



THE HUNTRRESS

WITH HER ONE-WOMAN PRACTICE, RADICLE, CHRISTIE GREEN WORKS TO REPAIR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE—INCLUDING THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS WE EAT.

BY TIMOTHY A. SCHULER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABRIELLA MARKS

THE STARS WERE STILL OUT when Christie Green, ASLA, parked her Tundra and turned off the engine. We were somewhere near Glorieta Mesa, Game Management Unit 45, about 30 minutes southeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico. In the moonlight, I could make out the bristle-brush tops of ponderosa and piñon pine. I grabbed the camouflage gear Green had lent me and got out of the truck. The April air was just a few degrees above freezing,

and the only sounds were the howls of coyotes and the quiet murmurs of cattle somewhere in the valley. As the chill began to seep in, I tugged on my gloves and cowl. I had no idea how long we were going to be out there.

Green, who for the past five years has run a one-woman landscape design practice in Santa Fe called Radicle, had agreed to take me turkey hunting. Almost all of her projects, in some

way or another, work to repair what she sees as humankind's broken relationship with nature, specifically the plants and animals that we eat to stay alive. Green herself hunts the majority of the meat she eats, and what began as a hobby has informed her practice in surprising ways. Being out in the wilderness, "you see what's happening with the vegetation, what's happening with the water," she said. "Where's the wildlife this year where it wasn't last year?"



ABOVE
Christie Green, ASLA, hunts several days a week, sometimes with a gun, other times with a bow.

I had assumed that Green, who grew up in Alaska, had learned to hunt as a kid. But the women in Green's family didn't hunt, she said. It was just a few years ago that Green accompanied her then-husband to Vermejo, Ted Turner's 920-square-mile ranch on the Colorado–New Mexico border. On their second day, Green shot her first elk. After that, there was no going back. Green always had felt a strong, almost physical connection to the food she grew; working in a garden sometimes felt like entering an altered state, she said. "It's not book knowledge. It's when you do something because it's in your body." Hunting, she said, "was like that times 10." You had to become an animal yourself, paying close attention to what you heard and smelled. "It's the most immediate way to re-

move all the layers of city, culture, and be this other biological thing," Green said.

I had never been hunting. Growing up in rural Kansas, classmates often wore camo to school, bragging about the bucks they shot. Hunting was a rite of passage. But my parents didn't believe in shooting animals for sport. "No Hunting" signs were posted on the barbed-wire fences that surrounded our property. They treated the old farmstead like a wildlife preserve, fastidiously planting native grasses to provide habitat for quail and deer. They did own a gun, a .22 rifle, which hung in a glass case in my mother's office above her drafting table. But the only time I remember her using it was to shoot a cat that had been mutilated by a disc harrow.

All this is to say that I wasn't sure how I felt about killing a wild turkey and watching it die. But I wasn't against the idea. In any case, I wasn't going to be the one pulling the trigger. It also helped that everything I had learned about Green had convinced me that her respect for living things was quite near limitless, so much so that any time she shot an animal, whether an elk or grouse or even a squirrel, she would sit down and "have a cry." In other words, she didn't like killing things. Green just felt like it was the right thing to do.

After a quick safety briefing and a description of what would happen if we did get a turkey—she would make sure the bird was dead, then, starting at its sternum, cut it open, remove its guts to let the meat cool,

SHE MADE TEA FROM RUSSIAN OLIVES AND JERKY FROM GRAY SQUIRRELS.

then arrange the entrails on the ground as a sort of altar—Green slung her 20-gauge shotgun over her shoulder and set off through the pines. With almost no understory, walking was easy, but a super-dry winter in which New Mexico saw just a fraction of its typical snowfall had left the ground littered with dry twigs, pine cones, and needles, which snapped underfoot like little land mines. “I feel like a Mack truck coming through here,” Green whispered.

We made our way south toward an area where Green suspected the turkeys might be roosting. Every few minutes she would stop and use a wooden box call to make a scratchy, high-pitched honk. The idea was to attract a gobbler, a tom (an adult

male turkey) or a jake (an adolescent), by mimicking the sound of a hen in heat. Thus far that year, Green had yet to hear any gobbles, and she was worried that the lack of water and harsh conditions had accelerated the birds’ mating season. If the climate continued to change, she said, the whole idea of “turkey season” could be moot.

A soft chirp made Green stop short. I froze. She motioned for me to crouch down, then lowered herself to the ground. She was in a half-supine position, back against a tree, shotgun pointed between her knees. Silence. I could feel my heart beating at a horselike clop. Turkeys roost in trees, then come down in the morning to forage for seeds. I scanned the ponderosa for turkey-like shapes but

couldn’t make out anything in the gray-black dawn.

After what seemed like 10 minutes, Green began to stand. A deafening chatter erupted in the trees just ahead of us. I had never heard a turkey make a noise like this. It wasn’t a gobble or a squawk. It was arpeggiated, a sort of burbling, full of staccato bleeps and bloops. It sounded fake, computer-generated. Listening to them talk in their melodic gibberish, I realized that there must be half a dozen hens above us.

