via several avenues. Two years ago, we made the decision to formalize and deepen our work in this arena by establishing a Cultural Arts Committee. In 2024 we were able to host:

Ongoing:

- **Bomba/Afro-Puerto Rican Drumming and Dancing:** We've hosted a monthly learning circle for folks in the community interested in exploring the how the African Diaspora lives on the island of Puerto Rico (and beyond!)
- **West African Dance Class:** In 2024 we began hosting a West African Dance Class every other Tuesday from 6:15-7:30pm in Earthseed's barn. Classes are led by Mama Ruby and include live drumming led by Baba Johnny.
- **Holiday Art Market:** This is our 3rd year hosting this holiday art market featuring local BIPOC artists and craftspeople led by Mama Dimples Gibbs.
- **[Durham Angoleirx:](#)** This Capoeira Angola group led by two of Earthseed's founding members (Courtney Woods and Santos Flores) hosts their monthly gatherings (called rodas) at Earthseed. They bring drumming, movement, and song to the land and it is a gift to bask in this ancient Afro-Brazilian practice of community and resilience building.



MORE FROM DURHAM ANGOLEIRX:

The monthly *rodas* continue to attract fellows from the U.S. Southeast region, including Atlanta, Charlotte, Asheville, Chesterfield/ Richmond, as well as folks from Baltimore and New York.

In September and October the group hosted two Master teachers, Mestre Roxinho of ECAMAR from Bahia, Brazil and Mestre Kamau of the International Capoeira Angola Foundation of Philadelphia.

Mestre Roxinho's visit to Durham, North Carolina was a success. His visit offered the Capoeira Angola community a chance to deepen their practice in historical knowledge, music, percussion, and physical movements. His offerings were spread out at multiple locations including Earthseed Land Collective, Weaver Street Recreation center, and Nzinga's Casa Cultural. His visit offered the following: 10 hrs of Music and percussion training, 12 hrs of Cultural movements training, 3 hrs of Roda, 6 hrs of Guest Speaking, and 10 hrs of community exchanges. Mestre Roxinho also titled Earthseed Land Collective's Santos Flores as a 'Treinel' in the arts of Capoeira Angola.

Mestre Roxinho spoke as Guest lecturer at DUKE for Dance Dept class, and at UNC Chapel Hill: for Dr.Viera's Portuguese course in the Language Department. Community exchanges included Mestre Roxinho visiting and discussing ideas on the: Warrenton Youth Project, Project Build School Resource Training program, Durham County Community Intervention Dept. and Earthseed's Bomba Percussion Study Group.

During Mestre Kamau's visit, approximately 25-30 capoeiristas from the east coast, including Atlanta, Richmond, Baltimore and New York, joined for 2 days of workshops hosted in the Earthseed barn. For many it was also their first time visiting Earthseed, and they appreciated having green outdoor space to enjoy during the breaks in between the workshops, having communal cooking space, hammocks to rest in and land that held them gently during their weekend visit.



EARTHSEEDLINGS AND FRIENDS:

Years ago, one of the members of the Durham Angoleirx group commented that Earthseed is one of the few places where his daughters can run and frolic freely without fear of being stereotyped or forced to fit into prescribed boxes. This is one of the highest compliments to our work and one that we are grateful to hear from many parents (and children) who visit the land. In 2024, we continued and inaugurated two formal spaces for our younger generations (in addition to the many informal ways we welcome children to the land):

- **Black Girl Magic:** BGM is a group that started meeting in February 2019 with the goal of creating a space where Black and Brown girls could gather in celebration of themselves, to see their beauty/brilliance reflected in others, and to grow in awe of the magic of their bodies & creativity. As Earthseed, we've been committed to centering and elevating Blackness in all of its forms, its richness, depth and power. This is an extension of that focused primarily on girls led by Zulayka.
- **Inaugural Camp Earthseed:** This summer Earthseed also hosted its first youth camp which included seven young kids ages 8-13. Earthseed members each facilitated one day of camp. Over the course of the week, the kids made a river mural, bakeable art and batik textiles, prepared greek cuisine, parfaits and custom flavored popcorn, harvested and observed what was growing in the garden, learned African drumming, walked the forested trails, enjoyed outdoor water play, created fun new games. We hope to continue this tradition for 1 week every summer for years to come.



