



January 2023 Newsletter

www.westslopecofibershed.com



Green is the New Black Fashion Show

March 10th & 11th in Carbondale
Our Fibershed group will be representing! Tickets just went on sale

<https://www.carbondalearts.com/fashion-show>



Indigo Starts (persecaria tinctoria)

While it's still a little early to actually start the indigo plants, the planning has begun and if you think you are interested in reserving some indigo plants for this upcoming growing season reply to this email so there are enough plants for anyone interested!

The monthly handwork meetup is an opportunity to have a monthly engagement with the group where we're using our hands and exchanging ideas. The idea is to bring your existing projects or learn about what collaborations are happening



MONTHLY
Handwork Meetup
@
719 2nd Street
in Paonia
3rd Sunday of each
month
Janary 15
1-4pm

FEATURED

MAKER + PRODUCER

Pam Werner of Paonia knit these beautiful 'Shepard's Gloves' using Navajo Churro wool raised by Heather and Matt Eland of Starry Night Farms, who are devoted to humane, regenerative husbandry. They have more skeins available!



Each month we'll feature one of our local makers, producers, growers, designers or processor in our westslope fibershed!



February 2023 Newsletter

www.westslopecofibershed.com



"We have neglected the truth that a good farmer is a craftsman of the highest order, a kind of artist."

— Wendell Berry

MONTHLY

Handwork Meetup

@

230 OAK AVE

in Paonia

3rd Sunday of each

month

2/19/23

1-4pm

We found a trailer!

...and she's a beauty! This is the first step in utilizing the grant we funding we received to create a mobile Fibershed unit. The hope is to utilize this retrofit trailer to facilitate workshops and educational demonstrations throughout the western slope to increase awareness and a connection for resources. If you have an interest in being a part of this buildout and project, reach out via email!



We're meeting at a new location this month, artist Ellza Coyle has been generous to open up her beautiful workspace to share this month. She has actively been working on felting and weaving among the many other mediums she works with. Bring your own handwork project or join to see what others are up to and a chance to exchange ideas.



Marigold + Iron

(credit: Flipside Farms... locally raised wool; spun and dyed w/homegrown marigold)

FEATURED MAKER + PRODUCER

Farmhand's Harvest Sheepskin + Moonflower Craft naturally hand-tanned shawl and buckskin ties.

Both of these devoted growers and makers in our valley represent our fibershed beautifully! Learn more at each of their websites

www.farmhandsharvest.com

www.moonflowercraft.space



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March 2023 Newsletter

Sheep Shearing with Farmhands Harvest in Paonia



As spring slowly approaches the planning for the coming season begins. For those of us shepherds lambing is the main and most fun spring event, but shearing comes in a close second. Slowly and steadily over the last 7 years I have taught myself how to shear. With the help of many youtube videos and a class through Wisconsin Farmer Extension I have become rather proficient at the old and ancient art of removing wool from the sheep that produce it. This year

Starry Night Farm and I are hoping to get a group of fibershed members to help us clean and skirt fleeces as the sheep are being shorn, before sending the wool out for processing. This will be a fun way to spend time with the sheep and understand the first step that the wool goes through before being transformed into yarn. If anyone is interested in a fiber cleaning field day we are going to get started in late March.

I am also offering up my services for others in the valley with small and hobby flocks at \$10 a sheep. Due to my equipment I am currently only able to shear a maximum of 15-20 a day.

For more information about custom shearing and/or to join in some fleece cleaning contact
farmhandsharvest@gmail.com



FEATURED FIBER GROWER



Excerpt from the Delta County Independent...

If you think yaks are only found in the Himalayas, think again. Forty years ago yaks were virtually nonexistent in the United States but their numbers are climbing. As a ranch animal, the yak is a jack of all trades.

With proper training yaks can be ridden, packed for backpacking, pull a plow and provide milk, wool and meat.

Take a trip to Crawford and you'll find two ranchers eager to show you how they're raising yaks and getting the most out of this bovine alternative.

"My daughter started looking into sustainable ranching and discovered yaks," said Bob Stuplich, owner of American White Yak Ranch. He began raising yaks 10 years ago. After learning about them he traveled to Tibet to learn first hand about yak husbandry. He now has a growing herd of 48.