We sat there, waiting for the tell-tale gobble of a tom. Surely they’d be summoned by all this ruckus. Five minutes went by. The chatter began to lessen. The birds seemed to know we were there. They grew

quiet. Green stood. At least 10 turkeys burst out of the top of the pines. Their wings stirred the air, and the noise it made was louder even than their vocalizations. As quickly as they were there, they were gone. They soared eastward above the trees until they disappeared, swallowed by the rising sun.

FIRST SAW CHRISTIE GREEN on stage at the ASLA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles in 2017. Her presentation was unlike any I had seen. Prior to the panel, on each of the room's round tables, Green had laid a piñon branch, a handful of pine nuts (both shelled and unshelled), and a plate of homemade pine nut bars. She explained the piñon's cultural significance to pueblos of northern New Mexico, how the tree has been used for centuries as a source of food and also for paints, dyes, and glues.

Walking the audience through some of her work, including an "edible invasives" dinner at the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve in Santa Fe, in which she made tea from Russian olives and jerky from gray squirrels, she recounted how, one night, in

preparation for that dinner, she and her daughter were both hard at work in the kitchen: Her daughter was baking a birthday cake, and Green was skinning a squirrel.

It wasn't just Green's work or her tales of hunting that grabbed the audience's attention. She had a presence that filled the room. She was funny and charismatic and self-deprecating, and bore more than a passing resemblance to the actress Laura Dern: the iridescent blue eyes, the powerful stature. Underneath it all ran this vibrating intensity, as if she really were a wild animal.

I was particularly taken by Green's intuitive and ecologically conscious way of working. That sounds a bit clichéd in this era of climate resilience, but Green will sometimes spend years building a site's soil with mulch and manure, outwaiting both droughts and pests. She's a fan of letting landscapes evolve over time and will rely on a client's behavior to tell her what should be done, watching as desire lines form and then laying stones. In some cases, Green makes only a single sketch, a process



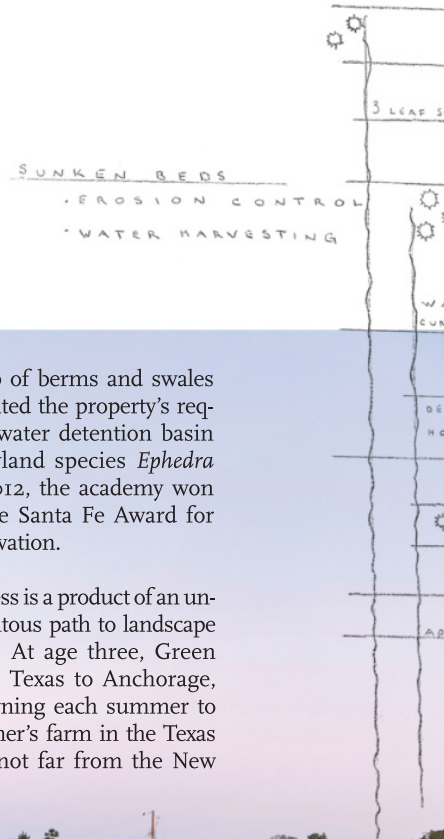


**CLOCKWISE,
FROM TOP LEFT**
Green's house is a
museum of past hunts.
Trophies include an elk
jawbone and the clawed
feet of wild turkeys.
Elsewhere, seedpods of
Proboscidea parviflora
are displayed in a grid.



LEFT
The courtyard at the Academy for the Love of Learning is planted with edible species, including grapevines.

BELOW
The rest of the sylvan campus is mostly evergreens and native shrubs and grasses.