RENTALS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

In 2024 Earthseed hosted over 25 groups bringing hundreds of people from across the country and many nations beyond to connect with each other and the land. In pursuit of economic justice we work with folks to find alignment between their budget constraints and honoring the sustainability of Earthseed.

We envision a future that is racially and economically just; in which wealth, land, and power are equitably shared. Currently, the richest 20% of Americans own 88% of the wealth in the US. One tool we use as a step toward economic justice is a sliding scale. The concept: those with access to less resources, pay less; and those with more access, pay more. In this way cost is not a barrier to any project who would like to bring their group to Earthseed.

These groups spanned from educators to grassroots organizers to international artists to progressive funding projects including:

- Durham Public School Foundation
- Change Elemental
- NC Environmental Justice Network
- Center for Environmental Farming Systems
- DocX at Duke University
- CEFS
- Southerners on New Ground (SONG)
- Refugee Community Partnership
- Wildseeds Fund
- NCCU
- Communities in Partnership
- Black Solidarity Economics Fund
- Highland Project



When we host a group at Earthseed, we invite attendees into our mission to remember and reimagine our relationships to ourselves, each other and the land in pursuit and practice of collective liberation. We offer guidance and space to be with the more than human world, to practice deep listening and to interrogate the norms in our work and in our lives that may be out of alignment with the world we want to build. The Executive Director of Wildseeds Fund recently shared this response about her organization's time at Earthseed:

"I wanted to extend the deepest gratitude for your generous hospitality and for sharing a space of dreaming and connection. Earthseed Land Collective could not have been a more perfect space for the work we do."

Additionally, Earthseed is the home to ongoing community-led projects including

- **[Whole With Joy](#):** Joy Long, a Durham-based licensed clinical mental health counselor and holistic psychotherapist has been using our treehouse to meet with clients in a safely-distanced outdoor space. Joy practices ecotherapy and access to the land and nature have been a great resource to her and her clients. During the winter months, Joy has moved her practice into FlowerTree.
- **Community Limpias:** healing spaces centering Indigenous wisdom
- **Díe Díe Textiles:** a slow natural dye and fiber project led by long-time friend, adé Oh, who [recently launched a fundraiser](#) for this beautiful project.

The Barn at Earthseed Transformed into a Art Gallery

[CEFS Committee on Racial Equity in the Food System \(CORE\)](#)'s "[Art as Method](#)," in collaboration with [DurmPAC](#), invited local BIPOC artists and community members of all ages and spaces to submit art pieces for a special show called, "UPROOT: BIPOC Visions of Our Food System."

"UPROOT: BIPOC Visions of Our Food System" was curated to be an interactive showcase of artwork, experiences, and the stories of local BIPOC food leaders and community members who work in and around food and agriculture. This show was open to submissions of all artistic expressions that explore experiences in the food system (visual, literary, sensory, etc.) and considers the question, "To cultivate a more equitable food system – what seeds would you sow?" The culmination of their UPROOT project included the creation of over 50 art pieces which were displayed at Earthseed's Barn and NorthStar Church of the Arts for two months.



LAND-BASED PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES:

Ongoing

- **Native Plant Apprenticeship:** Founding member, Justin Robinson, has been working with a small group of BIPOC folx to deepen their understanding and appreciation of native plants on Earthseed's land and the surrounding area.
- **Native Plant Garden:** In 2024 the native plant apprentices have continued assisting Justin with the installation of a native plant garden funded by Burt's Bees Foundation which now holds several hundreds of plants including many native sedges, trout lilies and other grasses that otherwise would've been destroyed at nearby sites slotted for development. Justin has been prioritizing rescuing rather than purchasing plants in the belief that they are our neighbors and kin. He describes his passion for this work and its importance in a November episode of the radio show [Due South](#)
- **Trail Map and Nature Guide:** We completed the trail map and nature guide in collaboration with Brian Bockhahn from the NC Parks! Those resources can now be found on the land [and on our website!](#)

