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The cover image is courtesy of Michelle Garvey from her article in this issue.

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POKELORE: HOW A COMMON WEED LEADS US TO KINSHIP WITH OUR MID-RIVER LANDSCAPE

By Lynn Peemoeller

"A weed is a plant growing in a place where we don't want it, and I have seldom seen a poke plant that I wanted removed." Euell Gibbons, Stalking the Wild Asparagus[1]

It's certainly not the primary defining characteristic of St. Louis, Missouri, nor is it the secondary, but if you are looking, it's hard to miss. Phytolaccaceae, otherwise known as the pokeweed family of plants, runs wild in this part of the middle waters just south of the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. To some who look through empty spaces, these weeds are just the backdrop to a prosaic landscape here in the river city. But for others, who are drawn to the botanical lives that share our ruderal spaces, poke is a beacon of kinship.[2]

Detail image of poke in the space between the levee and the river. Image courtesy of Jennifer Colten.

Poke in the space between the levee and the river. Image courtesy of Jennifer Colten.

Weeds, often considered the outlaws of the plant family, are widely maligned today; the deep-rooted desire to conquer and eradicate is culturally pervasive. The idea of a weed is a human construct; there is no biological equivalent. Ralph Waldo Emerson formulated the famous adage "What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered"—an optimistic view that reflects how humans have been assigning a hierarchy of value to plants for thousands of years and coaxing them into productive relationships with humans by selective breeding.[3] Yet the cultural emphasis on weeds as "a plant in the wrong place," eliminates the ecological attributes of plants and is rife with human bias on what qualities are wanted and unwanted.

What we pay attention to grows, and ironically, so does the idea of a weed. We can't get rid of weeds. They follow us everywhere in response to human footprints, they compete for ecological resources with crops, and they thrive in disturbed areas. *Plantago major*, known as broadleaf plantain, was named "white man's footsteps" because it grew widely around European settlements in North America. Today it is commonly seen in cracks of sidewalks. Weeds—aggressive, invasive, toxic, ugly, useless, unloved saboteurs—are the plants that haven't quite made it as chosen human companions, and yet, we're stuck with them. The kindest thing we might be able to say is that weeds are simply plants in the wrong place. But what is the right place for a weed? Is there such a thing?

One could say that poke is a paradox. On the one hand it embodies the spontaneous vegetative ethos of a weed, and on the other hand, unlike Emerson's limited view, we have proof that it is a plant whose virtues *have* historically been explored. According to Jonathan Sauer, botanist and plant geographer who extensively researched *Phytolacca americana* (the scientific name for poke also known as pokeweed), the plant's native area includes North America, specifically southeastern Canada and the entire eastern half of the United States, and a small area in the northeast of Mexico.[4] Poke acts in ways that are often characterized as weed-like, even though it is a native plant. Prehuman evidence shows that poke aggressively colonized streambanks and disturbed ground and then gave way to plant (or rather, ecological) succession in due course. Human activity in the landscape creates disturbances in the ground that lead to increased poke colonization. Grazing animals left it alone and so its spread was vigorous. Today, it seems to occupy a niche, much more comfortable inhabiting disturbed areas and thriving in ditches, railroad embankments, floodplains, roadsides, fence rows, hedges, old fields, old orchards, gardens, pastures, dumps, clearings, and spaces of general human habitation. "Poke's success as a weed of the cultural landscape appears to be based, not on selective modification during human times, but on previous adaptation to disturbed habitats."[5] Although poke has coexisted with humans in North America and has spread to other continents, it has only had moderate success as a cultivated plant and has never quite reached full integration into agricultural practice.

Botanist and agronomist Jack R. Harlan explains, "one man's weed is another man's crop and vice versa. . . . Plants drift in and out of cultivation, are domesticated, abandoned, enobled, and may degenerate again: they escape, become naturalized, migrate, retreat, build hybrid swarms, and evolve new races."[6] Weeds can tell us a lot about ourselves and our relationship with the land—what we see and don't see, what we value and what we don't—and how we currently completely outsource our food procurement to a select few farmers and increasingly industrialized food systems. Is it any wonder that the term plant blindness—the ability of humans to ignore the plants around us—has become a common and widespread condition?

