

# Green Gazing

Field Guide

Presented at Workman Arts  
<<Rendezvous with madness festival>>  
Nov 7, 2021

## Recommended Readings and Resources

Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good

by adrienne maree brown

Environmental Data Justice Lab

<https://technoscienceunit.org/people/lab>

<https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement>

Catalyst Journal- 5(2): Special Section on Plantarium:

Human-Vegetal Ecologies

<https://catalystjournal.org/index.php/catalyst>

Watch Your Head - An anthology of creative works

devoted to climate justice and the climate crisis and all

issues that intersect.

<https://www.watchyourhead.ca/resources.html>

Healing Justice podcast

<https://www.healingjustice.org>

Native American Technology & Art

<http://www.nativetech.org>

<http://ontariowildflowers.com>

**Learn More + Donate:**

Gidimt'en Yintah Access

<https://www.yintahaccess.com>

<https://www.coastprotectors.ca>

## Thank you

Tosca Teran: <https://toscateran.com>

Matt Munro

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## Green Gazing

Field Guide

Green Gazing is a site-specific media arts installation that incorporates the co-creation between a movement practice, plants and projections.

<https://greengazingproject.wordpress.com/>

**Ashley Bowa** is an emerging filmmaker, media artist and arts educator based in Toronto. She is also trained as a yoga and pilates instructor and in outdoor education. Instagram: @a\_s\_h\_l.e.y

**Lesley Marshall / LES666** is an award-winning filmmaker and intermedia artist. Projection art by Lesley has been performed at the National Art Centre, Montreal Jazz Fest, and CentrePHI. Lesley is the founder of MAVNetwork a production, media and marketing agency for audio visual design and presentation. Instagram: @mavnetwork

## The Land & Environment

We share this field guide of found resources, tools and inspirations to inspire curiosity and help foster possible next steps. It is a starting point for further thought and exploration.

### Interrogating our Relationship to the Land

While land acknowledgements are an important first step, we invite you to consider the following (from native-land.com): What is your relationship to the territory that you live on and how did you come to be here?

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Example: I am an uninvited guest/settler.

List the traditional territories, languages and treaties that govern the land that you live on:

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What is some history of the territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?

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What are some of the privileges that you enjoy today because of colonialism?

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Name some actions that you can take to confront and dismantle colonialism.

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How can people redefine their relationship with the first people's of your area?

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Name indigenous plants that grow where you live?

Research some if needed.-----

## Write your climate story

([www.climatestoriesproject.org/tell-your-story.html](http://www.climatestoriesproject.org/tell-your-story.html))

Who are you and where do you live?

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What in your local environment or community is special to you?

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What specific changes have you seen or experienced in the places you care about?

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How do you imagine the future?

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What advice would you give to the world about climate change?

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Describe the moment when you realized that climate change was affecting your life.

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How did you feel?

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Describe your emotional responses to climate change as you think about yourself, your family, and your community.

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What changes are you making in your own life and/or in your community to respond to climate change?

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## Movement of the Trees

Continued

3. Choose 1 or 2 movements that speak to you. Choose the intention that you have set to use as inspiration.

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4. Slowly start to move according to your chosen inspiration. This can be totally improvised or you can imagine a few poses that mimic the movement of the plant.

### Examples

-Flowers opening/closing: A forward bend and close your arms around your legs; slowly rise to standing and outstretch your arms looking towards the sky at the top.

-Branches swaying : Standing side bend from side to side. Either single arms reaching over head in the direction of your bend or with hands together above head.