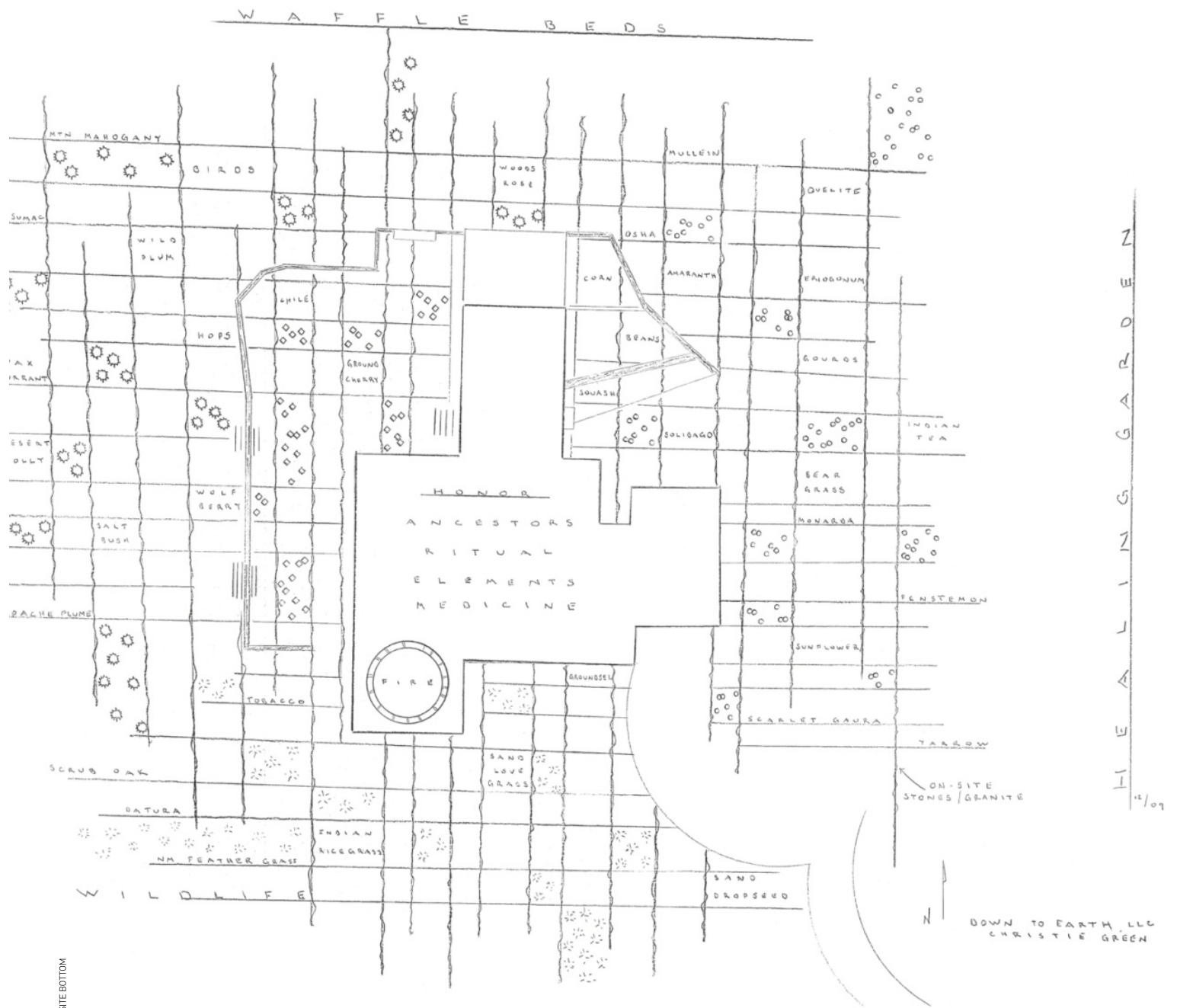
made possible by the fact that Green handles the majority of her own construction administration.

The result is a rugged, do-it-yourself aesthetic, with an emphasis on natural or repurposed materials. Her work exhibits an undeniable level of pragmatism, a ruthless commitment to conserving resources. For the 86-acre campus of Santa Fe's Academy for the Love of Learning, the entire landscape design revolves around slowing and capturing water. Green had enough confidence in her

intricate web of berms and swales that she planted the property's requisite stormwater detention basin with the dryland species *Ephedra viridis*. In 2012, the academy won a Sustainable Santa Fe Award for water conservation.

Green's process is a product of an unusually circuitous path to landscape architecture. At age three, Green moved from Texas to Anchorage, Alaska, returning each summer to her grandfather's farm in the Texas Panhandle, not far from the New





RADICLE, TOP AND OPPOSITE TOP; MINESH BACRANIA, OPPOSITE BOTTOM

Mexico border. Growing up in such rural, wild places gave Green an appreciation for untamed landscapes. When she moved with her mother to Palo Alto, California, and enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, majoring in cultural history, she couldn't stand the thought of living in the Bay Area forever. She spent her summers back in Alaska, living with her father and working very odd

jobs: cleaning up the Exxon Valdez oil spill and fleshing hides at an Alaskan hunting lodge.

After graduation, Green got a job with Bioneers, an environmental education organization, and eventually moved to Santa Fe. To Green, New Mexico was the Alaska of the Southwest. In both places, "people don't want to live by the rules," she

said. "And they have a deep connection to place, through seasons and through food. It's who they are." Among other things, Green helped with the Bioneers' Restorative Development Initiative, working with farmers all over the country to educate them about how to grow higher-value, more ecologically beneficial crops and connecting them with potential markets.

ABOVE Radicle's plan for Seton Castle, located on the Academy campus, features a landscape modeled on Zuni waffle gardens.

AS SHE LEARNED MORE
ABOUT THE POLITICS OF FOOD,
GREEN DECIDED SHE WANTED
TO GET HER OWN HANDS DIRTY.





ABOVE
Green's temporary installation, *Death of an Ideal*, explored the energy that goes into achieving an idealized feminine form.

OPPOSITE
Green's art is more often ecological: Mounted elk scat and mountain mahogany leaves comment on the animal's superlative nutrient cycling.

As she learned more about the politics of food, Green decided she wanted to get her own hands dirty. In the winter of 1999, she quit her job and started a landscape design/build company focused on edible plantings and backyard gardens. She called it Down to Earth. "It was purely political," Green said. "It was like, we cannot let monocrop agriculture win, or have children think the only kind of tomato that there is is what you find in the store."

Green's first client was Paula Baker-LaPorte, a well-known architect and environmental activist, who hired Green to design the landscape of her personal residence just outside Santa Fe. Soon, Green began to get referrals, working on ever-larger and higher-end residences, until she was designing clients' fifth and sixth homes. Often these clients cared little for native species, much less growing and harvesting their own food. "Those are like the worst projects of my career," Green told me. "I mean, they looked pretty but [they had] zero meaning."

