

GENERATION RESPONSE

PEOPLE | EARTH | ART



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Generation Response Staff

Aubrey Tingler
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Holly Bok
Editor-in-Chief

Maggie Mang
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Jessica Goodman
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Copy Editors
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Hana Qoronfleh,
Shachy Rivas
Diane Ryu

Contributing Writers
Ioulia Fenton
Ricardo Pagulayan
Shachy Rivas
Diane Ryu
Malika Shettar
Ryan Southerland

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of Meijun Chen

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Letter from the editors:

Hello,

Thank you for reading Generation Response. Generation Response strives to raise awareness in the Emory community of environmental and humanitarian issues, and promote sustainability. We hope you enjoy the pieces in this issue, and learn something about important causes in our community or around the world. If you have questions, comments, or would like to be involved with Generation Response, please email us at generationresponse@gmail.com. We also encourage you to check out our website: <http://generationresponse.wordpress.com/>. Happy reading.

Peace,

Aubrey Tingler, Editor-in-Chief

Arts and reviews

Black Gold

A film review

By Aubrey Tingler

On March 26th, The Green Bean, Campus Kitchens, Slow Food Emory and Second Nature co-sponsored a screening of the coffee trade exposé documentary, *Black Gold*. If you weren't there, you missed out. Not only did attendees receive free, pizza, veggies and fair trade coffee, they also learned about the consequences of the price and accessibility of coffee.

There are coffee shops all over major cities these days, and Starbucks is practically as prevalent as McDonalds, and can be found even in small towns off of interstate highways. Many people enjoy a fresh, rich coffee daily, without considering how it got to their cup. Even as someone who was aware of the injustices of the coffee trade before seeing the film, I realized I need to be more conscious about my coffee choices as a consumer.

The buzz about “fair trade” certification, particularly for food products coming out of Africa and South America has been around for a little while now. *Black Gold* focuses specifically on how the lack of fair trade affects the lives of coffee farmers in Ethiopia. People in the coffee farming village of Ethiopia depend almost exclusively on coffee for their livelihoods. Coffee is the only commodity that brings money into these communities, so when the price of coffee is low, these communities are impoverished.

Coffee, like other food commodities such as sugar and cocoa, is not governed by the supply and demand economics that rule many commodities in the capi-

alist economy of the United States. Instead, coffee is traded on the New York Board of Trade, which means that the price is set by commodity traders. This dictates how much farmers can earn from the coffee they sell.

The film follows the work of Tadesse Meskela, a coffee cooperative manager. Meskela is disturbed by the plight of his farmers. They live in groups of fifteen people in two room huts; they cannot afford to educate their children, and in many cases they cannot afford enough food to feed their families. They have no other opportunities for economic advancement outside of coffee farming.

Meskela is followed on his travels around the world, as he tries to interest coffee buyers in purchasing the coffee from his cooperative at a price that is fair for his farmers. The film uses the stark contrast between the industrialized Western world to which Meskela travels and the rural coffee villages of Ethiopia to create a series visually stunning tableaux, which make the viewer acutely aware of the economic development and opportunity gap many coffee farmers face.

The film is rife with statistics that bring home its message. For example, a cup of coffee in United States costs between two and three dollars. The coffee farmers in Ethiopia are lucky if they received five cents of that amount per kilo of coffee. The farmers say it would make a huge difference in their lives to make even seventeen cents per kilo of coffee sold. *Black Gold* is informative, fascinating and visually captivating—overall a very well done documentary that I would highly recommend to anyone, especially coffee drinkers.

The Disharmony of Sabotage

A prose poem

By Shachy Rivas

Silence. Not a dreadful silence but a peaceful one. The wind whispers in my ear ever so slightly, as if it is telling me its most obscure secrets, causing the trees to jovially dance around me. Long blades of grass tickle the spaces in between my fingers as I listen to the leaves rustling under the footsteps of small animals playfully chasing each other. Slowly, I drift into an unfathomable sleep. Smoke. Debris. Fire. What seems like dozens of men march about chopping, severing, and slaughtering the statuesque trees that were once graceful, as if the flames were not approaching faster by the millisecond. “Assassins,” I cry, and like the other creatures of the forest, disoriented, I scurry away from the danger. From my window, I watch the flames, destructive, yet mesmerizing. A forest of prosperity disintegrated. Lives of present and future generations obstructed by this deceitful force. Fire. In the wake of it, I am no longer human, no longer powerful. I am a victim. This is deforestation.