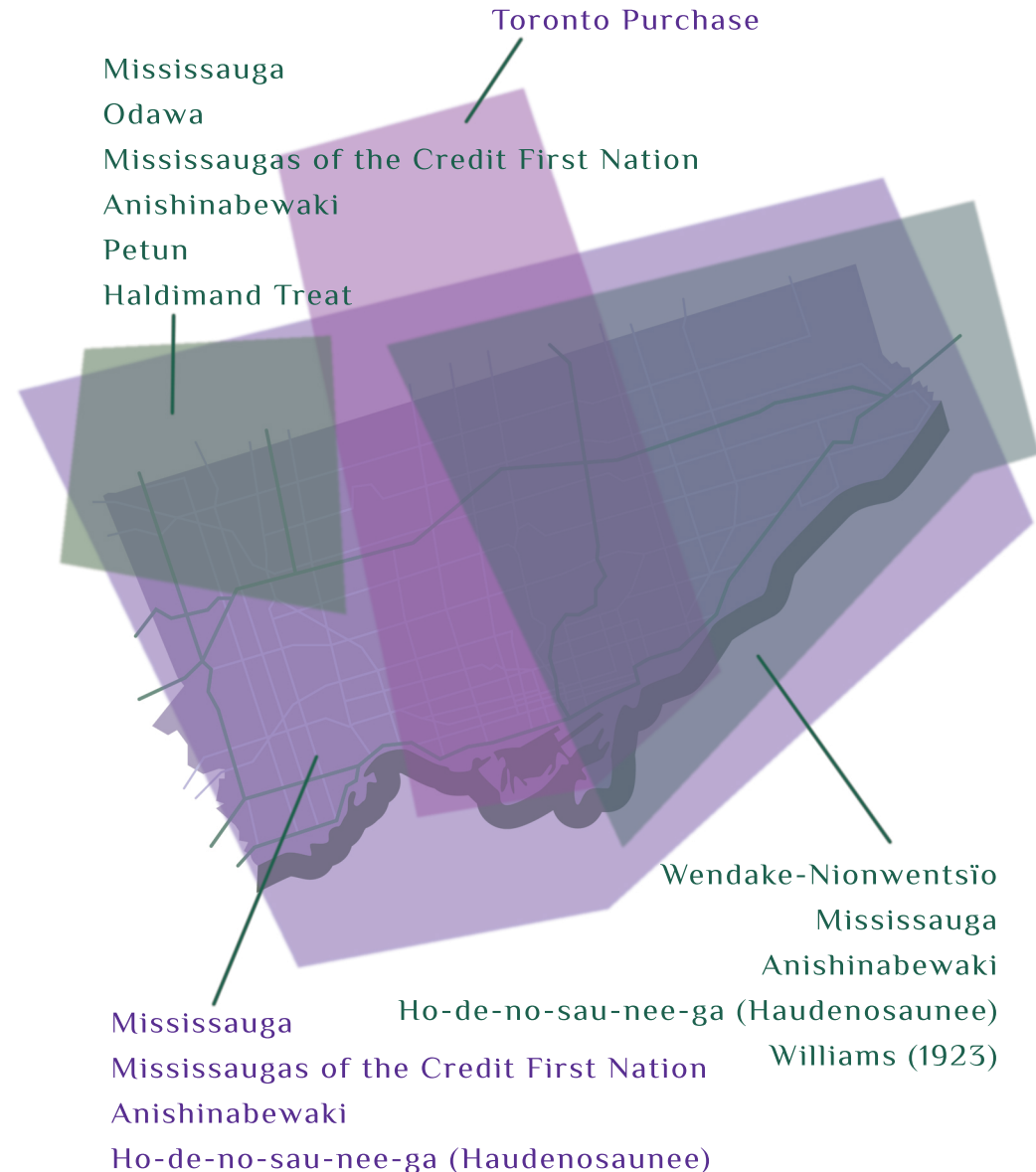
**Modification for indoor practice or for when the movements of the plants are subtle:**

If there are no movements that are immediately obvious to you, think about the ways the plant is positioning itself to satisfy its needs (like light, water). How is the plant structured for resilience? (eg. Flexible stem, long roots, broad leaves)

10

## Tkaronto / Toronto

the place in the water where the trees are standing



Source: [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)

Base Toronto Map Designed by vectorstock (Image #19210576)



## Reclamatory Audit

Below are select questions from the Reclamatory Environmentalism Audit (re audit); a tool for "invoking a liberation praxis rooted in cultivating wholeness in the self/the earth." Created by **Being a Green While Black** - An Instagram-based digital archive dedicated to visually reclaiming the greenness of blackness. <https://www.beinggreenwhileblack.club/home>

What ethics ground and tether you as a person?

How can those ethics translate into action to curtail environmental harm?

How can the privileges you possess be leveraged to disrupt environmental degradation?

What is the relationship between pleasure and justice?

What practices, systems, ideas, etc. keep you disconnected from the earth?

## Movement of the Trees

This movement exercise can be done both outdoors and indoors.

\*\*\*Always make sure to research, take precautions and respect the posted notices about the area you plan to explore, ensuring the safety of the land and yourself. This means avoiding sensitive and / or protected areas while following "leave no trace" principles.