As her business grew—at its peak, Down to Earth employed eight people

—Green felt like she was increasingly forced to compromise who she was and why she had gotten into design in the first place. The pace, too, was unrelenting. She found herself working around the clock, a single mother commuting to Santa Fe every day from her "dream farm" outside Española, New Mexico, breastfeeding her daughter on the side of the road. "I was fried," she said. Running a firm only added to the pressure. "It was like this beast that I had to keep feeding because you have to keep all these people employed."

She considered scaling back. Before she could, the economy forced her hand. In 2008, the recession came. "All of a sudden, the phone stopped ringing," Green said. She had little choice but to lay everyone off.

Shortly after, Green was invited to team up with a local landscape architecture firm on an RFP for an affordable housing project. Their team didn't win, but the experience convinced Green that she wanted to pursue RFPs herself. At almost 40 years old, with a five-year-old daughter,

Green enrolled in the graduate landscape architecture program at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in Albuquerque.

IN SCHOOL, GREEN MADE an immediate impression on her professors. "I was blown away by her," Katya Crawford, an associate professor in the landscape architecture department at UNM, told me over the phone. "At the time she was a single mom, she was driving from Santa Fe, which was an hour [away], and she never once missed a deadline, never once had an excuse, and before final reviews and things like that, she would bring these amazing meals that she had cooked." From the first day of class, Crawford said she saw Green as more of a peer than a student. "Even though she knew so much, she was also really humble," Crawford said.

Kim Sorvig, a research associate professor at the university (and an occasional contributor to this magazine), recalled a similar dynamic in his own class, a graduate seminar called Sustainability, Landscapes, and Construction. Green was outspoken yet





RADICLE, TOP RIGHT

considerate of others' opinions. "She was thoughtful about the dynamics of the group," Sorvig said.

Being exposed to theory expanded Green's understanding of what landscape is. But she had a hard time reconciling her newfound identity with her love for working with her own hands. She remembers thinking, "If landscaping is *déclassé* in the eyes of landscape architects, and landscapers think landscape architects only do things on paper, and I want to do *all of it*, what am I supposed to do?"

Sorvig finds this sort of dichotomy tragic—and all too real. "As a profession," he said, "I think we train people out of their pragmatic affection for real landscapes. We forget a lot of the things that actually connect us to the Earth. That's something that Christie is *not* doing."

Green graduated in December 2013, determined not to repeat the past. She wanted to bring her whole self to her practice. She rebranded her firm and named it Radicle, the term for a

seedling's embryonic root—the very first part of the seed to grow. She decided to stay small and pursue only projects that she believed in, such as an outdoor recreational facility for the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo north of Española, or the landscape for *House of Eternal Return*, an immersive, psychedelic art installation produced by the Santa Fe-based artist collective Meow Wolf.

To explore larger ideas, she rented an old warehouse and converted it into studio space. She held salons on topics such as "consumption and waste," and ripped up the building's concrete parking lot, making it into a pop-up outdoor art gallery. She used the space for "goofy art installations," as she called them, like *Death of an Ideal*, in which she positioned nine Barbie dolls on top of small mounds of soil that had been arranged in a grid. In front of them, she had dug nine doll-sized graves. It was a commentary, she wrote, on "the idealized feminine form and what is consumed and wasted to achieve this ideal."



ABOVE
Representatives from Tewa Women United pore over drawings for the Española Healing Foods Oasis.

OPPOSITE
Green and Beata Tsosie-Peña have worked with community members to coax what was once a vacant and eroded hillside into a public ethnobotanical garden.



ABOVE LEFT
The site of the Española Healing Foods Oasis before construction.

ABOVE RIGHT
Today, the slope is planted with edible, medicinal, and culturally significant plants.

OPPOSITE
The garden is conceived as a series of rock-lined terraces, with curving bands and benches that reference the Tewa water god.



RADICLE, TOP LEFT AND OPPOSITE

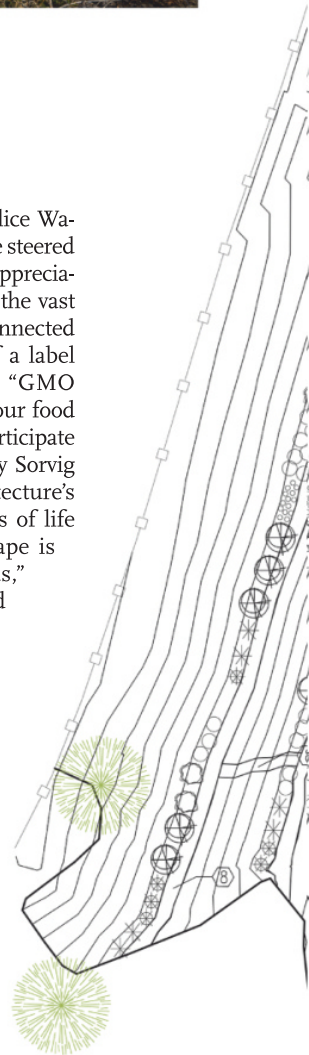
In both form and irreverence, the artwork was a descendant of the Bagel Garden by Martha Schwartz, FASLA. Crawford told me she sees similarities between the two designers' work, "in that a lot of what [Green] does, professionals probably don't think is landscape architecture." Case in point: mounting elk scat and the leaves of *Cercocarpus ledifolius* (one of the animals' favorite foods) as a comment on the superlative way that nature handles waste. "Elk do such a nice job of cycling their own nutrients," Green said during her ASLA presentation. "They don't have landfills. Everything they give back is beneficial." Plus, she said, they have the "most perfect shit."