photo taken from <http://cronkitenews.asu.edu/assets/images/13/05/03-cards-california-full.jpg>

Extreme Fieldwork: Rattle snakes, bandits and breaking the law

Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States

A book review

By Ioulia Fenton

As I began my journey to becoming an anthropologist, one of the first pieces of wisdom shared with me by a professor was: “Be prepared, because you will spend a lot of time explaining what it is that you do.” And this has generally been the case, as most people struggle to visualize the daily life of an anthropologist. While some have a vague idea that anthropology is an academic discipline requiring fieldwork, most fall back on popular stereotypes presented in the media: “So, are you basically like Indiana Jones?” an Emory business student asked me.

While this kind of generalization may upset some anthropologists, it does reveal a certain basic truth: anthropologists do have a special sense of adventure, and are undaunted by facing the feared and discovering treasures of knowledge to bring to the world.

However, most anthropologists would stop short of putting themselves in mortal danger, except for the hardy few who would halt at nothing to discover their truths. Seth Holmes, Associate Professor of Medical Anthropology and Public Health at University of California Berkeley, is one such Indiana Jones type. His latest book *Fresh Fruit: Broken Bodies* is a gripping tale of danger, social oppression, struggle and resistance.

Anthropologists gain their data by immersing themselves in the daily lives of the people they want to study. They watch, experience and talk, making friends along the way to gain deeper and more honest insights from them. This ethnography lasts at least one year and often much longer.

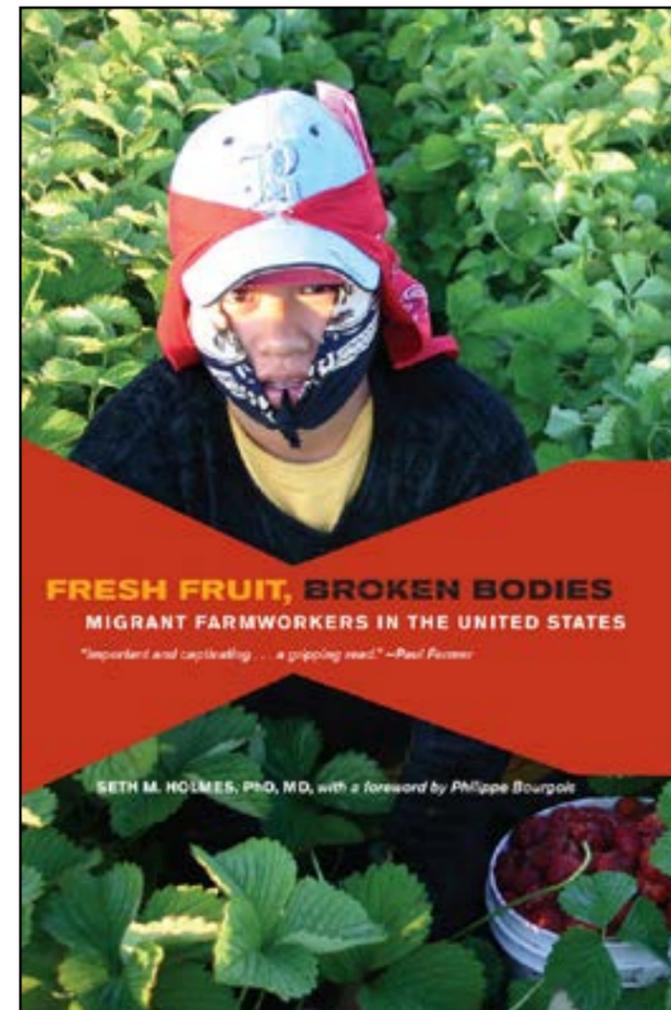
Over a total of five years, Seth Holmes set out to investigate what it is really like to be a migrant worker coming undocumented from Mexico to the United States to work picking strawberries, blueberries

and sometimes apples for the American fresh fruit market. To do this, he spent two seasons berry picking with his Triqui friends, an indigenous group of the western part of the Mexican state of Oaxaca. During his fieldwork, Holmes attempted a journey that thousands of economic migrants undertake every single year—crossing the Arizona desert to enter the United States illegally.