Yet, there are people who maintain botanical knowledge and relations with the land. Today, poke maintains a robust vernacular identity in the United States. The name itself, poke, is derived from the Virginia Indian or Algonquin

Phytolacca decandra (American Pokeweed) (1806). Image via "The Botanical Magazine or Flower Garden Displayed." by Francis Sansom. Original from The Cleveland Museum of Art.

word *pokan*, referring to plants used for red or yellow dye. Other names of Indigenous origin include scoke, cunicum, coakum, and cokan. More common names referring to the red stem and berries include redweed, redberry, inkberry, pigeonberry, crow berry, shoe button plant, bear's grape, red nightshade, and American nightshade.[7] But the most common name throughout the United States vernacular is poke sallet also spelled sallit, salat, and salad, and it is colloquially known as "poor man's greens." Poke leaves and stems are never eaten raw and are cooked as a potherb. The leaves and stems need to be carefully prepared through multiple rounds of boiling and rinsing to remove toxins. This knowledge has been carefully passed down through countless generations of people who depended on the land for survival. Jack Harlan, in his influential work *Crops and Man*, examines the deep connection between crops and human civilization, highlighting the botanical expertise of hunter-gatherer societies.[8] He addresses their remarkable understanding of how to use plants that are otherwise poisonous, stating, "detoxification is required for a considerable number of plants used by the North American Indians. . . . Gatherers knew how to make plants safe."[9]

Only in the last 10,000 years have humans begun to domesticate plants and animals. All human life before that, in a period known as the Golden Age, subsisted using hunter-gatherer strategies. At the time of European contact in the Americas, while many Indigenous societies were hunter-gatherers, there were others that were agriculturally based.[10] Since then, the practice has been declining in relation to the development and dominance of selectively breeding plants and animals for food. It was only after agricultural systems had been adopted that weeds became more conspicuous. Agrarian adopters bore prejudice against hunter-gatherers and their practices. The stereotype of hunter-gatherers was that they were lazy people always on the verge of starvation and did not apply their time and energy to the pursuit of cultivation.[11] The 1966 symposium *Man the Hunter*, held at the University of Chicago was a groundbreaking exploration of ethnographic research on hunter-gatherers, which has led to hundreds of subsequent research papers and critiques that have expanded the understanding of the so called Golden Age. Yet the question remains: why do people who have access to agricultural knowledge systems still continue to forage?

In recent times, poke has largely been associated with hardscrabble survival in the American South, and it has a strong connection to Indigenous American and African American foodways that were also adopted by white settlers. Folk stories of poke parallel those of human subsistence, land dispossession, and migration in North America. As one of the first spring greens, it served to provide relief from a poor winter diet. Those who knew the landscape and followed the rivers found what they could use to survive. It wasn't the first choice for eating, but if it was the only plant available, it was supper.[12]

The legendary forager Euell Gibbons grew up in the Dust Bowl era and once subsisted exclusively on wild foods for five consecutive years. In *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, which Gibbons wrote in 1962, he calls poke "a wild potherb par excellence."[13] He writes that poke (at that time)

