

## **PROGRAMME FOR THE CLUSIUS SYMPOSIUM**



### **Other Ways of Gardening**

In collaboration with the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology,  
Leiden University

Leiden, 29 May 2015

Cover Photo: Gardener with tree fern in the Hortus botanicus Leiden (1897)

# Other Ways of Gardening

Clusius Symposium

Leiden  
29 May 2015

**Organizers:**

Prof. Adriaan van der Staay  
Prof. Gerard Persoon  
Dr. Gerda van Uffelen  
Dr. Tessa Minter  
Drs. Nikkie Buskermolen



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Leiden



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## The Clusius Foundation

The activities of the Clusius Foundation are inspired by the international and interdisciplinary work of Carolus Clusius. Carolus Clusius (1526 - 1609) was a botanist of world fame. For him botany, medicine and pharmacy belonged to an interconnected field of enquiry. He was an early pioneer of garden plants and gardening and the scientific founding father of the Hortus botanicus in Leiden. In the Netherlands he is well known for his introduction of the tulip, today a feature of Dutch horticulture.

The Clusius Foundation aims at furthering the study of gardens and plants in the widest sense. In 1990 the Foundation organized a noted international symposium, *The Authentic Garden*, to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hortus botanicus in Leiden. The Clusius Foundation assisted in the creation of the Von Siebold Memorial Garden, which is now much visited by Japanese and other tourists. The Foundation also maintains a Chair for the History of Botany and Gardens at Leiden University. The Clusius Lectures attract a varied audience of people interested in contemporary discussions about botany and garden architecture.

In the tradition of the Clusius Lectures, the themes of the symposium may draw different audiences, mainly consisting of professionals and non-professionals interested in the history of botany and gardening. The Clusius Foundation aims to bring together expertise from the academic fields of the natural sciences and the humanities from abroad and the Netherlands.

*Other Ways of Gardening* will focus on less well-known traditions of gardening that exist in Africa, America and Asia. Gardening is defined as the systematic cultivation of plants in limited areas for food, pleasure, or ritual purposes, or a combination of these. Specific regions touched upon will be South-East Asia, Middle America and Sub-Saharan Africa. The conference will explore early forms of gardening, i.e. the initial transition from hunting/gathering to horticulture, agriculture or combinations of these modes of production. In the western histories of gardens and gardening these concepts are taken as a given fact, while the symposium will be more fruitful if these presuppositions are questioned. Other ways of gardening become more relevant if they also lead to a rethinking of *our* ways of gardening.

Hopefully the symposium will be able to sketch a wider perspective of the garden as an interface of the relationships of man with nature. This could help to bring about a new and apposite definition of a social and cultural history of the garden, the landscape and the environment in interaction.

## Programme

### *Other Ways of Gardening*

*Welcome*

Adriaan van der Staay

*African Diaspora Gardens and their African Ancestors*

Grey Gundaker

Break

*Gardening among Rainforest Inhabitants in Central Africa*

Serge Bahuchet

*Garden Connections between Suriname and Africa:*

*Diversity and Significance of Old World Crops grown by Suriname Maroons*

Tinde van Andel

Lunch

*Yaavi*

Maarten Jansen & Itandehui Jansen

*Caught in the Maize: The Ancient Maya and the Natural World*

Charles Zidar

Break

*Landscapes of Exchange and the Domestication of Kenari*

Roy Ellen

*Philippine Hunter-Gatherers and Horticulture: the Agta and their Gardens*

Tessa Minter

*Forest Gardens on Siberut Island*

Gerard Persoon

*Conclusions Symposium*

Roy Ellen

## ABSTRACTS

### **Grey Gundaker - African Diaspora Gardens and their African Ancestors**

Africans and Europeans, their descendants, and Native Americans, have been mixing, borrowing, and differentiating themselves from each other in the territory that is now the United States Americas for almost 500 years. Because colonization, slavery, and political and economic injustices have mediated these processes from first contact forward, these processes have never settled down into a neat pattern of “influences” of one group upon another, or absorption of one group into another. Instead mixture and differentiation must be understood in relation to historical, cultural, economic, and political trajectories that converge on any given context as well as diversity within these populations.

Gardens are no exception. To a great extent African Americans live in landscapes shaped by dominant whites’ agendas of land use and planning, but have also created spaces of considerable autonomy within these strictures. On a general level most African American gardens conform to general expectations shared with members of other ethnic groups. Yet, African American cultural aesthetics and ideologies of landscape also inform the organization of gardens. That which endures most strongly from the African past is also that which remains most important to people in their lives and which African-oriented resources best express.