Art offered Green a way to continue explorations she had begun in school, as well as a world with fewer constraints than design. In 2014, she was invited to participate in the Santa Fe Art Institute's Food Justice

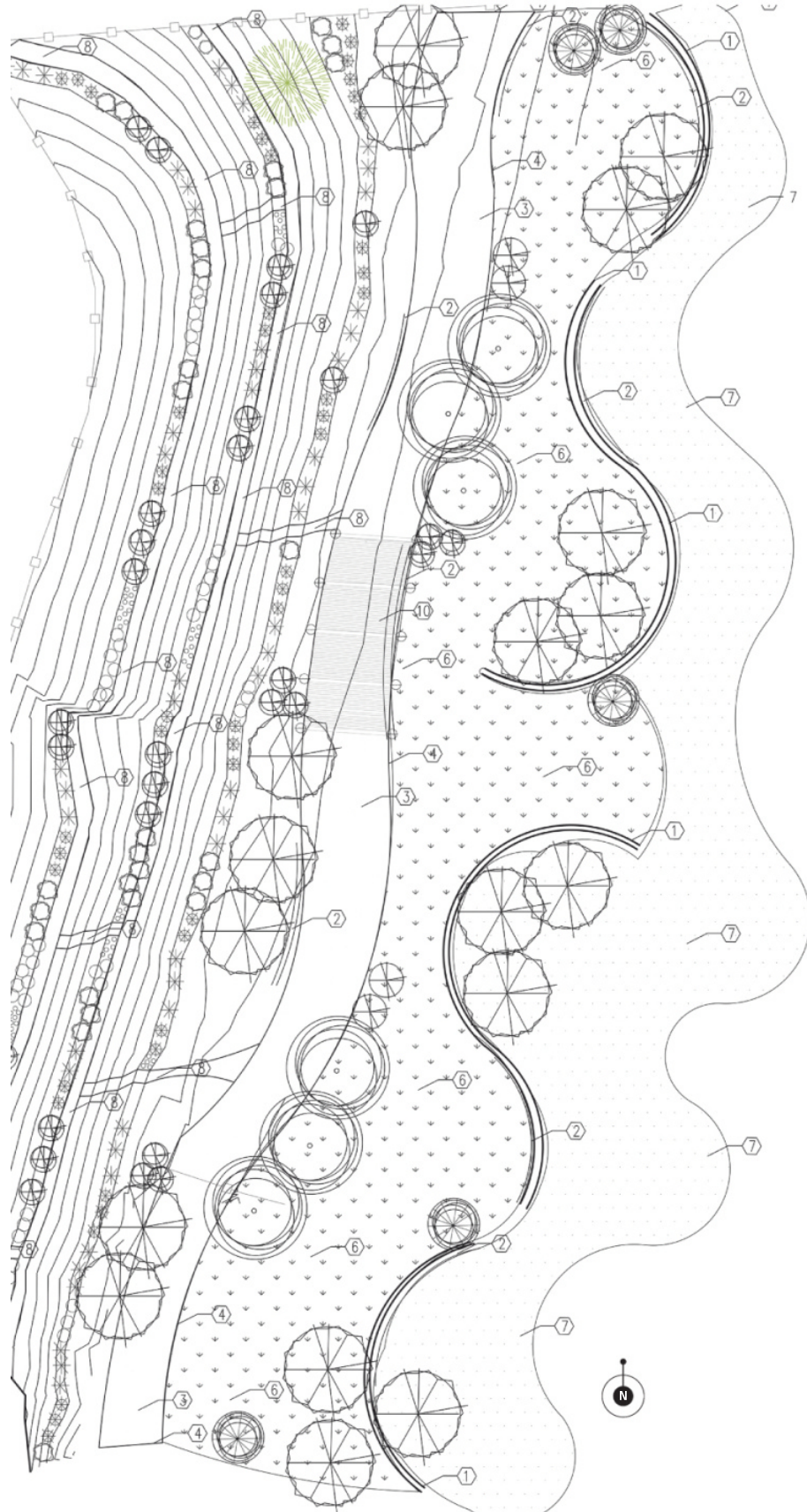
residency program, as a part of which she hosted her "edible invasives" dinner, the one with the Russian olive tea and the squirrel jerky. Two years later, she was invited back, this time as an artist in residence to explore the subject of water rights. Her performance piece, "Holy Communion," imagined a religion in which "God" did not take human form but rather that of nature. She served participants New Mexico spring water in communion cups and a "holy sacrament" of elk. "I was trying to have a sense of humor before I got burned out," Green said.

If there is one consistent theme across Green's work, it is food. Her career is an attempt to challenge the mindlessness with which we approach what we consume. "Humans are so arrogant and entitled most of the time, not because we're assholes, but because we can be," she said. "We flip a switch and we get what we want."