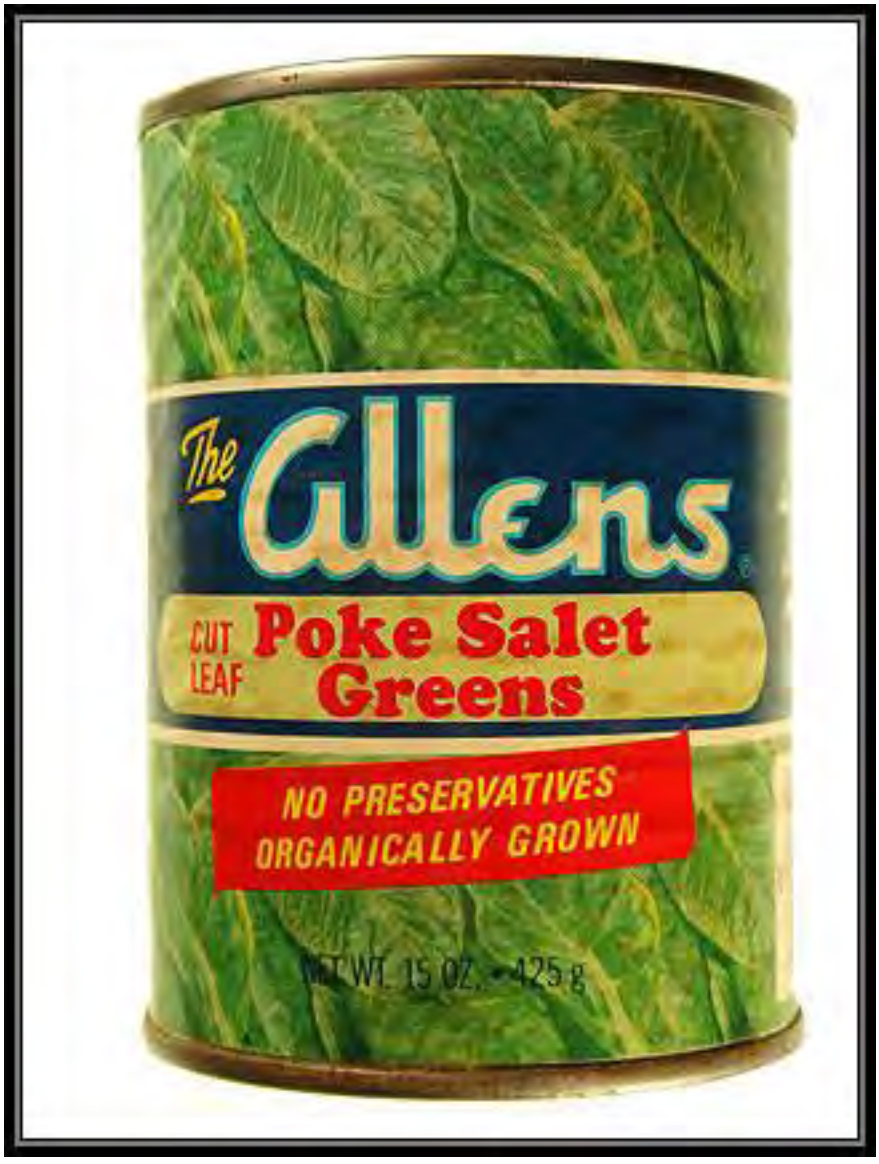
> is probably the best known and most widely used wild vegetable in America. . . it is a favorite green vegetable with many country people and the tender young sprouts, gathered from wild plant often appear in vegetable markets especially in the South. . . . Settlers carried seeds back to Europe and the plant spread as a cultivated plant throughout the southern Europe and North Africa.[14]

It's hard believe that not so long ago poke occupied a quasi-cultivated status as a market vegetable not so different from wild gathered

watercress, lamb's quarters, or purslane that are sometimes seen at farmers markets today.

In fact, poke almost reached the mainstream in the mid-twentieth century. According to the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Research and Extension, in the 1950s "Dr. John Bowers, a former colleague in the horticulture department, made efforts to turn pokeweed into a legitimate 'vegetable' presumably through breeding efforts that never quite took off."[15] However, two vegetable processing plants—Bush Brothers of Tennessee and Allen of Siloam Springs, Arkansas—produced canned poke salat that were distributed in supermarkets widely throughout the South. Allen's was also famous for the iconic Popeye (canned) spinach. Unlike spinach, which was cultivated by farmers and sold to the cannery, the poke was wild harvested and sold to the cannery. According to John Williams, the canning supervisor at Allen Canning,

> as the generation of people who grew knowing poke sallet began to pass, the demand for the item dried up. Allen Canning packed its last batch of poke sallet greens in the spring of 2000. . . . The decision to stop



Allens canned poke.

> processing poke was primarily because of the difficulty of finding people interested in picking poke and bringing it to our buying locations. Also, poke processing was never a significant item in the multimillion-dollar enterprise, so it just became more bother than it was worth.[16]

The loss of canned poke is felt in the twenty-first century as botanical and culinary knowledge slip away through generations. Canned poke represented a cultural bridge between generations who carried relationships with the landscape and the shift to upwardly mobile mid-century lifestyles which traded plant relations for the convenience of a safely prepared, shelf-stabilized foodstuff.