Holmes spends the first section of the book dispelling the myth that this journey is one of choice. People leave their homes in Mexico and other Latin American countries because their livelihoods have been largely destroyed by external factors, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the United States and Canada which has made growing, eating and/or selling traditional corn virtually impossible for a lot of rural farmers. People risk their lives and their life savings to cross a desert full of deadly rattle snakes, oppressive desert heat, opportunistic thieves, and the possibility of being caught and detained precisely because there is no alternative.

This is a humanitarian issue that seldom rears its head in the media and in public debates, while the dangers the people face are very real. The group with whom Holmes attempted to enter the United States was apprehended by the border patrol, leading to his arrest and imprisonment. While detained, despite his American citizen status, he was denied some of his basic rights as a human being and his lawful rights as a border patrol detainee. Twice the law enforcement officers coldly denied Holmes a phone call, and the legal requirement of food and drink provisions every six hours failed to materialize.

But there is much more to the book than that. The story telling is effortlessly interwoven with anthropological theoretical concepts that are explained in an unusually accessible way. A common thread confronts the naturalization of inequality and suffering of certain population groups. This refers to the fact that undocumented Mexican farm workers are seen as deserving of their low social position—and the suffering that entails—by the general public, the people who employ them, the doctors and health professionals who treat them, and, crucially, the farm



Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies is a book by Seth Holmes, written about the migrant workers in the United States of America.

photo taken from <http://www.ucpress.edu/img/covers/isbn13/9780520275140.jpg>

workers themselves.

Chapter two embellishes on the experience of the farm work and packed living quarters where for privacy's sake Holmes, to the confusion and bemusement of his Triqui colleagues, was more comfortable sleeping in a wardrobe. He describes how much care the migrants pay to staying invisible in the eyes of the law, such as always driving within the speed limit and making sure their cars are fully operational and spotless.

The third chapter exposes the hierarchies on the farm itself: a clear pecking order from the Japanese owners at the top and the middle ranks of white farm managers, to the bottom of the ladder where the Triqui indigenous migrants bend over all day long picking strawberries for very little pay. Chapter four describes how the lower a migrant worker goes down the ranking, the more broken their bodies become,

a health problem that is more to do with social inequality than the work itself.

Chapter five details the cultural gap that exists between medical professionals and the migrant populations they treat for health issues brought on by their work, exposing some of the ways in which doctors and nurses are also constrained by the surrounding unequal system. The penultimate section explores how even the migrants themselves have come to believe that they deserve the social position they find themselves in. And the final chapter is a practical call to arms, including some very specific recommendations for action, for anyone hoping to change things for the better.

When asked how conditions on the farms can be improved, most farm workers ask for English language classes to help them navigate American systems better and small practical changes like graveling farm roads to keep the dust out of the pickers' shacks-come-homes, their families' food, and their children's lungs. Among other things, Holmes also suggests decreasing pesticide usage and increasing pesticide use safety education to better take care of the migrant's bodies and the environment, while ensuring better employee hiring and advancement strategies. Beyond the farm, he advocates for a re-education of the public and of policymakers that challenges such key terms as “illegal alien,” and for public health systems that dethrone biological foci of ill-health in favor of sensitivity to social, economic, and political factors that drive it.

Fresh Fruit: Broken Bodies is a great anthropological book to dig into for anyone remotely interested in the discipline, the issues surrounding migrant agricultural workers in the United States, or who loves a good real-life read. And while I cannot claim to be ‘like Indiana Jones’ myself, Seth Holmes is an example of an anthropological adventurer who comes pretty close.

Book information:

Title: *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*

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University California Press

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Features

The Endangered Starvine By Ricardo Pagulayan

If you ever watched the 2004 film *Anaconda: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid*, you might vaguely remember that the plot revolved around a team of scientists on a quest to find the “blood orchid,” a very rare plant with medical capabilities. Here at Emory, you might be surprised to learn that the Emory area has its own “blood orchid”—the rare and endangered starvine plant: *Schisandra glabra*.

Like the “blood orchid” the starvine is very rare, and is posited to have untapped medical capabilities. Interestingly, the plant’s closest relative is *Schisandra chinensis*, which can be found in China. At one point, *S. glabra* was found all over the southeastern United States, but it is now limited to receding and widely dispersed population ranges. Atlanta, and more precisely, the area around Emory University is one of the last places that the starvine plant can be found in Georgia.