In addition to land-based programs, Earthseed continues to deepen our investment in local and regional BIPOC land initiatives by providing technical assistance and resources to aligned project partners. We regularly receive emails and phone calls from folks from across the nation looking to learn more about Earthseed's model as fuel for their own dreams of collective land ownership. We are also in thoughtful conversation about how to continue nurturing our relationship with and support of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation—an essential component of Earthseed learning to be in right relationship with this land. We continue to donate a percentage of all our income with the tribe on an annual basis, just one small step towards what we hope will be a more robust exchange in the years to come.



AGRICULTURE/FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:

Tierra Negra Farm: Co-led by founding members Cristina Rivera Chapman and Tahz Walker, work to grow Black and Brown agrarian futures by actualizing a vibrant and just food system present. They do this by building capacity in our communities for food sovereignty by equipping local Black and Latinx families with hands-on traditional agriculture and food preservation skills.

In addition to a beautiful season of Farmshare, our “shared work shared harvest” model of food production and distribution. TNF is grateful to Earthseed that we now have a 250 sq ft farm office. This means that we have a dedicated farm space that is air conditioned, mold-free, and mouse-free for our seed library, our medicinal herb apothecary, and room for small processing workshops. The biggest gift is that now our community can have regular access to the seeds and the plant medicine. There is space for us to leave seed out to dry out



FULLY which in the humid Southeast is always a challenge. Plus the DryCards from UCSB we have been able to better gauge if our seed is dry enough to store. Our hope is that all of these factors will help us save seed with higher germination rates and increase our seeds viability and health.

NewSoil Vermicomposting: Co-led by founding member Corre Robinson, this interdependent business continues to thrive and grow, nurturing Earthseed’s soil and individuals in the surrounding area. NewSoil Vermiculture continued renovations to the brick tobacco barns as part of an Ag Economic Development and NC Department of Environmental Quality grant to divert food waste from the landfills to sustainable composting facilities.



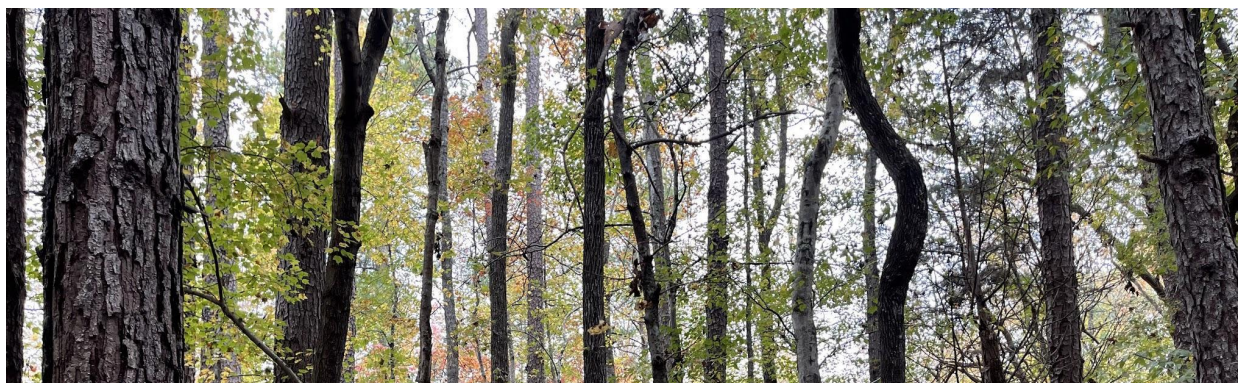
OUR ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT:

Our work is nourished and supported by:

- ★ The 48 acres of land we have the honor of co-stewarding together: This land is the ancestral homelands of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation. We are grateful and honored to be here.
- ★ Our contractors who offer their labor and skills to tend to the land, the buildings and in service of thriving, safe, clean, beautiful spaces.
- ★ The volunteer efforts of 7 active Founding Members: Cristina Rivera Chapman, Corre Robinson, Courtney Woods, Justin Robinson, Santos Flores, Tahz Walker, and Zulayka Santiago.
- ★ Our family, friends and extended community: We couldn't do this without their tireless love.
- ★ Our sustainers: All of those folks who believe in our work so strongly that they commit a monthly financial contribution to ensure we continue to flourish. Thank you!
- ★ Our fiscal sponsor, Southern Conservation Partners: Who share our commitment to the well-being of the natural world and provide financial oversight for our work.
- ★ Foundations and individuals who understand that we are intimately interconnected and invest in Earthseed as a way of investing in our collective well-being. We are so grateful!