Each month we feature one of our local makers, producers, growers, designers or processors in our westslope fibershed; email any projects you'd like to have shared!

Scholarships Available for 2023 Fashion and Circular Economy Symposium

Featuring Fibershed founder Rebecca Burgess

CSU's College of Agriculture has allocated funds to offset registration costs for Fibershed members, farmers, and makers interested in attending the 2023 Fashion and Circular Economy Symposium. This is an exciting opportunity and tickets are normally \$275ea

If you are interested in attending at a discounted rate, please contact Madeline Wilson at wilson.madeline@icloud.com prior to March 11th

When: April 14 - April 15, 2023

Where: Richardson Design Center— CSU, 552 W. Lake Street, Fort Collins, CO 80526

More Details: <https://dm-colostate.nbsstore.net/fashion-and-circular-economy-symposium-registration>



Rebecca Burgess,
Fibershed
Executive Director



Sonali Diddi,
Associate Professor in
Design and
Merchandising



Illustration courtesy of Fibershed

SECOND-RATE RAW FLEECE AVAILABLE

In effort to recycle byproducts bound for dumpsters, I have second-rate raw fleece from black welsh mountain sheep available to creatives/gardeners/project people. Second-rate means fleece-breaks, organic material, ram scent, and colour variation NOT representative of market quality. If interested in a 50gal bag of raw fleece, contact Madeline Wilson at wilson.madeline@icloud.com or 850-420-7063

MORE WOOL SHEARING OPPORTUNITY



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-moffat-county-sheep-shearing-school-registration-464491686137>

Dye Color of February



Black Walnut Hulls
+ Iron

MONTHLY

Handwork Meetup

@

719 2nd Street

Paonia

3rd Sunday of each month

3/19/23

1-3pm

Bring your own mobile handwork project or join to see what others are up to and a chance to exchange ideas! We are back to the dye studio space on @2nd Street in Paonia with more room to spread out. At the last meetup, we had nearly 20 fiber folks join in! Your welcome to join with or without a project. We'll do introductions around 1:30pm and then share ideas as well as a rolling dye demonstration.

YARN AND OTHER WOOL PRODUCTS

SURVEY

It would be helpful for the producers to get a better understanding of what people in our group are interested in as far as processed fiber is concerned. This will also help us have a better gauge of what the maker community outside of the group is likely interested in as well. A list of possibilities from the fiber mill is listed below. Let us know what is of interest and what is not. If there is anything else that you would be interested in using that is not on the list please add that as well.

-Thanks

Your Western Slope Fibershed Producers

Yarn Weights...

7 - Jumbo, Rug,	2.5 stitches per inch
6 - Super Bulky	2.75 - 3.75 stitches per inch
5 - Bulky, aran	4 - 4.5 stitches per inch
4- Medium, worsted	4.75 - 5.25 stitches per inch
3 - Light, worsted	5.5 - 6 stitches per inch
2 - Fine, DK/sport	6 - 7 stitches per inch
1- Super fine, fingerling	7-8 stitches per inch
0 - Lace	8.5 stitches per inch

Other possible considerations:

- The processor also spins the yarn differently for crochet vs knitting
What is your preference?
- 2 ply which is flatter or 3 ply which will be rounder
-Roving
-Batting

**Your response is so helpful! email
farmhandsharvest@gmail.com**



April 2023 Newsletter

Seeking New Home: Angora Rabbit Adoption

Two intact buck satin/french angora rabbits looking for a new forever home. They have been together from the start, so I would like to keep them together. They are 3 years old. One produces more fiber than the other. This breed requires regular grooming and shearing about 4x a year. They need to be kept cool through Summer and out of wind and wet conditions in Winter. They can be a bit shy, but are sweet boys. They have been on 18% pellets and timothy hay. Please contact me for more information. I do have a hutch that I would be willing to sell, the rabbits are free to the right home. Crystal, 970-275-9130 (Palisade, CO)



Interested in Sheep Shearing?

Starting this week, Matt Eland of Starry Night Farms and Benjamin Capron of Farmhand's Harvest are planning to shear Starry Night Farms' flock. There is an invitation to anyone in our fibershed group who is interested in seeing how the wool is harvested and those who would like to participate.