The dramatic drop in range and population of the starvine was caused mostly by habitat loss, primarily due to urbanization and development. Starvine favors shady areas by the embankments of streams, or the well-drained soils of a hillside. The specialization of the habitat preferences make it all the more vulnerable to habitat loss, particularly to in the face of urbanization, the clearing of forests for development, and pollution. For example, Emory’s Starvine Way is so called because it was constructed over known starvine habitat.

The lengthy reproductive process of the starvine plant also limits the plant’s already constricted population range. Starvine plants often need to grow and develop over the course of several years before they begin to produce flowers. The flowers then mature into berries, though these berries are a rare phenomenon in the urban and suburban woodland setting. Because the starvine has become so rare, little is known about the reproductive cycle of this species, and how it might spread.

Luckily for the starvine, there is still hope for the survival of the species thanks to cooperation between Emory University and Wesley Woods retirement community. In the fall of 2011, Carl Brown, a professor in Emory University’s Environmental Sciences Department, joined forces with Kirk Hines, the founder and director of the horticultural therapy program at Wesley Woods Hospital. Brown collects runners (reproductive offshoots of the starvine plant) which are then propagated and planted by the residents at Wesley Woods. In

the Wesley Woods greenhouse, several starvine runners have rooted, and many plants are thriving. Some are already over two feet tall. Brown and Hines have attained a 50% survival rate in their work with starvine propagation, which Hines claims to be quite successful in the absence of much research on the starvine.

In the woods around Emory, such as Lullwater Preserve, starvine plants continue to grow in secrecy right under the noses of Emory students. Emory’s woodlands are one of the last surviving habitats of *S. glabra* in Georgia, and starvine populations continue to be documented by Emory’s environmentalists and ecologists to protect the species’ survival. If you ever have the wonderful privilege to observe the starvine in its natural setting, or if you witness the rare starvine berries, feel free to admire their natural beauty. Just be sure to not disturb the starvine plants, so more and more of them will continue to thrive in woods of Emory University.

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Addressing the Root of the Problem: The Super Giant Community Garden in Bankhead, Atlanta By Diane Ryu

A large abandoned building. A vacant parking lot. The last thing you expect to find in this large abyss of concrete is new growth and life. Yet, this is what the Super Giant Community Garden, in partnership with the Emory Urban Health Initiative (UHI), is bringing to the Bankhead neighborhood of Atlanta. By creating an urban garden in this derelict lot, this initiative is turning unused space into green space that will generate healthier food options for an entire community.

The Super Giant Community Garden is located next to the Super Giant Food grocery store on Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway, the only grocery store within a four mile radius. Grocery shopping is an ordeal for many members of this community, as public transit and long walks are a part of the routine of acquiring food. Neighborhoods like Bankhead are identified as food deserts. Food deserts are defined by the USDA as, “parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets and healthy food providers.”

A staggering 13.5 million Americans live in regions considered to be food deserts. In Atlanta and the neighboring regions, there are over 500,000 people classified as living in a food desert. This means that of the approximately 5.5 million people living in the metro-Atlanta region, one in eleven people live in regions with difficult access to fresh food.

At first, the problem seems simple enough. There are people without access to healthy food in the United States. Building supermarkets with greater food choices seems to be the appropriate measure. However, the problem transcends beyond bringing healthier food to the table. These communities face a higher risk of developing food-related diseases, such as diabetes or obesity. These regions are often composed of lower-income households, which may not be able to afford healthier options even if they are available. The wide-range of obstacles such communities face is reflective of a greater social justice issue: how low-income populations across the United States are subjected to additional burdens by their environment.

In a country that boasts equity and freedom, there are a plethora of inequalities across all sectors that are the root of larger issues limiting lower-income, under-represented populations.

Therefore, Sam Goswami, the owner of the Super Giant Food grocery store and a key leader in the implementation of the new community garden, has a vision that extends beyond providing alternative food options. Goswami hopes to convert the empty building space into a health clinic, and create a space where people can learn how to cook with the ingredients coming from the garden. The idea is to make this a place for improving social networks, with opportunities for promoting environmental stewardship and education, and ultimately creating a meeting space for a cohesive community.