This talk discusses two levels of meaning in its title: the ways that some African Americans make special places for their own ancestors within a larger garden design and the ways that African landscape design principles, visual iconography, and ways of claiming land contribute to these places. Since Sub-Saharan Africans and their descendants have long been excluded from the global history of garden and landscape design, the talk also aims to illustrate why this exclusion has been a great loss to the field.

*Grey Gundaker is Dittman Professor of American Studies and Anthropology at the College of William & Mary in Virginia, United States. She has researched gardens and landscapes in the African Diaspora for over twenty years. Her publications include numerous articles as well as the book *No Space Hidden: The Spirit of African American Yards* (Judith Mcwillie, co-author) and the edited collection *Keep Your Head to the Sky: Interpreting African American Home Ground*. More recently, she has been investigating the ways in which legacies of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism have shaped narratives of the history of garden and landscape design.*

### **Serge Bahuchet - Gardening among Rainforest Inhabitants in Central Africa**

After describing the agricultural practices in the African rainforest, we will examine the interrelationship between so-called “farmers” practicing swidden cultivation, and so-called “hunter-gatherers” (known as “Pygmies”). As a matter of fact, hunter-gatherers exchange forest products as well as their labour forces in the gardens against agricultural products. Using historical sources and ethnolinguistic evidence, we will show that the Pygmies are in contact with agriculture since many centuries, and that the persistence of the foraging way of life in the present time despite official pressures and

politics against it, results from a deliberate strategy of association of complementary economics.

*Serge Bahuchet (b. 1953) is professor of ethnobiology in the National Museum of Natural History (Paris), where he is head of the Department "Humankind, natures and societies". As an ethnoecologist, he worked during some 30 years among rainforest populations in Central Africa, mainly the Aka Pygmies, and subsequently among indigenous populations in French Guyana.*

### **Tinde van Andel - Garden Connections between Suriname and Africa: Diversity and Significance of Old World Crops Grown by Suriname Maroons**

Several Old World crops were introduced to the Americas as provision on slave ships. Enslaved laborers planted leftover seeds in their home gardens, known among historians as the 'Botanical Gardens of the Dispossessed'. In the former Dutch colony Suriname, cultivation of most African crops was abandoned by coastal Creoles after the abolishment of slavery. Farming became the activity of wage laborers from Java and India, who preferred to grow their own Asian crops.

Many African slaves escaped into the country's forested interior to settle in tribal communities, practicing shifting cultivation with seeds and cuttings they took from plantations during their flight to freedom. Maroons, descendants of these runaway slaves, still live in remote rainforest villages. The recent discovery of African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) on a Maroon field suggested that probably much more 'lost African crops' could be found on their provision grounds. In 2013, a field study was carried out on Old World cultivars grown by Suriname Maroons and their motivations for maintaining this crop diversity. We investigated the role of 'ancestor crops' in traditional dishes, medicinal and ritual applications. We hypothesized that farmers maintained Old World crop diversity to guarantee food security and to prepare traditional dishes and specific rituals.

Greatest diversity in Old World cultivars was encountered in taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), banana (*Musa* sp.) and okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*). Most crops were used for food only. Some crops (e.g., sesame, melegueta pepper, African rice) largely lost their food function and became ritual crops, while others (e.g., Bambara groundnut, *Vigna subterranea*) were nearly forgotten. Farmers (almost all female) actively exchanged seeds and tubers with family members and other ethnicities, both in the city and in the forest. Spending time in the capital during childbirth or illness, however, resulted in the loss of typical Maroon crops (Bambara groundnut, sesame), as these seeds lost viability during farmers' absence. Motivation to grow specific crops and cultivars varied from tradition, food preference and seasonal spreading of food availability to the need to carry out typical Maroon rituals related to ancestor offerings and traditional medicine. Documentation of specific cultivar properties and storage of seeds in germplasm centers is urgently needed to safeguard these previously undocumented crop cultivars. Promoting these African plants as 'cultural heritage crops' could stimulate their cultivation.

*Prof. Tinde van Andel (1967) studied Biology at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in Tropical Ecology. She obtained her PhD from the National Herbarium of the Netherlands (Utrecht University) on the use of wild plants by the Indians in Northwest Guyana. As a postdoc in the same institute she studied medicinal and ritual plants of Suriname. When*



*the herbarium moved to the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden, she obtained an NWO-VIDI scholarship in order to study the West-African origins of plant use in Suriname. Since May 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 she holds the Naturalis Chair of Etnobotany at Wageningen University as Extraordinary Professor.*

### **Maarten Jansen & Itandehui Jansen - Yaavi**

In this session we will view and discuss Yaavi, a documentary about the cultivation of the agave and preparation of pulque in the Mixtec region, Mexico. The elder couple Esperanza and Erasmo continue a traditional life style in rural Mexico. When one takes a living being for consumption one has to ask for permission first. This is the way of the ancestors.