For more information, contact Matt:
eland.matthew@gmail.com

FEATURED FIBER ARTIST

Jane Dupree Fiber Arts
Cedaredge, CO



Jane Dupree retired as CEO of St. Joseph Home in Chicago to join family in Hotchkiss. This "retirement" soon became a series of adventures as short-term Executive Director of the Creamery, wine steward at Liliputian (family winery), hospice grief counselor and chaplain, farmers market vendor in Telluride, Ridgway and Montrose, founding board member and contributing artist at GMAEC, five-year artist at Aspen Saturday Market, and "retirement" again to her fiber studio to provide classes and original wearables and art to shops and galleries in Aspen and the Western Slope.

She is looking forward to future collaborations with the current generation of local fiber folks, particularly in delighting and educating new recruits in the delicious and completely addictive love of fiber.

Jane has two felting workshops coming up in May!

Session I New Designs for Felting Wool Hats and Bags

Session II Advanced Felting: 3D Techniques for Wearables / Wall Art

Please check out her instagram and website for more information!

www.janedupreefiberarts.com @mizjane16

A huge **THANK YOU** to all that participated in the Carbondale Green is the New Black fashion show last month. What an overwhelming success it was and a well of inspiration for new ways to share the work of the farmers and makers of our region. We are working on a way to share the garments and their stories in a detailed presentation.



American White Yak Fiber FOR SALE!

What an incredible resource to have in Crawford!

For more information about availability and price, please contact Bob Stuplich:

bobs405@gmail.com
970 209-1356



It was also brought to our attention that the season for brushing the Yaks has begun and if you have an interest in learning more about this, again contact Bob Stuplich.



LOCAL KNITTERS GROUP MEETING TIMES

Hotchkiss

The Hotchkiss Knitters meets at the library in Hotchkiss on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10:00-12:00

Paonia

Fiber Friends Paonia Knitters group meets at the library in Paonia the third Saturday of every month from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. The Fiber Friends aim to enhance and support fiber skills in the community. Bring your own supplies. All ages and skills are welcome to join!

A word about who to contact for what:

To best serve our Fibershed region, a point person has volunteered to receive inquiries specific to the categories below. This is a starting point for building strong communication within each facet of the broader group.

PROCESSOR	bluemesayarn@gmail.com Linda Freimuth
MAKER	willow1154@hotmail.com Betsy Johnson
DESIGN TO MARKET	hstratton11@gmail.com Hannah DeHerrera
PRODUCER	wilson.madeline@icloud.com Madeline Wilson
OUTREACH	kdlinehan@gmail.com Kate Linehan

Dye Color of April



Avocado Pits
+ Skins

MONTHLY Handwork Meetup

@
719 2nd Street
Paonia
3rd Sunday of each month
4/16/23
1-3pm

Bring your own mobile handwork project or join to see what others are up to and a chance to exchange ideas! We are back to the dye studio space on 2nd Street in Paonia with more room to spread out. You are welcome to join with or without a project. We'll do introductions around 1:30pm and then share ideas and enjoy some handwork. Please bring a chair or cushion if you have one.

This is not a formal meeting, but we are planning an official group meeting around late May/June. Stay tuned!

WORKSHOP



Sat, Apr 15 |

Grand Junction
Silk Scarf Eco-Print

Where:
Confluence Studios
660 White Ave
Grand Junction

Cost:
\$90 (Includes Scarf
Blank)

Eco-printing is a natural dyeing technique in which the pigments from plant material are transferred to fabric.

Silk Scarf Eco-Print
Time & Location

Apr 15, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Grand Junction, 660 White Ave, Grand Junction,
CO 81501, USA
About the event

In this class, you will create a one of a kind silk scarf and learn the process of Eco-printing. The instructor will supply all necessary materials, except please bring your own flat headed hammer. Also feel free to bring any fresh plant materials such as garden flowers, leaves and weeds!

\$90.00 per person (includes materials,
including scarf blank)

Sign Up Online:

<https://www.imconfluencestudios.com/event-info/silk-scarf-eco-print>

Vol .04 Newsletter



first weekend of each month

May 2023 Newsletter

Have you heard of Spun in Palisade? Check it out!