Even as tastemakers like Alice Waters and Michael Pollan have steered the culture back toward an appreciation for food's provenance, the vast majority of us remain disconnected from what we eat. Even if a label promises "free range" or "GMO free," few of us see where our food comes from, much less participate in its harvest. Which is why Sorvig considers landscape architecture's obliviousness to rural ways of life problematic. "The landscape is the thing that supports us," he said. "It's where our food comes from, whether it's wild or cultivated, animal or plant. This is why I attach quite a bit of importance to what Christie is doing. If we're going to survive, we're going to need to recognize how dependent we are on the landscape as a total system." ↘



HEALING FOODS OASIS – PLANTING PLAN



KEY COMMON NAME BOTANICAL NAME

TREES		
PE	PINON PINE	PINUS EDULIS
M	APPLE 'CHICKADEE', 'AKERO', 'BLUE PERMAIN'	MALUS SP.
P	PLUM TREE 'STANLEY' OR 'WANETA'	PRUNUS SP.
PA	WILD PLUM	PRUNUS AMERICANA
PC	CHERRY TREE 'STELLA'	PRUNUS AVIUM
PF	CRABAPPLE 'PRAIRIE FIRE'	MALUS SP.
PV	CHOKECHERRY	PRUNUS VIRGINIANA
QO	CAMBEL OAK	QUERCUS GAMBELI
RN	NEW MEXICO LOCUST	ROBINIA NEOMEXICANA

SHRUBS		
AC	FOURWING SALTBUCH	ATRIPLEX CANESCENS
AF	SAND SAGEBRUSH	ARTEMESIA FILIFOLIA
AR	FRINGED SAGE	ARTEMESIA FRIGIDA
AT	BIG SAGE	ARTEMESIA TRIDENTATA
CL	CURL LEAF MAHOGANY	CEROCARPUS LEDIFOLIUS
CM	MOUNTAIN MAHOGANY	CEROCARPUS MONTANUS
CN	RABBITBRUSH	CHRYSOTHAMNUS NAUSEOSUS
Esp	MORMON TEA	EPHEDRA
FP	APACHE PLUME	FALLUGIA PARADOXA
GS	BROOM SNAKEWEED	GUTIERREZIA SAROTHRAE
LP	WOLFBERRY	LYCUM PALLIDUM
NM	BEARGRASS	NOLINA MICROCARPA
RC	WAX CURRANT	RIBES CERUEM
RF	WILD ROSE	ROSA FENDLERI
RI	GOOSEBERRY	RIBES INERME
RS	RASPBERRY	RUBUS IDEAS
RT	THREE LEAF SUMAC	RHUS TRILOBATA
SN	ELDERBERRY	SAMBUCUS NIGRA
YB	BANANA YUCCA	YUCCA BACCATA
YG	NARROW LEAF YUCCA	YUCCA GLAUCA

VINES		
CL	VIRGIN'S BOWER	CLEMATIS LIGUSTICIFOLIA
V	GRAPE	HIMROD, VANESSA,
VA	CANYON GRAPE	VITUS ARIZONICA

GRASSES		
AP	ARISTIDA PURPUREA	PURPLE THREEAWN
AS	LITTLE BLUESTEM	ANDROPOGON SCOPARIUS
BC	SIDEOTS GRAMA	BOUTELLOA CURTIPENDULA
BG	BLUE GRAMA	BOUTELLOA GRACILIS
BL	SILVER BEARGRASS	BOTHRICHOLOA LAGUROIDES
ET	SAND LOVEGRASS	ERAGROTIS TRICHODES
HO	SWEET GRASS	HERIOCHLOE ODORATA
LS	WOLFTAIL	LYCURIUS SETOSUS
MP	BUSH MUHLY	MUHLENBERGIA PORTERI
MR	DEERGRASS	MUHLENBERGIA RIGENS
NT	THREADGRASS	NASELLA TENUISSIMA
OH	INDIAN RICEGRASS	ORYZOPSIS HYMENOIDES
PJ	GALLETA GRASS	PLEURAPHIS JAMESII
PS	WESTERN WHEATGRASS	PASCOPYRUM SMITHII
PV	SWITCHGRASS	PANICUM VIRGATUM
SN	INDIAN GRASS	SORGHASTRUM NUTANS
SW	GIANT SACATON	SPOROBOLUS WRIGHTII

PERENNIALS		
AA	MILKWEED	ASCLEPIAS ASPERULA
AC	YERBA MANSO	ANEMOPSIS CALIFORNICA
AF	SAND YERBENA	ARIZONA FRAGRANS
AC	PINK NODDING ONION	ALLIUM CERNUUM
AL	YARROW	ACHILLEA LANULOSA
CB	BUFFALO GOURD	CUCURBITA FOETIDISSIMA
CF	WILD PARSLEY	CYMOCYPTERIS FENDLERI
CI	INDIAN PAINTBRUSH	CASTILLEJA INTEGRATA
CS	BEEPLANT	CLEOME SERRULATA
GA	GUNWEED	GRINDLIA APHARACTIS
EL	WILD CUCUMBER	ECHINOCYSTIS LOBATA
EP	CONEFLOWER	ECHINACEA PURPUREA
EU	SULFUR BUCKWHEAT	ERIOGONUM UMBELLATUM
HF	DAYLILY	HEMEROCALLIS FULVA
HT	JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE	HELIANTHUS TUBEROSUS
IL	BLUE TRUMPETS	IPOMOPSIS LONGIFLORA
LA	LAVENDER	LAVENDULA ANGUSTICIFOLIA
LC	TAILCUP LUPINE	LUPINE CAUDIATUS
LL	WILD FLAX	LINUM LEWISII
MB	BEEBALM	MONARDA MENTHAEFOLIA
MM	DESERT FOUR-O'CLOCK	MIRABILIS MULTIFLORA
MS	YERBA BUENA	MENTHA SPICATA
MY	HOREHOUND	MARRUBIUM VULGARE
PG	CRANESBILL GERANIUM	RELARCONIUM GRAVEOLENS
PM	PLANTAIN	RATIBIDA MAJOR
RT	MEXICAN HAT	RATIBIDA TAGETES
RSP	WILD RHUBARB	RUMEX
SC	SCARLET GLOBE MALLOW	SPHAERALCEA COCCINEA
SU	COMFREY	SYMPHYTUM X UPLANDICUM
TM	NAVAJO TEA	THELESPERMA MEGAPOTAMICUM
VM	YERBENA	VERBENA MACDOUGALI
VT	MULLEIN (biennial)	VERBASCUM THAPSUS
ZO	DESERT ZINNA	ZINNA GRANDIFLORA

