

Bronzeville Agracademy and Making Gardening Accessible

Since the COVID19 Shelter-In-Place order took effect I have been very focused on getting the gardens at Mezzacello up and running efficiently. After all, I have the time and access! Mother Nature needs the work done no matter what. I was really looking forward to sharing Mezzacello with the community this spring via the Bronzeville Agracademy. The Agracademy is a partnership between the OSU African American & African Studies Community Extension Center (OSUAAASCEC), Bronzeville Community and a select group of Urban Farms in the King-Lincoln, Bronzeville, Near East side. Well that all got shelved. But that did not stop my dear friend and mentor, Julia Lynne Walker. She organized the Bronzeville Agracademy, is the main teacher and arranged all the tours. She just went and got things started on her own. She created a Zoom Meeting and invited everyone she knew to get on there and create an online community where she has been fearlessly teaching people how to plan, start, build, maintain, and sustain a garden. She has been courageous and brilliant, and every week her impact grows. I admire her greatly.



Julialynne Walker doing what she does best; building community. [Jim Bruner](#) | Mezzacello

When she pivoted this project, she knew very little about zoom, wifi bandwidth, digital technology, processors, and internet access demands of online learning. In that respect she is all the rest of America; Left reeling with the new reality of teaching from home. But she is thriving and I am thriving alongside her. Every week I learn something new and I love it. Julialynne succeeds due a combination of incredible amount of knowledge and experience on multiple continents and diverse ecosystems, a passion for her topic that is infectious, and an iron will in her conviction that all people need to know the secret to making more food. She is a hero and I admire her greatly. We all of us do need to take more responsibility for our health, our lives, and our food.

I had the honor of hosting an online tutorial on the Bronzeville Agracademy zoom call last week around composting. I talked about the basic biochemistry and physics of [compost](#) and alternatives to traditional composting. It was a great deal of fun and I learned so much in the doing of it. That is exactly what we all of us want. To keep learning and growing

and getting through all of this safely and wiser. I am taking these lessons I am learning from these 60 families that are now joining us on these twice-weekly zoom calls. It has changed my mission here at Mezzacello a bit. I want to focus more on community engagement and education – especially online and via video. I want to be a hero like Julia Lynne Walker. If you haven't visited yet, take a look at her Bronzeville Academy Facebook group. Tim McDermott DVM is hosting a class 4/16/2020 from 10:00-11:00 via zoom on the basics of container gardening. Join us!