Used Fiber Tools and Equipment

Yarn

Needles

Notions

Equipment Exchange

Classes + Events



www.spunpalisade.com

Upcoming Workshop at the Grand Mesa Arts Center

Creative Stitchin' with Patt Jones

Class Description:

A large variety of hand embroidery stitches and embellishment techniques will be taught using varied fabrics including flannel, linen, wool and cotton. All will be completed by hand as you discover the many ways to let your imagination soar using needle and thread. \$15 per class All Materials Included

- 2 hours
 - \$15
 - Grand Mesa Arts & Events Center
- www.gmaec.org

FEATURED FIBER ARTIST

**Linda Freimuth
Blue Mesa Yarn**



Linda spends her summers with her husband Rick as a fire lookout for the San Juan National Forest on Benchmark where her spinning wheel joins her. As she says " Nothing like spinning at 9300 ft surrounded by 4 walls of windows or out on the deck 43 ft in the air!"

Blue Mesa yarn is currently available to buy at Delicious Orchards in Paonia

"I use to have an Etsy shop near the time they began and it was great. At that point there were not that many of us spinning bison, silk, alpaca, etc. and selling it on line so it was a great business. But I was also spending a LOT of time on the computer writing up descriptions, taking photos, etc. so I decided to limit myself to fine arts fairs (mostly an all women group -- it was amazing) when we lived in Maine. (So going international to local was a foreshadowing of the Fibershed!) Since becoming a part of Western Slope Fibershed I will be adding plant dyes to my local fibers."

Thanks Linda, for all you bring to our Fibershed group!



Dyer's Chamomile
(*Anthemis tinctoria*)
Available for purchase



Large quantities of Dyer's Chamomile for sale in the Paonia. Harvested in 2022

Very colorfast, and produces rich yellow hues.

Contact Matt with Grey Owl Gardens if interested
907.388.2995



**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS,
FOLKS!**

SATURDAY JUNE 3rd
11am - 3pm



Location:
719 2nd Street
Paonia, CO



@ 12pm

**Western Slope of Colorado Fibershed
Presentation**

Updates on current work; future projects,
and membership sign up information!

11-2pm

**Community
Indigo Dye Vat**

(suggested \$5 donation per item)

11-3pm

Food and drinks

There will be food and drink provided and
feel free to bring something to share!

11-3pm

**Fibermobile work party sign-
up**

Sure to be a fun time, hope to see you there!

Dye Color of May



Western Sagebrush

MONTHLY

Handwork Meetup

@

719 2nd Street

Paonia

NO MEETUP THIS MONTH!

**Next meetup will be the 4th
Sunday 6/24 4-6pm**

With Summer on the horizon we've switched the meetup timing to the fourth Sunday of each month from 4-6pm. No meetup in May but we hope to see you in June!

Successful shearing event at Starry Night Farms last month!



Time & Location

May 07, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Cedaredge, 195 W Main St, Cedaredge, CO 81413, USA

About the Event

ReFind Vintage Then and Now Fashion Show

New this year to kick off the ReFind Art Festival is a unique ReFind Vintage Fashion Show featuring Then and Now clothing. Sunday, May 7 models of all ages and sizes will take the runway in the Bank of Colorado Theatre at the Grand Mesa Arts and Events Center. Art students in Kara Mann's (Cedaredge Middle School) and Pepper Foley's (Cedaredge High School) classes have selected a vintage piece of clothing from the collection of Judy Leonard, a local artist and member of the art center. The students are taking cues from the vintage style to create a version that is totally "Now." The students have also visited local thrift stores to recycle clothing and accessories to fit their contemporary vision of fashion. Along the way, the kids will be learning about the history of fashion, fabric and clothing construction. May 7 will be the reveal of all their hard work this winter and spring at the ReFind Fashion Show. The fashion show will also include some of our creative adult seamstresses and fashionistas who will also be modeling vintage outfits and funky creations.

Tickets are \$10 adults \$5 Students

<https://www.gmaec.org/event-details/refind-vintage-fashion-show>

CREATOR S WANTED!

06.03.23

06.10.23

BASIC UPHOLSTERY
AND BLOCK PRINTING
WORKSHOP

\$1300 INCLUDES ALL
INSTRUCTION, LODGING,
MATERIALS, AND HOUSE MADE,
LOCALLY SOURCED MEALS.

PARTIAL AND FULL
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!