ANNUALS		
AM	AMARANTH	AMARANTHUS BLITOIDES
AG	DILL	ANETHUM GRAVEOLENS
AO	ASPARAGUS	ASPARAGUS OFFICINALIS
AS	CHIVES	ALLIUM SCHONOPRASUM
BO	BORAGE	BORAGO OFFICINALIS
CL	LAMB'S QUARTERS	CHENOPODIUM LEPTOPHYLLUM
CT	DOVEWEED	CROTON TEXENSIS
DP	TANSY MUSTARD	DESCURAINIA PINNATA
HA	ANNUAL SUNFLOWER	HELIANTHUS ANNUUS
PC	SCORPIONWEED	PHACELIA CURRUGATA
PH	GROUND CHERRY	PHYSALIS HEDERAIFOLIA
PO	PURSLANE	PORTULACA OLERACEA
RO	ROSEMARY	ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS
SA	WHITE SAGE	SALVIA APIANA
SE	HORSE NETTLE	SOLANUM ELAEAGNIFOLIUM
SJ	WILD POTATO	SOLANUM JAMESII
SO	CULINARY SAGE	SALVIA OFFICINALIS
TM	NASTURTIUM	TROPAEOLUM MAJUS
TO	DANDELION	TARAXACUM OFFINALE

HATCH LEGEND

[Hatched pattern]	COMPACTED CRUSHER FINES	[Dotted pattern]	GALLETA AND WESTERN WHEAT GRASS
[Stippled pattern]	NATIVE PERENNIAL WILDFLOWER SEED	[White box]	BARK MULCH AND COMPOST BLEND

"WE DON'T SHY AWAY
FROM INCORPORATING
OUR SPIRITUALITY
INTO THIS GARDEN."

—BEATA TSOSIE-PEÑA





OPPOSITE
Amaranth, an important food of many pueblo peoples, is among the edible species planted at the Healing Foods Oasis.

CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT
This past fall, Tewa Women United organized an amaranth harvesting workshop, in which community members learned to sort the grains and then spread them out to dry.



→ Nothing in the Radicle portfolio recognizes this fact more thoroughly than a tiny, ragged, community garden project known as the Española Healing Foods Oasis. Initiated in 2012 by an environmental justice organization known as Tewa Women United (TWU), the Healing Foods Oasis occupies a scrap of leftover land between Española City Hall and Valdez Park. Once a barren and rocky slope, today the space has grown—or, rather, been actively cultivated—into a public demonstration ethnobotanical garden, providing opportunities to teach younger generations traditional Tewa techniques of dryland cultivation, passive water harvesting, and bioremediation. Almost every plant is either edible or medicinal and culturally significant to the Tewa people.

Green became involved in the project in 2015, recommended by an engineer named Martin Garcia, whom she knew from Meow Wolf. By then, Beata Tsosie-Peña, TWU's environmental justice program coordinator and the garden's instigator, had a fairly well-developed vision for the space, but many of the per-

mits and grants the organization was seeking required a licensed design professional. To hear Green tell it, she merely translated TWU's vision into working drawings and an Excel spreadsheet. But Tsosie-Peña described Green's involvement as catalytic. "It started out really simple," she told me. "I just wanted to plant some trees and catch water. And then when Christie came on board, she really taught me to dream big. And then scale down as you need to."

Today the slope has been graded into a series of rock-lined terraces, which intercept runoff from the parking lot. Serpentine bands of dry-stacked stone reference the Tewa water god, Awanyu, and also trap moisture and regulate the temperature of the soil. "This is dryland farming 101," Green explained.

Between the stone bands are plantings of sage, amaranth, piñon, and comfrey. There are fruit trees, a pollinator garden, and plans to plant Indian ricegrass (which is harvested for its grain) in a linear band that traces the route of a long-buried *acequia*, or irrigation canal. There are plants

specific to the needs of midwives, and others whose pigments are used to make dyes. The planting design reflects the seasonality and harvest time of each species: Those plants that are harvested more often are located next to the garden's primary path, while those harvested annually are planted farther up the slope. "The idea is that people can walk through and graze, or harvest and take home," Green said.