The fact that it had nutritional value and regional cultural identity to boot was a bonus. With a canned product, you could have your poke in minutes without all the effort to identify, harvest, and prepare it. You didn't even have to call mama or grandma to get the recipe. Yet unlike other modern food conveniences of the twentieth century, like Spam, the demand for canned poke faded. It could never surpass the stigma of being attached to a poor Southern identity.

Today, the suggestion of eating poke strikes a chord of fear among those who have not learned from tradition and are not confident about identifying or preparing it. Some simply see it as too much trouble. Many wild plant guides cite a

Harvesting poke. Image courtesy of Jennifer Colten.

responsible warning with poke that root, seeds, and mature stems and leaves are dangerous: "Be very careful not to include part of the root when collecting the shoots, and peel or discard any shoots tinged with red."[17] Its edibility can be confusing territory to navigate for the uninitiated. A wild foods blog, *Eat the Weeds*, explains how to approach the harvest:

> When I go collecting poke weed, I take a ruler with me. It's called my hand. From the tip of my middle finger to my wrist is about six inches. If the shoot is six inches or under, into the pot it will go, taller I leave it be. The second rule is, pick nothing with red stems, but that's not so hard and fast because even two-inch shoots can sometimes be pink to red. And when I gather it, I don't pull it up, I cut it to avoid the possibility of getting any root. And do not handle raw poke weed if you have any cuts or abrasion on your hands.[18]

In Michelle Lee's comprehensive collection of traditional African American folk healing practices, *Working the Roots*, she calls poke

> the Jedi of the plant world. Why? Because it has a wide range of beneficial applications from use as food, medicine, ink, dye, paint and as a solar absorbent (to generate solar power). And like the Jedi, poke has both a light side and a dark side. As a medicine, it is a potent and concentrated substance that, like the light side of "the Force", can effect a powerful healing. However, like the dark side of "the Force," if used incorrectly, it can harm, even kill.[19]

The toxins in pokeweed range from deadly to mild. They are usually concentrated in the roots, berries, and seeds and include an alkaloid (phytolaccine), a resin (phytolaccatoxin), and a saponin (phytolaccigenin).[20] Medicinally and culturally, the roots and berries of the plant have several applications. It's emetic, which means that its toxic qualities can cause vomiting if ingested. Many applications are topical in the form of tincture or salve. The berries contain abundant red pigment (anthocyanin) which has been used as dye on fabric, on paper, and in foods. Some recipes use poke berries to make wine or color foods. The seeds are completely toxic and should be avoided. Traditional healers like Lee who worked with poke knew that using any part of the poke plant for medicine should be done with caution.

Alexis Nikole Nelson, known as the Black Forager, has posted about poke on TikTok several times. "Poison or soul food?" she asks, "This plant is both!"[21] What a good reminder that we should hold nonbinary thinking as a possibility. Yes, two things can be true. We don't have to live in worlds of absolutes. She encourages people to learn the history of eating poke because the knowledge and tradition of how to prepare it correctly is passed down through generations. "If people don't know how to do it, that knowledge will be lost," she cautions.[22] Once the old ways are forgotten, how quickly a culture can dissolve if we don't practice it into being.

A post on Facebook in the spring of 2021 shared a photo from the Library of Congress of an African American woman preparing poke in 1939.[23] There were over 7,000 likes and more than 1,200 comments such as: "It is a very Southern thing. I have aunts and great aunts that share stories about how to eat it;" and "I still eat it if I can find it. It's not hard to fix. You need to drain the water from it at least 3 times." "I'm 63 and learned from my Grandmother. We ate it every Spring." "My parents ate it a lot in the depression. It was an equal opportunity food." "Love poke and can spot it anywhere!! Boil three times changing the water, add fat back green onions, with a bowl of pintos and cornbread. . . . Man, I miss my Mom and Gma!! Good eatn'." These comments not only reflect nostalgia but also the value of intergenerational knowledge and some hope that points toward a desire to reclaim these traditions.

Woman preparing "poke-salad" near Marshall, Texas in March 1939 by Russell Lee, 1903-1986.