LOCAL NOMAD HOSTEL
PAONIA, COLORADO

DESTINATION
ART

email laura mcloughlin at
laurasubelmc@gmail.com to learn more



June 2023 Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION

first weekend of each month

Hi, Fiber Friends! We hope you'll join us for a fun day of connecting with our local fiber community!

Saturday June 3rd 11am to 3pm

OPEN HOUSE



719 2nd Street Paonia CO 81428

FIBERMOBILE

Learn about our new mobile classroom and marketplace, for which received a Fibershed micro-grant in 2022



GET INVOLVED

From flax to fashion, get involved with our current projects.



MEMBERSHIP LAUNCH

We aim to support resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies by connecting a regional network of local fiber, local dye and local labor
Come grab a bite and get to know your neighbor.

LEARN MORE ON OUR NEW WEBSITE!

www.wsfibershed.com



Vol .06 Newsletter

Drinks, Bites and Fiber Fun. Stop by and
Check it Out this Saturday!



11 - 2 PM

Community Dye Vat

First come first serve, we will have an open indigo dye vat and you're welcome to bring one item to dye per person, ideally made of naturally fiber. \$5 suggested donation



12 PM

Western Slope Fibershed Presentation

We are excited to share about our current Fibermobile project, new membership structure as well as upcoming events and goals and how you can become involved.



11 - 3 PM

Maker Member Showcase

Spinning Demonstrations, shared examples of Fibershed work from the valley including processed yak fiber, wool, natural dye samples of local dye plants and more!



JULY 2023 Newsletter

first weekend of each month

LLAMA FIBER

For Sale

- Yarn
- Knit Goods
- Roving @ \$12 per 3oz

To purchase, contact Kathy at
turkeytrots@gmail.com



*"Never look into the eyes
of a llama, you'll fall in
love" - Glenn Stanko*



Interesting Llama Facts

- A llama's average lifespan is 20 years
- Llamas are very social
- Llamas can grow to 6 feet tall
- Llamas are used as therapy animals
- Yarn made from llama fiber is extremely versatile
- Llamas are hardy and well suited to harsh environments. They are quite sure-footed, easily navigating rocky terrain at high altitudes.

FEATURED PRODUCER

Kathy + Glenn Stanko



One thing was clear when I interviewed Kathy Stanko, she and her husband Glenn really love their Llamas. Having been closely involved with the Rocky Mountain Llama and Alpaca Association since 2006 and tending to her own herd of llamas for nearly 20 years, Kathy has a lot of experience in this unique fiber realm. Kathy and Glenn have resided in Kannah Creek, outside of Grand Junction, since 1995. At the time, two goats were there initial entry into animal husbandry, but it wasn't long before Kathy was intrigued by the idea of a guard llama for her two goats. Over time they were caring for 19 llamas, 12 cashmere goats, guinea hens and 15 peacocks! But the scales had tipped for manageability on their farm and they recognized tending to one species' needs was the best direction for them and their animals. Needless to say, the llamas never left. Kathy emphasized that not only do they produce a beautiful fiber quite similar to alpaca that deserves more exposure, but they are excellent guard animals and very sociable creatures to connect with. When I asked Kathy, what if any primary challenges currently exist with raising llamas in our area? She was quick to reply that large animal veterinary care appears to be an unfortunately dwindling profession in our Western Slope Area.

Thank you Kathy and Glenn for your good work! Llama fiber and farm visits are available.

turkeytrots@gmail.com



Dye Color of July



Madder Root
(*rubia tinctorum*)

The common madder can grow up to 1.5 m in height. The evergreen leaves are approximately 5–10 cm long and 2–3 cm broad, produced in whorls of 4–7 starlike around the central stem. It climbs with tiny hooks at the leaves and stems. The flowers are small (3–5 mm across), with five pale yellow petals, in dense racemes, and appear from June to August, followed by small (4–6 mm diameter) red to black berries. The roots can be over a metre long, up to 12 mm thick and the source of red dyes known as rose madder and Turkey red. It prefers loamy soils (sand and clay soil) with a constant level of moisture. Madder is used as a food plant by the larvae of some Lepidoptera species including the hummingbird hawk moth.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubia_tinctorum

COLORS TO CONTEMPLATE

Dye colors of the American Flag



An excerpt from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History shares more about the star spangled banner...