Hugh Green, an MPH student at the Rollins School of Public Health, who has worked with UHI to bring the garden to Bankhead says that he enjoys seeing “food as a way of to build health and human connection,” and that is in fact, exactly what the Super Giant Community Garden is doing. Their efforts to engage community members, while a challenge, have been successful, as demonstrated by the 100-plus people who showed up for the Grand Opening Day of the Super Giant Community Garden. Green says that he would like to see, “the community take ownership of the garden.”

In other regions of the country such as Detroit, similar programs were implemented to solve the issue of food deserts. However, these efforts were stymied with the realization that less than 50 percent of the community members had space in which to cook, prepare, or store the healthier alternative fresh foods. Furthermore, research shows that people who have positive perceptions of the location where they purchased food—whether they be of convenience, quality or selection provided—tend to have a higher intake of produce.

Therefore, the vision molded through the efforts of Goswami, Green and the UHI team of creating not only a supply of food, but a space that is embraced by the community is incredibly innovative. Green says that he hopes to see this space become a “part of a larger healthy hub where people come to learn, live and grow together.”

photo courtesy of Claudia Deng

Life after Meat: The Benefits and Misconceptions Associated with Adopting and Maintaining a Vegetarian Diet

By Ryan Sutherland

Per capita, Americans consume approximately 185 lbs of meat—including beef, pork, poultry, and fish—and 630 lbs of dairy products each year. Since many studies have emerged that link the over consumption of meat and dairy products to high blood pressure, diabetes, certain types of cancers, and heart disease (among other ailments), Americans have begun to reconsider their dietary proclivities. In recent years, a multitude of documentaries, cookbooks, scholarly articles, and weight-loss programs promoting alternative diet plans have confirmed the benefits of vegetarian lifestyles and have garnered considerable media attention. In addition, many restaurant and supermarket chains have begun offering more vegetarian selections, making it easier than ever for individuals to adopt and maintain a vegetarian diet.

In addition to the potentially harmful health effects associated with eating animal products, a recent publication by the environmental advocacy organization Friends of Earth cited the devastating environmental impacts caused by the untenable production and wide-spread consumption of meat products. According to this study, one-third of all cultivated farmland and approximately 70% of available fresh water in the world are used to raise livestock. Adrian Bebb, a campaigner with Friends of Earth, stated: “Diet is no longer a private matter. Every time we eat, we are making a political choice, and we are impacting... the lives of people around the world.” Organizations such as Compassion

Over Killing, Mercy for Animals, PETA and the Animal Protection and Rescue League are outspoken proponents for the ethical treatment of animals and the adoption of a strict vegetarian or vegan diet. These organizations and the objectives they support have not gone unnoticed by the American public, but most Americans do not choose to subscribe to their ideals.

Vegetarianism is still considered rather uncommon in the United States. A 2012 Gallup Poll estimated that approximately 5% of Americans consider themselves vegetarians, approximately 15 million individuals nationwide, definitely a minority. However, adopting a vegetarian lifestyle has become increasingly feasible in recent years. National health and wellness initiatives, an increase in the consumer cost of meat products, and the abundance of healthful and appetizing vegetarian options—including meat alternatives—have made the transition to vegetarianism easier for carnivores and omnivores to bridge.

To be a successful vegetarian, it is important to become an expert on your diet and formulate a list of values you wish to observe. Ask yourself: “Why did I choose to become a vegetarian?” or “What do I hope to accomplish by adopting a vegetarian diet?” Outlining your objectives and citing the motivations that encouraged your decision to become a vegetarian will not only make it easier for you to remain faithful to your diet, but will also assist you in describing and promoting your diet to others.

Social pressures may make it difficult for some fledgling herbivores to loyally abstain from consuming meat or animal products. Irrespective of your motivation, “coming out” as a vegetarian is never easy and remaining strictly adherent to a plant-based diet isn’t always an easy

feat either. Still, know that clear evidence exists to show that you can survive (and thrive) on a plant-based diet, but depending on your personal health needs, it may be necessary to supplement your diet with vitamins and minerals, such as B12 and iron. Trust your body. Ask yourself, “Do I feel healthy as a vegetarian?” If you don’t *feel* healthy, consider making dietary adjustments.

As a vegetarian, you will undoubtedly encounter misconceptions. Some of which are rather humorous. When I first became a vegetarian, several of the most hysterically inaccurate, insensitive and awkward questions and comments I received concerning my diet were: “Well, you don’t look like a vegetarian!” and “So, if you love animals so much, why are you eating all their food?” While beating these individuals over the head with a carrot would be very cathartic, eloquently informing them about your motivation to become a vegetarian and the health benefits that stem from this lifestyle will hopefully put an end to their ignorance.