To this day, there are several parts of the regional south that hold poke festivals: Arab, Alabama; Blanchard, Louisiana; Gainesboro, Tennessee; Harlan, Kentucky celebrating its seventieth anniversary in 2025; and Toccoa, Georgia. The Poke Sallit festival in Toccoa has been led by community historian Larry Gholston for over 30 years, emphasizing black self-reliance. He is quoted in the New York Times saying, "The festival is meant to maintain our heritage. A lot of Black folk will tell you, 'I don't eat that mess, man. It has connotations of poorness and rural.'"[24]

Take for example, the 1968 song "Polk Salad Annie," a slice of Americana written and performed by Tony Joe White (and later Elvis.) It's a swampy rock country ode to the poor Southern lifestyle of presumably white folks in Louisiana: "My folks raised cotton and corn. There were lotsa times when there weren't too much to eat, and I ain't ashamed to admit that we've often whipped up a mess of poke sallet. Tastes alright too—a bit like spinach. . . Poke salad Annie. . . the gators got your Granny."[25] That may have been half a century ago, but the idea of resilience is in high circulation these days.

Upriver from Louisiana, resilience is a subject of study in St. Louis, a city that is no stranger to hardship. A small but dynamic group of mostly female artists, healers, historians, and plant people have been meeting regularly since 2021 as part of the Mid-River Field School. The field school explores synergies of our contemporary landscape on both sides of the river, emphasizing kinship with the nonhuman world and collective deinstitutionalized knowledge building.

Summer poke. Image courtesy of Jennifer Colten.

Thematically, the idea of crossings guides project-based work that is anchored in the practice of how to be in relation with a place that is at odds with itself. Both valued and abandoned, vibrant and suffering, St. Louis is not unlike many other American cities. Yet it straddles American history in particular ways. It has been described as the northernmost southern city and the westernmost eastern city and "the right place for all the wrong reasons" according to George Lipsitz, a Black scholar at the University of California Santa Barbara.[26] It is primarily a river city, and we use that as our guide. The water connects us to relatives both upriver and downriver. We are the middle waters.

It is along the banks of the Mississippi River, the muddy gap of rushing water that divides St. Louis city and its eastern counterpart, East St. Louis, in an area that artist Jennifer Colten calls "the space between the levee and the river" otherwise known as the batture, that the pokeweed grows most majestically.[27] Poke is a subject of field study for our group. Physically, the plant is hard to ignore. Its stature is large, growing 6 to 10 feet tall and like something out of a Dr. Seuss book, the white summer blossoms give way to a dense peduncle or stalk holding a cluster of shiny dark purple berries that are very attractive to birds and irresistible to children's play. Historically, it was noted that "leaves of pokeberry were worn on the lapels of supporters of the first dark-horse candidate for president, James Polk who served from 1845 to 1849 and for whom Polk County is named."[28] Today it is not uncommon for flowers and berries to make their way into wildcrafted bouquets. We can't seem to get this second-rate, toxic plant out of our minds or our landscapes.

Compared with aggressors like kudzu or Japanese knotweed, poke is not an aggressive invasive species. It is more of an opportunist with a perambulatory relationship with the landscape. It moves slowly to stake its claim by power of root and seed. Poke roots are thick, yellow gnarls resembling a giant mandrake. They are deep and strong, keeping the plants rooted in place year after year. It is the berries that are the travelers, attracting birds who eat them untouched by the toxins. If there is a poke plant, it is sure to be there year after year unless it is forcefully removed. All bits of the root need to be carefully combed from the soil. Like a worm, if there are any pieces left, they can easily regenerate. This strong hold in the ground demands high labor relations with humans. Poke is not easily removed once it has become established. Perhaps this is why it has become so unloved. In most highly controlled areas, poke, like other weeds, is eradicated by all means necessary. But St. Louis is just wild enough that poke finds its way to root in place, living side by side with human relations.