2024 Supporters:

Sustain our Future Foundation
Impacts Assets- Honeybee Fund
Kataly Foundation
Oak Foundation
Robert Raushenberg Foundation
Satterberg Foundation
Solidaire Network
Tricia and Mark Wilson



Supporters in Previous Years:

- Fund 4 Democratic Communities
- RSF Social Finance
- New Field Foundation
- Effie C. Bowen
- Ruckus Society (Reparations Summer/Black Land and Power)
- Anonymous Donor/Trust Web
- NEO Philanthropy/Cypress Fund
- Black Lives- Reparations Summer Campaign Fund via Center for Third World Organizing
- ActBlue Charities (via Tema Okun's White Supremacy Culture website)
- Amalgamated Foundation
- BENEVITY Causes
- Burt's Bees Foundation
- Ceres Trust
- Impacts Assets- Honeybee Fund
- Farbman Family Foundation
- Impact Assets
- Kataly Foundation
- Liberated Capital
- Oak Foundation
- Penney Family Fund
- Satterberg Foundation
- Solidaire Network
- Solidaire National Gathering/Tides Adv
- Synergy Through Solidarity
- The Tides Foundation
- T. Rowe Price Charitable Grant
- Walton Family Fund/United Way
- Why Hunger Fund

Earthseed Land Collective is based in Durham, NC. Our mission is to remember and reimagine our relationship to ourselves, each other and the land in pursuit and practice of collective liberation. Our collective is made up of 7 black and brown folx who share their gifts as farmers, entrepreneurs, facilitators, and teachers, each of us deeply enmeshed in networks and communities devoted to creating alternative models for sustainability, equity, and cooperation within communities of color across our region. Together we invest in a more equitable world by lovingly centering BIPOC, queer folx, women and other communities pushed to the margins.

We believe that lasting systems change and birthing just communities requires us as BIPOC to trust and depend on each other in the face of oppression, fear and risk. We believe that trust is built when we are able to integrate the whole of who we are and to connect to others in their wholeness. Earthseed is a place and a practice to reclaim our cultural and community ways, further bolstering our movements and strategies for justice and equity. We do this by uplifting:

- **LIBERATED LAND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:** Amplifying traditional agrarian foodways, and regenerative agriculture practices that are grounded in food sovereignty and agroecology as an accessible and essential alternative to the industrial food system.
- **CULTURE AND ART:** Current anti-black anti-immigrant rhetoric and violence, compels us to elevate and center our ancestral wisdom, our cultures and our contributions to the world. We are honored to host brilliant cultural workers and changemakers and provide a base for local and regional cultural organizing.
- **COOPERATION/CROSS-POLLINATION:** Creating spaces, strategies and structures for ourselves and broader communities that uphold collaborative culture, and practices rooted in: sharing power, cooperation, and honoring interdependence. We continue our work to share key learning of struggle and success and as well as provide space for the flourishing of other POC and no women-led endeavors in our community to gather and share wisdom.
- **COMMUNITY SPACE:** Increasing our support of and solidarity with aligned communities by strengthening our ability to grow, manage and share our beautiful, culturally-affirming, nature-centered indoor and outdoor structures. Offered at a sliding scale for convenings, events, organizers, retreats, and cultural & healing practice.
- **MUTUAL LEARNING:** Sharing our model and expanding Earthseed's capacity to practice and promote our strategies and structures for democratic control, cooperative ownership, and stewardship of land & conservation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <https://earthseedlandcoop.org/>