*Discussant: Prof. Dr. Maarten Jansen is full professor of Mesoamerican archaeology and history, chair of the specialization 'archaeology and anthropology of Mesoamerica and the Andes' at Leiden University.*

*Director: Armando Bautista García (Santa Maria Apazco, Mexico 1975) received a Ford Foundation Fellowship to study Philosophy and Literature in Barcelona. After his studies he started writing screenplays. He has written and produced the short films Alma & Esperanza and The Last Council both directed by Itandehui Jansen. Both films screened at multiple international film festivals and won different awards. Armando also participated in many different film development programs, such as the Cine Qua Non Lab 2011 in Morelia and the Guadalajara Talent Campus 2012. He recently participated in the Script Station of the Berlinale Talent Campus with the project 'Where the Sky Rests'. He is currently working on the feature film In Times of Rain with a grant of the Mexican Fund for Arts and Culture (FONCA).*

*Director of Photography: Itandehui Jansen (Oaxaca, Mexico 1976) studied film directing at the Netherlands Film Academy in Amsterdam. She has directed several documentaries and short films, which screened at international festivals such as the IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam), the Guadalajara International Film Festival, the Morelia International Film Festival, and many others. Her short film The Last Council received the Special Jury Award at the Viña del Mar International Film Festival and was nominated for the Diosa de Plata, the Mexican Film Critics Award.*

### **Charles Zidar - Caught in the Maize: The Ancient Maya and the Natural World**

"For the Maya, trees constitute the ambient living environment, the material from which they fashioned homes and tools, the source of many foods, medicines, dyes, and vital commodities such as paper. They provided the fuel for cooking fires and soil-enriching ash that came from the cutting and burning of the forest. Trees were the source of shade in the courtyards and public places of villages and cities, and the home of the teeming life of the forest (A Forest of Kings, Schele and Freidel, 1990, p. 90)."

Despite the importance of plants to the ancient Maya and the many advances in understanding ancient Maya iconography and hieroglyphs, there has been scant identification and interpretation of botanical motifs in Classic Maya art. Many Classic period monumental and personal artworks feature plants, the rich variety of imagery

reflecting that of the natural environment. This research addresses the understudied topic of botanical motifs in Maya art.

The research presents identifications of the genus and species for plants depicted in Classic Maya art, beginning with those rendered on painted ceramics and carved jadeite ear flares. The research also includes photographs or drawings of the identified plants and brief discussions of how and why the ancient Maya may have used them.

The idea for this research came from the author attending the 2001 Primer Congreso Internacional de Copán entitled "Ciencia, Arte y Religión en el Mundo Maya" where Dorie Reents-Budet spoke on the interpretation of Maya polychrome ceramics. Her talk, "Loza Fina, Bella Arte y Regalos de Prestigio: La Cerámica Policromada Maya" included a brief discussion of the types of imagery painted on the pictorial ceramics, including unidentified botanical motifs. This led to the author's focused research on plants illustrated on Maya ceramics and jade earspools, which identified distinct botanical features of a wide variety of plant families. His early research culminated in a Master's thesis (*Sacred Giants: Ethnobotany of the Bombacaceae by the Southern Lowland Maya*), and on-going research into other plant families important to the ancient Maya.

The author's research is the basis of the FAMSI (Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies Inc.) botanical resource database. Its purpose is to identify the plants depicted in Classic Maya art and thereby perhaps discern unknown or forgotten plants used by the Maya. The data may shed light for botanical studies by Mayanist scholars and biological scientists researching Central American plants for culinary, economical and pharmaceutical endeavors.

*Charles Zidar has a degree from the Ohio State University in Landscape Architecture. He also has a Liberal Studies degree from the University of Oklahoma and is completing his PhD from Leiden University. His thesis: 'Sacred Giants: Ethnobotany of the Bombacaceae by the Southern Lowland Maya' was the impetus behind the creation of the FAMSI (Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies Inc.) flora and fauna centers of research. His coauthored manuscript titled 'Sacred Giants: Depiction of Bombacoideae on Maya Ceramics in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize' caught the attention of the BBC, where they featured his work in the article 'Sacred Plants of the Maya Forest.' Charles Zidar originally began his archaeological work on Greek and Roman sites in Greece and Cyprus. For the last decade he has worked in natural history museums completing work in Central and South America. His focus of research is on plants and animals used by the ancient Maya and their depictions on Maya ceramics, earspools and headdresses. He recently worked for the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. He now resides in Tarpon Springs, Florida.*