Outing yourself as a vegetarian to a room full of card-carrying carnivores will likely lead to a barrage of misinformed comments, such as “Well, you know, we are the superior species and we are meant to control the animal population by eating them,” or “It’s not natural to cut milk out of your diet. You really should drink milk to get strong bones,” or “Well you don’t see athletes that are vegetarians, and they are in great shape!”

To save yourself some stress, it’s important to be informed about how to respond to people who may try to belittle your dietary choices. For instance, the founder of The McDougall Program, Dr. John A. McDougall, M.D., best counters the claim that milk products are necessary to foster bone density and strength by asking the following question: “Where does a cow or an elephant get the calcium needed to grow its huge bones?” From plants, of course! Also, one of my many athletic idols is ultra-runner Scott Jurek, who holds a 2010 US record for running 165.7 miles in 24 hours. Contrary to the misinformed claim that all athletes are voracious carnivores, Jurek firmly adheres to a vegan diet.

In my case, after carefully considering the statistics showing the health benefits of adopting a vegetarian lifestyle and witnessing a measurable improvement in the health of several of my friends who had converted to vegetarianism, I felt inspired to become a vegetarian myself. While I consider my decision rational versus radical, some people continue to view vegetarianism as a bold political statement. Regardless of how vehemently you deny your affiliation with radical anti-American sub-groups, the mere fact that you refuse to purchase hot dogs from street vendors or order chili fries at baseball games may make you a target of suspicion. Because nothing says patriotism like eating a big, juicy hamburger, right?

Some people fail to recognize that eating a plant-based diet is a *conscious choice*. As such, try to be flexible and creative with your diet, viewing dietary restrictions as a set of guidelines, not barriers. Vegetarianism shouldn’t feel like deprivation. Still, being a vegetarian can be a challenge in some social settings. I remember a friend invited me to celebrate their birthday at Texas Cattle Co., a restaurant that specialized in serving aged steaks. Looking over the menu, I realized that vegetarian choices were virtually nonexistent (even the asparagus was drizzled with beef gravy!). I called the restaurant ahead and discussed my predicament. The chef made it his personal challenge to conjure up a vegetarian entrée that would suit my needs, and his creation was one of the most delicious vegetarian dinners I’ve ever eaten!

Recent studies outlining the long list of health and environmental consequences that parallel the consumption and production of meat and dairy product have encouraged Americans to consider pursuing healthier alternatives. The American consumer’s awareness and concern for the environment and for their own personal health has increased in recent years, and this factor has made the populace more receptive to adopting a vegetarian or semi-vegetarian diet. Regardless of your motivation to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle, eliminating meat and animal products (or at least decreasing your consumption of them) has been shown to have measureable health benefits that may be worth exploring.

Easy Guacamole Recipe

By Aubrey Tingler

Ingredients

- 1 whole avocado
- 1 tbs. + 1 tsp. red onion, diced
- 2 large garlic cloves or 3 small cloves, minced
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt to taste

Directions:

Cut avocado with a sharp knife lengthwise all the way around. Pull avocado apart and remove pit. Pull off peel and slice into chunks. Dice red onion and mince garlic. Juice lime and remove seeds from juice. Put all ingredients into a small mixing bowl and mash avocado with fork or pastry masher until all ingredients are combined and avocado is smooth. Small chunks are perfectly okay, and will add texture to your guac. You should mash to your desired smoothness.

photo taken from <http://www.pachd.com/free-images/food-images/guacamole-01.jpg>



Field Pleasures
By Ricardo Pagulayan

As Michael R. Canfield noted in his book, *Field Notes on Science and Nature*, the field has a different connotation for everybody. In studies pertaining to ecology, the field is essentially a location where one goes to study and observe the flora and fauna. The “field” then, could be someone’s backyard, the vast expanse of Lullwater Preserve here at Emory, a plot of jungle in the Amazon, or beside the train tracks at Zayas. Regardless of location, the field can provide many educational and self-fulfilling experiences, as well opportunities for relaxing and constructive interactions with nature.

