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The Ancestral Science Podcast explores scientific topics through conversations between Knowledge Keepers and Scientists, while *experiencing* the origins and depth of science on and with “the Land”. Join us as science COMES ALIVE when knowledges are shared alongside ancestor plants, rocks, animals, and rivers, creating connections between personal, Indigenous, and global science. The Ancestral Science podcast is a place for *everyone* to see themselves in science, to be inspired by the SCIENCE that is all around them and expand the definitions of both *ancestor* and *science*.

SEASON 2: Episode 21 ([audio/video](#)) with **Latifa Pelletier-Ahmed** “Decolonizing Mother Earth, One Native Plant at a Time”

Within this "active" Spring season of re-birth and re-growth, the Ancestral Science Podcast is taking a brief break to refresh and heal ourselves...so in deciding what episode to re-launch we were guided by the recent first thunder (amidst a thunderSNOW storm) that prompted the pop of the cottonwood buds, emerging crocus, and increased desires to reconnect with Native plants and our gardens, we thought...let's promote a previous guest Latifa of ALCLA Native Plants.

The episode was recorded in Fall 2023, on the Lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Tsuut'ina Nation, Îethka Nakoda First Nation, and more recently the Otipemisiwak Métis. The Ancestral Science Podcast was grateful to speak with **LATIFA PELLETIER-AHMED**, French Canadian with Bangladeshi roots, who is a botanist, herbalist, educator, artist, and co-owner of [ALCLA Native Plant Nursery](#) on Treaty 7 (just North of Calgary, Treaty 7). Latifa taught us about significance of critical thinking in science, plants as teachers and guides, the incredible adaptability and resilience of Native Plants, personalities of seeds, harm of mono-agriculture, honeybees aren't native, how to decolonize your lawn, and the importance of recognizing and learning about invasive species.

Grab some herbal tea alongside a robin or crocus friend, and let's learn together about the importance of Native plants from Latifa Pelletier-Ahmed

Remember, you can support the pod and rock some unique Indigenous Science merch at www.relationalsciencecircle.com/shop, all proceeds go towards Knowledge Keeper honoraria, following protocols, and keeping the pod going.

Please like, share, follow, and rate the pod, it goes a long way to share this knowledge.

Hand to heart to [Indigenous Screen Office](#) and [Bespoke Productions Hub](#).

SHOWNOTES:

LATIFA PELLETIER-AHMED is a botanist, herbalist, educator, and artist, and is co-owner of ALCLA Native Plants a native plant nursery based in Treaty 7 Territory, near Mohkinstsis/ Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She holds a BSc in Botany from the University of Calgary and an MSc in Herbal Medicine from Middlesex University, London, UK. She has been working with native plants for 15 years, her expertise includes identification, sustainable collection, cultivation, and ethnobotany. In 2016 she founded Latifa's Herbs, which primarily serves to educate the public on the edible and medicinal uses of wild plant species in both Alberta and British Columbia. She is a former faculty member at Pacific Rim College in Victoria, BC where she taught Botany and Horticulture in addition to Wild Plant Nutrition.

-What is science to you?

- Observation in many ways, about the world around us.
- think critically about who created/write/passed on that scientific knowledge
- who is profiting from that knowledge?

-Global Science Description of the “Deadly” Water Hemlock.

<https://www.wildernesscollege.com/water-hemlock.html>

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgajpd/medicina%20antiqua/sa_hemlock.html

- thinking critically about the Global Science/Western perception of a “poisonous” plant, and opening up your mind to its gifts, how it can help you, just like the Water Hemlock helped Latifa!

-What is a Native Plant?

- plants on the Land prior to European Settlement.

-ALCLA Native Plants:

- learn which plants are native to your area, and which plants are non-native/invasive.
- [Alberta Native Plant Council](#)

- Plant Watch: Engaging Citizens in Science:

<https://www.naturewatch.ca/plantwatch/alberta/>

- Alberta Invasive Species Council

- look at the regulation in restoring Native Species, how can this be done “in a good way?”

-Blackfoot People & Native Plants

- Blackfoot People didn't need to cultivate plants, they were already very abundant!
- “The Plants and the Blackfoot”, Alex Johnston (book)
- Kainai Ecosystem Protection Association (KEPA) @KainaiEPA
- [Naapi's Garden ant Katoyiss Seed Bank](#)
- There is an absence of Native Species at seed banks!

-Health of the Ecosystem comes from its Pollinators

-Decolonialize your lawn!

-please do NOT plant Kentucky Blue Grass! These lawns are NOT made to thrive in drought conditions, requiring excess watering. Native grasses thrive in drought conditions, and their natural habitats.

-the land is not a carpet!

-Plant some Blue Grandma Grass, Bunch grass- these are mold tolerant and happy on the lands of Southern Alberta.

-remove invasive/non-native species

-learn about and plant Native species from your area.

- <http://www.skinnernativeseeds.ca/index.html>

- <https://wrightnursery.ca>

-know the bylaws of your area, but there should be exceptions for planting Native species.

-Plant Medicines

-Indigenous people have had relationships with plants and their gifted medicines for thousands of years. This knowledge is well respected and valid but come with protocols. Be careful when passing on this knowledge, do it “in a good way,” with reciprocity, without ego, and for the community and Land.

-remember that plant ancestors and oral teachings have different time scales

-misuse of plant knowledge is real and has consequences that may not be immediate.

-respect the medicines, and don't overharvest. Think about WHY you are harvesting, are you taking away from people who need these medicines for ceremony and cultural practices?

-If you want to share this knowledge and you are not from that community, ask yourself, why are you sharing it, whose voice are you taking away?

Other Resources and Links:

- <http://www.buffalorocktipicamp.com>

check out their fish rescue program, seasonal flooding, & weed pulling.

- iNaturalist (app)

- “The Cree Healer and his Medicine Bundle” by David E. Young, Robert Athlyi Rogers, and Russell Willier (book)

- North American Ethnobotanical Database: <http://naeb.brit.org>

- “Nitsitapiisinni: Story of the Blackfoot People” (book)

- Stories and Spaces <https://galileo.org/kainai/>

-Reader Rock Garden, in Calgary Alberta

<https://www.calgary.ca/parks/reader-rock-garden.html>

And learn about the Native and Non-Native species in your area.

Want more Indigenous Science Resources? Check out [Relational Science Circle](#).

Want to learn more about Indigenous Science, Indigenous Science/Mathematics Teacher PD sessions, or have an idea for a guest or topic for the Ancestral Science Podcast, email relational.science@gmail.com

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