

Botany of Nations: Re-Collecting the Lewis & Clark Herbarium with Indigenous Perspectives

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Project Description:

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University is seeking collaboration from Native Nations ethnobotanists, ecologists, and culture keepers to enrich the biocultural information of the plants included in the Lewis & Clarke Herbarium.

Through the Local Context Hub, we are hoping to identify potential collaborators in the development of an exhibition to take place in 2026 entitled Botany of Nations: Re-Collecting the Lewis & Clarke Herbarium with Indigenous Perspectives.

The Academy houses plants collected by Meriwether Lewis as part of the Lewis and Clarke Corps of Discovery (1804-06). The project intends to enrich the materials held in the herbarium with the voices of Native Americans, who for millennia inhabited and sustainably managed the lands that Lewis and Clark traversed, and who contributed richly to the botanical knowledge advanced by the expedition.

Through our proposed exhibition, the Academy endeavors to bring the story of 10 plants of the 222 plant specimens gathered by Meriwether Lewis to life through a combination of western scientific and Indigenous ethnobotanical perspectives to create a compelling, culturally layered view of the remarkable plants of North America. The exhibition intends to show how the Herbarium, which features some of the oldest plant specimens in the country and the ongoing cultivation of heritage plants through agroecology and traditional foodways, safeguards a biodiverse future and food sovereignty in an age of species loss and climate change.

Through the Local Context Hub we are hoping to bring to life the voices of critical ambassadors and collaborators who shared their botanical knowledge – most notably, the Indigenous Nations and leaders who guided Lewis and Clark on their journey to understand and catalog the land's

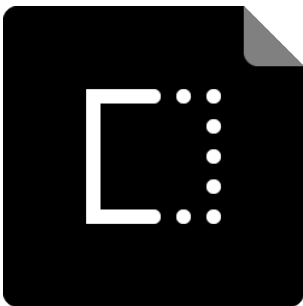
agricultural and horticultural identity.

We are interested in how the plants in the collection are tied to indigenous traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)—cosmologies, lifeways, rituals, healing practices, diets, artifacts, and cultural futures.

Project Links

- <https://ansp.org/research/systematics-evolution/botany/lewis-and-clark-herbarium/>

Project Notices



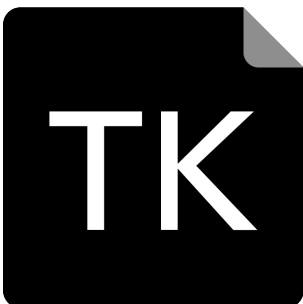
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