To ensure that the space feels welcoming to all, signage (which instructs visitors to ask permission from the plants before harvesting) is in Tewa, English, and Spanish. But the garden is much more than some feel-good exercise in positivity. For Tsosie-Peña, the Healing Foods Oasis is just that—an oasis, a space in which the people of the Santa Clara Pueblo can reestablish their ancestral connection to the land and do so publicly in an urban context. "We don't shy away from incorporating our spirituality into this garden," Tsosie-Peña said. "It's really [about] seeing these plants as living beings. My experience with herbalism is that the plants do what you ask them to."

"CHRISTIE IS A BRIDGE.
SHE CAN COMMUNICATE
WITH JUST ABOUT
ANYBODY."

—KATYA CRAWFORD

The garden is also a testing ground. Among the organisms that have been “planted” around city hall are shoebox-sized bricks of oyster mushroom mycelium. Oyster mushrooms, specifically those belonging to the genus *Pleurotus*, are the MVPs of mycoremediation, researchers have found. And environmental contamination is one of the most pressing issues facing the Tewa pueblos, owing in large part to the proximity of Los Alamos National Laboratory. Tsosie-Peña said demonstration projects like the Healing Foods Oasis can help normalize landscape-based strategies. “Given the urgency of the issues and the times that we’re in, we really need to combine indigenous knowledge with western technology,” she said.

With the construction of the garden in its final stage, Green and Tsosie-Peña have begun plotting how to replicate the concept in other communities around New Mexico, including at Santa Clara Pueblo. Crawford, of UNM, told me that she recently included the Healing Foods Oasis in a talk she gave at the

Albuquerque Museum. She too has become convinced that indigenous knowledge will be vital to the survival of the human species, and is worried that it remains a fringe topic in the world of design. “Christie is a bridge,” she told me, a translator of ideas, of cultures, of worldviews. “She can communicate with just about anybody.”

THE NIGHT AFTER our hunting expedition, I drove to Green’s house with my wife for a “wild game supper.” There was no mistaking which house was Green’s. Deer legs, stripped of everything but their hooves and a few tufts of fur, hung on the wooden fence, and a metal sign said, “Food is LOVE is food.” There were garden beds of spring peas and potatoes and neat stacks of hand-chopped firewood, guarded by a mannequin whose head had been replaced with a rack of elk antlers.

Inside, the dining room table had been set for at least 10 people. In the center, amid a constellation of flickering tea lights, was the skull of a white-tailed deer, its antlers still attached. Around it were the remains

of the rest of our dinner: the delicate, black-clawed feet of a grouse, the deer’s white-striped tail.

On a white sheet of paper, Green had printed the menu: “SPRING SUPPER: tasting landscape, with wild love and gratitude, Christie.” It listed nearly a dozen items, many of which were preceded by their place of origin: “east garden golden and red pickled beets,” “hopewell grouse bites + broth,” “amos tank elk; she had white elbows.” Other items evidenced Green’s sense of humor: “whitetail buck balls, y’all”—delicious venison meatballs slathered in a deep burgundy, pomegranate balsamic glaze—or the “damn salad,” made from the samaras of Siberian elm, along with carrot, radish, and sprigs of dill. Dessert consisted of individual peach cobblers, baked in ramekins and topped with whipped cream.

As I watched Green interact with her guests, and listened to stories of dinners past, I reflected on the way in which Green has lived most of her life straddling seemingly disparate worlds: urban and rural, design



LEFT

Green in her home office in Santa Fe.

OPPOSITE

Green's life and work are two threads of a singular effort to insert the "rural into the urban."

and construction, whimsy and pragmatism, and increasingly, in a way, human and animal. To live within this liminal space is to sometimes feel like a stranger in both.

The poet Susan Hertel, who also called Santa Fe home, once wrote, "I am not a person of the people tribe. I am an immigrant among the animals." Green, I thought, lived a similar existence. It was true, of course, that each of the animals we were eating—the grouse, the elk, the white-tailed deer—had been alive before Green shot it, with her bow or her shotgun. And yet it was impossible to see any malice in Green's actions. In the care she took to prepare the meal, in her willingness to share her bounty, I saw only love, respect, gratitude.

Several months after the supper, Sorvig told me that although he admired Green's approach to design, he also understood that it cost her. "It's a limit on what kind of client she's going to get," he said. A slow, iterative, uncompromisingly environmental ethic is not what every individual or organization wants. A part of Green seems to be okay with this. But another part of her wonders if she's made the right decisions. Maybe she never should have quit the Bioneers, or started her firm, or gone back to school. "I'm not good at strategy," she told me more than once.

Even now, she said she doesn't consider Radicle a success. Success means growth, she said, and she's done the opposite of grow. "In nature, if it's not

growing, it's dying," she said. Which is true, to a point. But it's also true that what looks dead is sometimes very much alive. Sometimes it's just that the growth is happening underground, in the dark, life-giving world of the Earth. Of all people, Green should appreciate that.

If it's true that Green has no master plan, she always has been more intuitive than rational, more wild than tame. She's a farmer, not a strategist. For her, design should be about observing and listening to the landscape: When the desire lines have formed, that's when you lay the paths. ●

TIMOTHY A. SCHULER WRITES ABOUT DESIGN, ECOLOGY, AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. HE LIVES IN HONOLULU.