Set an intention for your practice:

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Choose a location with a plant or tree that you would like to practice with.

1. Take 1 minute to get comfortable and ground yourself by tuning into the natural rhythm of your breath.
2. Spend as much time as you like observing and taking note of the movements of your chosen plant / tree. Take note of the shapes and patterns of the movement as well as the speed and general energy of the movement. Example: branches slowly swaying-reaching-bending, flowers opening-closing, leaves quickly shaking-falling-floating.

## Why plants and projections?

As artists and technicians, we wanted to show our connection to nature through our technical tools. We noticed how we tend to forget that we are also a part of the natural world and this disconnect has an effect on our ethics to the land and to each other. Working in projection, we wanted to show the beauty of our energy and how our movements amongst the plants has a direct impact. Our intentions to label and to know our place and our history will help guide our future.

### Green Gazing: Technological Set-up

We set up plants that generally give off more variations in electricity. For instance, cacti do not have a lot of energy variation whereas a lilies do. We put electrodes on the undersides of leaves (the stomata) where the breathing function of the plant is performed. The electrodes are connected to a circuit board which measures the differentiation of the energy coming from the plants and the circuit board turns that data into MIDI info. The MIDI info is interpolated through our VJ software, VDMX, and we link that data to an effect which is reproduced on the projection. So as the energy of the people in the room affects the plants, the plants affect the projections.

## Environmentalists we are following

**Autumn Peltier**, young activist from the Wiikwemkoong First Nation. Chief Water Commissioner of the Anishinabek Nation, a political organization representing 40 First Nations in Ontario comprised of approximately 65,000 people.

**Makaša Looking Horse**, an activist from Mohawk Wolf Clan and Lakota in Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario, who is involved in the fight against Nestlé's theft of water from Six Nations communities, which do not have access to clean water themselves.

**Melina Laboucan-Massimo** is Lubicon Cree from Northern Alberta. Currently a Fellow at the David Suzuki Foundation, Melina's research is focused on Climate Change, Indigenous Knowledge and Renewable Energy.

**Isaac Crosby**, Ojibwa of Anderdon Nation creates pathways for BIPOC futures on the land through gardening, land restoration and land-based healing programs at Evergreen Brick Works.

**Can you name 3 environmentalists of colour?**

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**Can you name 1 local environmentalist?**

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## Common House Plants



Split-Leaf Philodendron



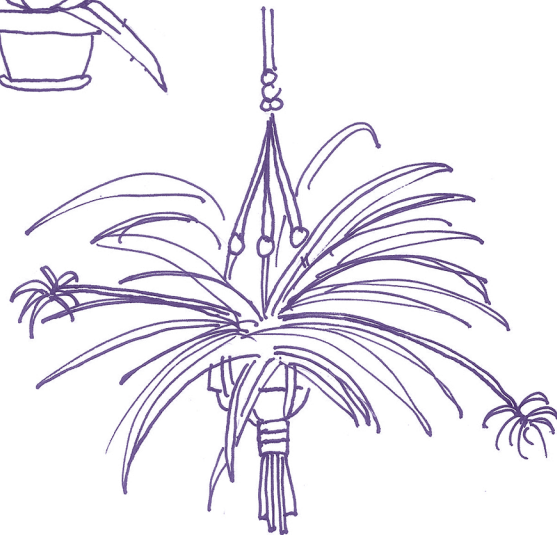
Christmas Cactus



Aloe



6 Peace Lily



Spider Plant

## Indigenous Plants to Eastern Ontario

### Wild lupine : *Lupinus perennis*

Once common in the black oak savanahs of southern Ontario. It is an important source of food for the caterpillar of the Karner Blue butterfly; which is currently endangered.

### Purple coneflower : *Echinacea purpurea* 'Maxima'

Coneflower, Echinacea. Commonly used to strengthen the immune system and for the treatment of cold sores, sore throats, hemorrhoids, burns, snake and insect bites.

### Cylindrical blazing star : *Liatris cylindracea*

The nectar and pollen from these plants are important for pollinators such as butterflies, bees and birds such as goldfinches and hummingbirds.

### Golden Alexander's : *Zizia aurea*

Flowering perennial plant of the carrot family, Apiaceae, that attracts butterflies. It is also commonly known as Golden Meadow Parsnip.

Have you seen any of these around your area or on a hike?