As a weed, poke is very successful. Its functionality is based on adaptation. Unlike cultivated plants, weeds thrive in the company of humans in ruderal ways by following our footsteps in the upheaval of the stirred-up human landscape. Plants and people share similar stories. Whether we choose to engage with it or not, it is a human companion plant. Could it live without us? Probably. Would it thrive? It's hard to know. Many hopeful signs of resilience can be found in attention to relational multispecies behaviors. Indigenous knowledge recognizes "a genealogic ancestry that binds humans and non-humans including plants in a web of intertwining kinship connections."[29] Environmental philosopher Matt Hall writes about kinship with plants as a kind of mutuality of being, a reciprocity of being in relation.[30] Perhaps it is because the mature poke meets us at eye level that it draws our attention. On a winter's walk, the dry skeletons of poke stand rigid in the landscape as an inescapable brush-force encounter for those who stray off the pavement. Along river walks, through abandoned lots, or in cobbled alleyways, poke can be seen as markers for wayfinding, as architecture of the cultural landscape. Notice: how does it steer us? Does it bend, point toward, or seed our relationship with the place? More often than not, it points back to us. St. Louis, like many river cities, offers liminal spaces that have stories buried in the

rubble. We are so tied to our humanity that we often forget the significance of our relationship with the nonhuman world, especially those living creatures that are unfortunate enough to dwell in ecosystems that are literally out of our sight. Out of sight, out of mind. But poke has the advantage of being very present in the landscape. In sight, in mind, and in body, it holds memory for us.

Plants can hold memory in the landscape in different ways than people. Another reason for poke's success is its relationship with time. A 1946 study showed that poke seeds buried in 1902 at depths too great for germination gave 80 to 90 percent germination after being unearthed in 1941.[31] The soil holds innumerable seeds underground in seedbanks. Generationally speaking, these seeds have patience built into them, waiting for the serendipity of conditions to activate them—the claw of an excavator, the channel of a flooding river, the slow steady erosion of time. Much of this activation is in relation to human activity. If we continue to look at the world through settler colonial logic, we consume landscapes as a tabula rasa with no historical or ecological underpinnings. How can we escape these cycles?

Perhaps if we view weeds as partners in place more than invaders in space, we can move closer to kinship with our landscape. When we engage in field observations our attention expands to see interspecies worlds that are bigger than us. We can see weeds not necessarily as invaders, but rather the evidence of our legacy on the landscape. They reflect a deep ancestral presence of the lineage of time connected to places. Plants help us locate ourselves, they are rooted to the ground and cannot float so easily off in the river. Yet, when we move, the weeds move with us.

Winter poke. Image courtesy of Jennifer Colten.

When we control, the weeds are suppressed. When we crumble, the weeds reemerge. We are in relation with them. That is kinship. They respond to our present with ancestral knowledge of resilience and survival. Weeds are artifacts of plant intelligence and embedded memory. If we are able to accept weeds as our plantcestors, they can offer us a way of partnering in place beyond the normative platform of exploitation through which many of us view the land and its resources. Writer and cultural geographer Lucy Lippard seeks historical narratives as they are written in the landscape at the intersection of nature, culture, history, and ideology.[32] From the ground on which we stand comes our place: the local. We share the ground upon which we stand with poke.