### **Roy Ellen - Landscapes of Exchange and the Domestication of Kenari**

It is now widely accepted that a major historic pathway to agriculture in the tropics has been via the management of forest and reliance on tree resources. Using ethnographic and ethnobotanical data from Seram in the Moluccas, this paper illustrates how this might have happened in one part of island southeast Asia. The focus is on the genus *Canarium*, species of which produce proteinaceous nuts that have been shown to be an important part of local diets, ethnographically, historically and prehistorically. In order to understand how such food-procurement systems evolve I suggest that we need to examine the biocultural dynamic established over the long term between different species, types of arboriculture, and cultivation strategies. One factor involved was most

likely subsistence pressure, but I argue here that exchange has also been an important driver in relation to *Canarium* in particular and the modification of forest landscapes more generally. Hence my use of the term 'landscapes of exchange'. While we tend to think of the main cause of agricultural change as dietary need, it is often the social and ritual significance of particular species that drives ecological and genetic change in anthropic contexts.

*Roy Ellen is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology and Human Ecology at the University of Kent, and was founding Director of its Centre for Biocultural Diversity within the School of Anthropology and Conservation. His research interests are currently in the area of plant knowledge systems and their cultural transmission, and on the resilience and adaptation of ritual cycles in the Moluccas. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, and between 2007 and 2011 was President of the Royal Anthropological Institute.*

### **Tessa Minter - Philippine Hunter-Gatherers and Horticulture: the Agta and their Gardens**

The place of horticulture and gardening in foraging societies is a much debated topic in hunter-gatherer studies. The generally marginal character of horticultural activity among foragers has often been taken as proof that they are incapable of becoming farmers, the reasons for which may be both internal or external. Conversely, one could argue that foragers might not aspire to make the full transition from foraging to farming modes of production, but rather use gardening as merely complementary to other livelihood activities. Viewed from that perspective, the marginality of foragers' gardening activities in terms of time investment and productivity, fits within a hunter-gatherer economic logic.

This talk will show how the Agta, a Philippine hunter-gatherer population of around 10,000 people, indeed use gardening as part of a highly diverse livelihood strategy. It will discuss Agta gardening practices in the Northern Sierra Madre, and provide insight in the importance of gardening in terms of time investment and contribution to daily diets. In addition, it will be argued that the relatively mobile Agta use gardening to make symbolic claims to land that may otherwise be considered vacant by neighboring farming communities. The Agta thereby also use their gardens to respond to social and environmental pressures, without necessarily giving up their autonomy.

*Tessa Minter is assistant professor at the Leiden Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. In her research and teaching she focuses on environmental anthropology, with a specific interest in hunter-gatherers' adaptation to environmental change in Southeast Asia. She has worked with the Agta of the Northern Philippines since 2002, and in her research she combines qualitative ethnographic methods with the collection of records on demography, time-allocation, hunting- and fishing success, food intake, health and child-care.*

### **Gerard Persoon - Forest Gardens on Siberut Island**

The Mentawaians of Siberut Island (West Sumatra, Indonesia) live of hunting, fishing and gathering in addition to various forms of agriculture and animal husbandry. They have differentiated a large number of productive elements in their forest environment.

Their staple food is sago extracted from the abundant sago palms growing in the swamp forests on the island. One of the most striking features of their agricultural practices is the lack of the use of fire in forest clearance for making their fields. The fields are used for growing a large variety of food crops, medicinal and ornamental or ceremonial plants. These fields are used for a number of years after which fruit trees start to dominate the vegetation. Traditionally the people do not grow annual crops like rice or corn. They only started doing so after they were forced to do so by government officials in the framework of development projects. In the course of history Mentawaians have incorporated various new cash crops in their horticultural practices like cloves, pacuili, and recently also cacao. In this paper an overview will be given of the ways the Mentawaians have been farming the forest and how they continue to interact with their forest environment.

*Gerard A. Persoon is professor Environment and Development at the Institute Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of Leiden University (The Netherlands). He has worked in Southeast Asia (Indonesia and the Philippines) in various research programmes over the past 35 years. He has also worked in a number of development and conservation projects in these countries. His teaching is focused on themes related to environment and development issues with a strong focus on indigenous peoples and island studies. Since a number of years he is a member of the advisory board of the Netherlands' Ministry for Environment for the procurement of sustainable timber (TPAC). At present he is the scientific director of the Institute.*