"Natural dyes were necessary to create the colorful broad stripes and bright stars that Francis Scott Key saw so gallantly streaming at the Battle of Baltimore in September 1814. The fabrics would have been pre-dyed before Mary Pickersgill, her two nieces, her daughter, and her indentured servant began work to create the Star-Spangled Banner flag.

Pickersgill created the flag from three fabrics. White cotton was used for the stars, which retained the cotton's original color. Undyed wool was used for the white stripes. She used dyed wool for the blue star background and red stripes.

The wool for the starfield background was dyed with indigo. Indigo, possessing a deep, rich blue color, is one of the oldest natural dyes for fabrics and is created from the leaves of the plant *Indigofera tinctoria*.

The wool for the red stripes was dyed red with the root of the madder plant, *Rubia tinctorum*. Madder root dye can produce reds of many different shades, from peaches and corals to deep burgundies. To get the right shade of red, the madder root has to be combined with mordants, metallic salts that help set and intensify natural dyes. Mordants help protect the dyed cloth from perspiration, water, and fading over time. The pH of the dye bath also affects the final color so many different shades can be achieved by altering the pH with the same mordant."

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/>

Dye Color of July



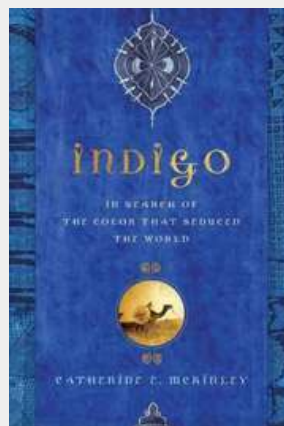
Indigo (*Persicaria tinctoria*)

Translating the color of sea and sky to our clothing has required the use of synthetic compounds created from fossil fuel derived substances at industrial scales of production.

Growing your color is an alternative to this system that engages and reconnects us with the land, its seasons and processes. We see that cultivating your own form of blue is now returning to our textile culture as interest grows from gardeners, farmers, designers and makers across the world. There are many species grown, and yet it is *Persicaria tinctoria* (syn. *Polygonum tinctorium*)—Japanese indigo—that has can be easily cultivated in many parts of North America (including our fibershed in Northern CA), and other temperate climates.

– FIBERSHED

book recommendation:

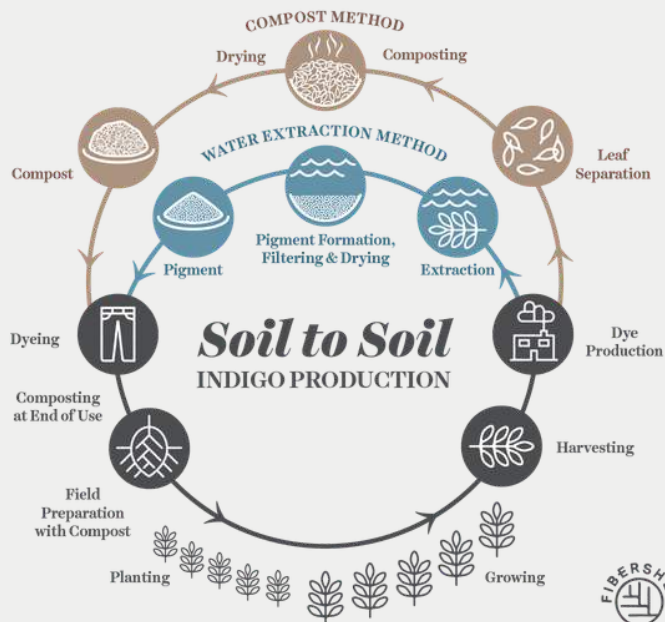


Indigo
In Search of the Color That
Seduced the World

by Catherine E. McKinley

(Amazon Book Review)

Brimming with rich, electrifying tales of the precious dye and its ancient heritage, *Indigo* is also the story of a personal quest: Catherine McKinley is the descendant of a clan of Scots who wore indigo tartan; Jewish "rag traders"; a Massachusetts textile factory owner; and African slaves—her ancestors were traded along the same Saharan routes as indigo, where a length of blue cotton could purchase human life. McKinley's journey in search of beauty and her own history leads her to the West African women who dye, trade, and wear indigo—women who unwittingly teach her that buried deep in the folds of their cloths is all of destiny and the human story.