I have been studying ants for the past seven years, and I consider myself an amateur myrmecologist, or one who studies the behaviors and life processes of ants. My field therefore, is anywhere ants happen to exist! My experience with ants is more specialized on species residing in the temperate regions of the Eastern United States. Though most ant species are found in the tropics, there are still so many ant species in the Eastern United States that it is hard to keep track of them all. In my studies, I needed a way to keep records and observations in an organized manner. So, I began a field journal.

I have been keeping a field journal on ants since I started anting. I bring these bound, lined, hardcover journals whenever I actively go out to seek ants. I record the measurements of ant specimens, such as their length, the approximate width of their heads, (though this can be hard to do with the smaller species) their pattern of coloration, and their behavior. I also make note of what type of environment the specimen was found in, such as a deciduous forest, an open meadow, or a pine forest. I also note the nature of the substrate, whether it is clay, loose humus, rocky, sandy, and so on. Finally, I record the weather—sunny, partially sunny, cloudy, or raining, and even the temperature. But most importantly, recording the time of day, the date of collection, and the location of the collection are vital to good field journaling.

I like to include sketches with my journal entries, usually of specimens themselves, to serve as visual representations of my written descriptions. Other times, the sketches attempt to represent an ant behavior that is hard to describe in writing, such as the movements of an ant’s antennae. I may also choose to include sketches of the environment in which the

ants were found, their prey items, and so on. Many of these sketches are labeled for the purpose of emphasizing their importance or relation to the journal entry. For example, if I notice a mite, which is a parasite to ants, I may sketch an ant with a mite on it, and draw the mite in relation to how I observed and described it.

Though field journaling has developed into a hobby for me, field journals have also served as valuable banks of information and data in my study of ants. I have found that many times, I refer back to my field journal to clarify some confusing aspects of myrmecology. For example, many species of ants look very similar and are often difficult to distinguish. Notably, the genus *Myrmica*, *Pheidole*, and the citronella ants, a parasitic group in the genus *Lasius*, tend to be difficult to tell apart from one another. Some of these ants prefer wooded areas, others prefer to nest directly under rocks in shaded areas, others nest under rocks in sunny areas, and others prefer open meadows. By referring to my observations that are kept in my field journals, I have come to notice that some citronella ants are found in shaded woody areas, while others of the group are found in more sunny places. Could this equate to two separate species? Possibly. Referring back to my journal has helped me in distinguishing subtleties that I would have overlooked in the field, which is why detailed descriptions and sketches are a big help.

Field journaling is efficient; all I need is a pencil and my journal. It’s portable, and it is free from the hassles of chargers, confusing menu buttons, and the need for electricity. Field journals preserve all my records, and I can refer to my own firsthand accounts made months earlier with the flip of a page. Field journaling provides more incentive and motivation to go outside, and to have a firsthand account of nature. One might think that given the number of years I have been journaling about ants, I must be coming close to running out of things to write. But that is far from the truth! Sure, there are some common observations and repetitive data, but I consider each entry I make a valuable source of new information to enrich my interest in myrmecology.

Would I recommend field journaling? Yes. There is not one rigid method to journaling about nature; in fact journaling is open to interpretation. Some people like to take photographic field journals, other prefer to sketch and measure. Others prefer to write long, detailed journal entries. It is all up to you. All you need is a pencil, paper, and the outdoors. The field awaits you, so write away!



Flash back to Fall: Powerless Hour 2013 at Oxford College
By Malika Shettar

The ghosts and zombies of Halloween arrived early this year at Dooley’s Tavern at Oxford College for Power(less) Hour, hosted by the Sustainability Club and Dooley’s Dolls. On October 23rd, storytellers and s’mores lovers all over campus gathered together in the dark to share frightening tales. Between sips of hot cocoa and bites of s’mores, students listened to their fellow classmates narrating terrifying stories, complete with spooky sound effects. From axe-wielding slashers to infamous clowns, the diversity of horrors never failed to surprise and horrify. Amid gasps and some laughs, facts about sustainable energy were shared to educate the crowd during this energy awareness event. Students left not only with vampire teeth, glow-in-the-dark spiders, and enough horror to chill their bodies as souvenirs, but also with a newfound knowledge of the importance of energy conservation. Power(less) Hour was a night that brought students together to support sustainability and celebrate Halloween.

photo taken from <http://www.tmglobalist.org/libraries/ckeditor/plugins/kcfinder/upload/images/food%20sustainability.jpg>



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