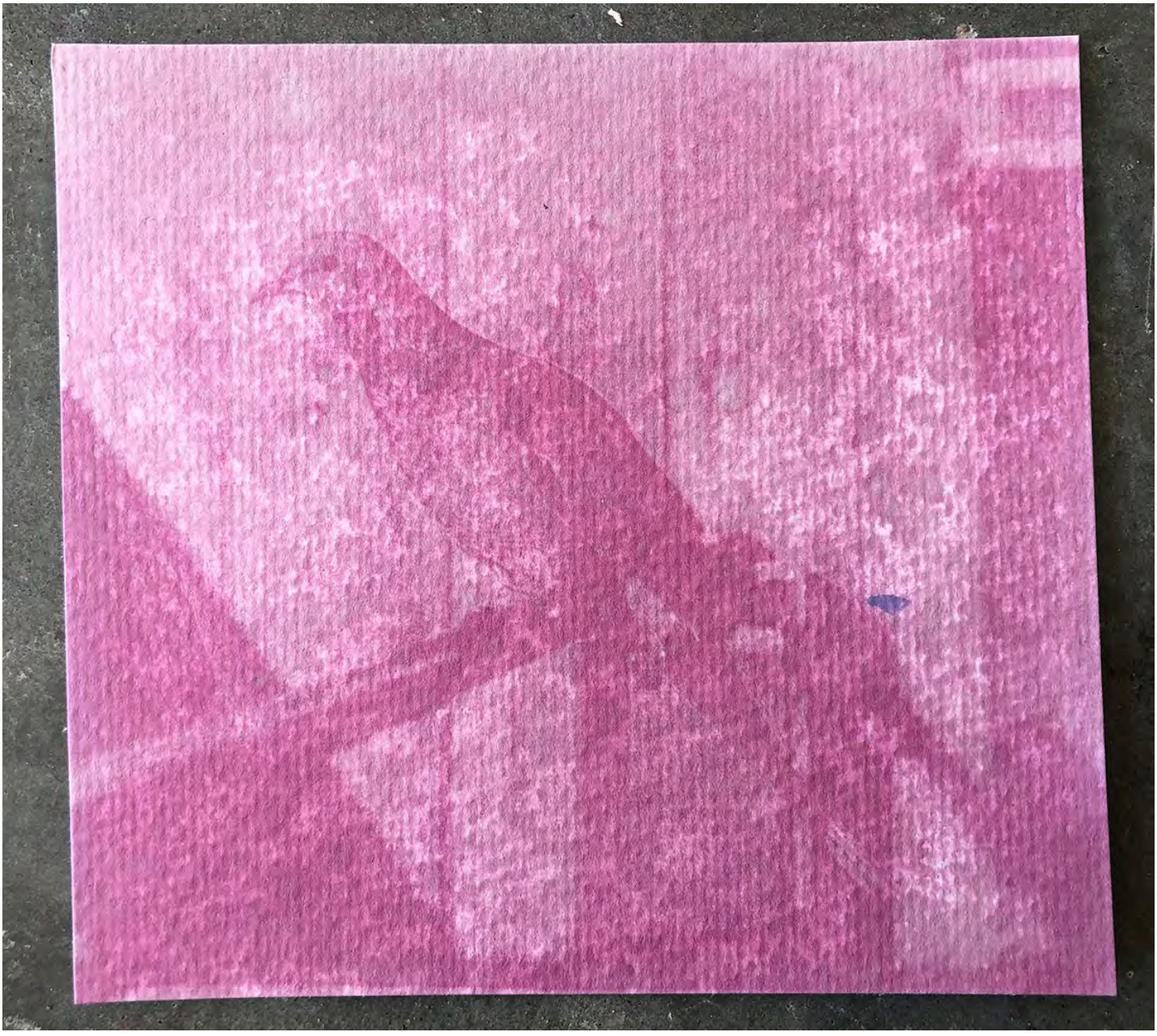
The warm weather wakes up new shoots of poke from perennial taproots. This is the best time to collect the tender young greens for eating.

Spring activates the life around us. All seasons are charged with memory and emotion for those who carry legacy. In tune with the clockwork of the phenological calendar, we come to expect the cycles by how we see poke. Poke offers itself to these relations in all seasons. The Mid-River Field School asks us to notice how the outer landscape mirrors the inner landscape. How can we see our place for what it is and not what we want it to be? Lippard says that "artists can make the connections visible. They can guide us through the sensuous kinesthetic response to topography. . . . They can expose social agendas that have formed on the land, [and] bring out multiple readings of places."[33] By providing space for encounter, observation, and community, the study of poke becomes a practice of resilience in how we view and represent our relations with the landscape. It gives us a material agent to practice collective learning and unlearning about our place. It offers

Poke-stained hands. Image courtesy of Lynn Peemoeller.

us a lens to look into the past and toward futures. We take these parts to weave narratives of our truths which we present to the world as heterogeneous collective memories.[34] These are the offerings of the Mid-River Field School.

Nimble weeds are most likely to survive the upheaval of time. Nature writer Richard Maeby calls weeds, "a time-biding genetic bank over which our buildings and tinkerings are just an ephemeral carapace."[35] Weeds remind us that the built environment is merely a temporary event. It seems they are saying, "we were here before you and we will be here when you are gone." In our effort to control life, wildness is a quality we have lost touch with. Weeds are embedded with a wild spirit and a reassurance that life goes on. Poke helps us appreciate how we can partner with the wild, how we can see beauty in the greening over of the dereliction of human activity. Poke has always been here. It has so much to teach us. The weeds belong; we are the outlaws.



Anthotype of passenger pigeon using poke ink. Image courtesy of Sarah Lewison.