The Project

The test plot at Flipside farms is 30' x 10'. The flax being grown is a long stemmed fiber flax variety from Holland, called Avian.



When the flax is ready to be harvested, you are invited to help in the harvest (hand pulling) and processing of the flax into linen fiber using traditional tools and technique



We are working to acquire traditional small-scale flax processing tools.



Those who participate are welcome to take linen home for spinning/processing into yarn.



Hotchkiss farmer, spinner, knitter and pattern maker, Hannah Stratton-DeHerrera is leading the flax project



This locally produced linen yarn can be used in the One Year, One Outfit Project, to follow.



ONE YEAR. ONE OUTFIT

PROGRAM DETAILS:

One year, One Outfit is a cohort-based project that responds to consumerism and the damaging effects of fast fashion.

We invite artists and/or groups of artists to sign up and create outfits (3 pieces) by following a soil-to-soil supply chain: fiber and dyes are grown, harvested, and made into a garment within the Western Slope of Colorado region, and all garments are able to return to the soil at the end of their life cycle.

Outfits are created in partnership with farmers, fiber guilds, community gardens, and local art studios.

The project is built around skill and tool sharing and a shared passion to solve problems by looking at our regional and personal assets.

The project aims to create a paradigm shift towards relating to our Earth and our communities with care and is organized by the Western Slope of Colorado Fibershed as an invitation for us to question the origin of our clothes.

(Images from Rust Belt Fibershed's 2022 One Year, One Outfit Project.)



MONTHLY

Handwork Meetup

@
719 2nd Street
Paonia

Next meetup will be the 4th
Sunday in JULY 7/23 4-6pm

FIBERSHED
Rust Belt

One Year, One Outfit Project

Interested in joining the next cohort? We'll kick it off with an info session at the end of February 2026 (exact date still TBD) via Zoom! You can add your name and email to be ...

 Rust Belt Fibershed



first weekend of each month

August 2023 Newsletter

HI...I'M KATE

FIBER ARTIST

...and the human putting these newsletters together;-)



I thought I'd boldly feature myself in this month's newsletter to share about what joy I find in the fibershed, and to share an upcoming change with the newlsetter.

With a love for beatuy, and adornemnt I have found myself drawn to learning and observing whenever possible. Working for Elisabethan clothing company in 2008 inititated my interest in alternative 'fashion' paths, then In 2013 my life led me to a small town the South of France where I had the privelage to participate in a dye workshop with renowned dyer, chemist and botanist Michel Garcia. Those ten days mark the beginging of what I now understand as a lifelong journey exploring natural color on fiber. I currently work from a dye studio in downtown Paonia where I have the opportunity to explore different techniques while also creating a small line of botanically printed scarves and over dyed second hand clothing. Working in the North Fork Community to build a fibershed group has been enriching in such unexpected ways and

I look forward to how the threads of human connection will continue to create a beautiful network and fiber of it's own. With that, life has been full in my commitments and as part of that, a recognition that scaling the newlsetter to a quarterly/seasonal sharing feels most fitting to adjust to. I am reminded of how good it feels to live in a place that cherishes strong roots, and commitment over time in tending what we hope to grow. This month is short and sweet, but there will be more to come! Enjoy these fleeting moments of Summer, and feel free to connect via our email in the meantime. --- Kate

wsfibershed@gmail.com

The dye plants growing in my garden in Paonia this year:

Dyer's Alkanet



Navajo Tea



Queen Sophia Marigold

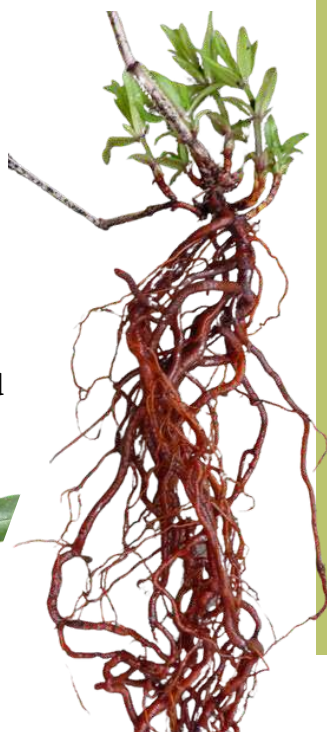
Japanese Indigo



Tango
Cosmos



Madder Root



Dyer's Chamomile



Woad

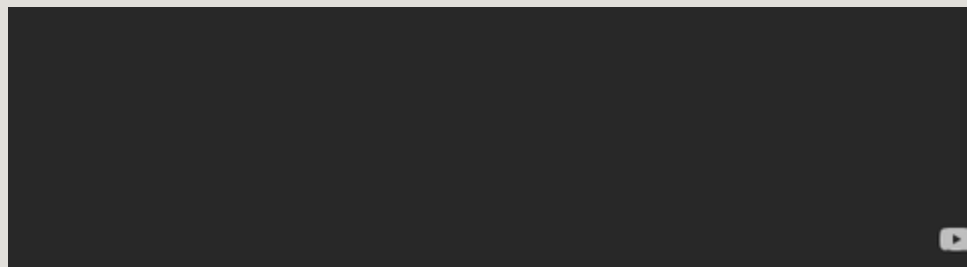




FLAX HARVEST 8/5/2023



A great video showing
all the steps Hannah at
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BACK IN THE DAY WHEN PICKING MILKWEED WAS A PATRIOTIC PURSUIT

Kathryn A. Kahler



These days kids are recruited to help save monarch butterflies by joining campaigns to collect milkweed pods and plant new stems. But back in the fall of 1944, similar efforts asked children to help save lives in another way involving milkweed.

"Two bags save one life," read one government slogan. Others were, "Don't let our sailors sink" and "Schoolchildren of America? Help save your fathers', brothers', and neighbors' lives by collecting milkweed pods."

Seventy-five years ago in the height of World War II, milkweed was valued for its floss, a naturally buoyant and water-repellant fiber used to fill life jackets for soldiers. It took two 20-pound bags of milkweed pods to make one life preserver.

Because men were at war and women were filling their places in the workforce, children became the government's focus for recruitment. Some picked milkweed as a class project, gathering pods in their walks to and from school where their teachers collected them. Others were a part of organized projects for 4-H clubs or Scout groups.

Before the war, life preservers were made from kapok, a silky fiber from the fruit of a tree grown in the East Indies (present-day Indonesia). But Japan's occupation of that region during the war cut off kapok supplies and the federal government identified milkweed as a suitable substitute.

There wasn't time to cultivate the amount of milkweed it would take to supply the need — 2 million pounds of ripe pods could make 100,000 life jackets — so the call went out to schoolchildren to pick wild milkweed.

Children were supplied with open-mesh onion bags or gunny sacks and sent afield to pick in September to mid-October, when the pods were ripe but not yet fully open. After picking, bags were tied together and strung saddle-style over fences to dry.

Urban and rural schoolchildren were encouraged to collect enough milkweed to make one life jacket — at least two sacks apiece — and were paid 15 to 20 cents per bag. Members of 4-H clubs received extra credit for their efforts.

A 4-H history website (4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/WW-II_Support/#TOC-20) tallied the collection efforts by 4-H groups across the country, reporting that "by November 1944, Wisconsin 4-H'ers had already passed their 50,000 sacks goal."

A report by the Michigan History magazine ("A weed goes to war, and Michigan provides the ammunition") tells the story of what happened to the pods once they were picked. In 1942, the government appropriated a former lumber company in Petoskey, Michigan — located on the milkweed-rich northeastern shores of Lake Michigan — as the country's only milkweed processing plant.

Petoskey was accessible by road, rail and ship. Collection points were established at rural stores and small businesses across the Midwest and New England to funnel the fruits of the children's efforts to the company's processing plant, where they went through a procedure to dry and separate them.

Bagged pods passed through a dryer at the rate of 1,000 bags per hour, were lifted and emptied into a hopper, then gently crushed to release the floss, which was collected in a bagging chamber. The broken pods and seeds fell through a grate to collection bins below.

It was a time when patriotism was intergenerational. Everybody made sacrifices and children stepped up to the challenge and did their part. Reports of the efforts estimate that by the end of the war, children had picked over 2.5 million pounds of milkweed.

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