Footnotes

[1] Euell Gibbons, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, (D. McKay Co., 1962), 174.

[2] Ruderal refers to a plant that grows in waste places or requires soil disturbance to become established. From Latin *rudera*, "ruins" or "rubbish," plural of *rudus*, "broken stone." In botanical parlance, a disturbance-adapted species. See Peter Del Tredici, *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide* (Cornell University Press, 2020).

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[4] Jonathan D. Sauer, "A Geography of Pokeweed." *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 39, no. 2 (1952): 113–25, https://doi.org/10.2307/2394507; Jonathan Deininger Sauer, "Poke (Phytolacca americana L.): Biology and Geography of a Weed," (master's thesis, Washington University, 1948).

[5] Sauer, "A Geography of Pokeweed," 113.

[6] H. Thomas Stalker, Marilyn L. Warburton, and Jack R. Harlan, *Harlan's Crops and Man: People, Plants and Their Domestication*, 3rd ed. (American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Wiley, 2021), 116.

[7] Jack R. Harlan, *Crops & Man*, (American Society of Agronomy : Crop Science Society of America, 1992).

[8] Harlan, *Crops & Man*.

[9] Harlan, *Crops & Man*, 20.

[10] Harlan, *Crops & Man*.

[11] Harlan, *Crops & Man*, 4.

[12] The City Wire Staff, "Allens, Poke Sallet and Change," Talk Business, January 12, 2014, https://talkbusiness.net/2014/01/allens-poke-sallet-and-change/; Gerald Klingman, "Plant of the Week: Pokeweed (Pokeberry)," University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/plant-week/pokeweed.aspx

[13] Gibbons, "Stalking the Wild Asparagus," 174.

[14] Gibbons, "Stalking the Wild Asparagus," 174.

[15] Klingman, "Plant of the Week: Pokeweed (Pokeberry)."

[16] Klingman, "Plant of the Week: Pokeweed (Pokeberry)."

[17] Lee Peterson, *A Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants of Eastern and Central North America* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1978), 46; Allison O. Adams, "A Mess of Poke," Southern Spaces, October 11, 2011, https://southernspaces.org/2011/mess-poke/.

[18] "Allen Canning Company: Pokeweed: Prime Potherb," Eat the Weeds and Other Things, Too, accessed June 1, 2024, https://www.eattheweeds.com/tag/allen-canning-company/.

[19] Michele Elizabeth Lee, *Working the Roots: Over 400 Years of Traditional African American Healing* (Wadastick, 2017).

[20] "Pokeweed, American (Phytolacca Americana): The Jekyll and Hyde Plant," Nadia's Backyard, accessed June 1, 2025, https://nadiasyard.com/our-native-plants/american-pokeweed/.

[21] blackforager, "LOL, one day I'll be good at social media but until then have some American food history! Poison! Culture! Dolly Parton! This video has a lot!" Instagram, May 18, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/tv/CdthHyUj4x-p/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==.

[22] blackforager, "LOL."

[23] Eating History, "Preparing 'poke-sallet' (or poke salat) made from the pokeweed. This is a green which grows wild in the South and if not prepared properly can be deadly, Marshall, Texas in 1939. From the Library of Congress," Facebook, May 27, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=301007308404022&id=114936913677730&set=a.115381450299943.

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[29] Matt Hall, "Kinship with Plants," in *Kinship: Belonging in a World of Relations*, eds. Gavin Van Horn, Robin Wall-Kimmerer, and John Hausdorffer, vol. 5, *Practice* (Center for Humans and Nature, 2021), 39.

[30] Hall, "Kinship with Plants."

[31] Sauer, "Poke (Phytolacca americana L.): Biology and Geography of a Weed."

[32] Lucy R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New Press, 1997).

[33] Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*, 19.

[34] This framework is generally attributed to Donna Haraway; see Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Autumn, 1998): 575–599.

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About the Author

Lynn engages communities and individuals in project design drawing from the depth of relational possibilities embedded in food systems, botanical histories, and interspecies landscape ecology. With this in mind, her role creates situations for embodied encounter and experience so that we may build and craft affinity narratives about who we are and where we come from. Through these practices, her wish is to cultivate a sense of belonging in this world for herself and others.