

Digging, Sowing, Tending, Harvesting (Making War-Fair)

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Guerrilla gardeners, if we take them at their word, are fighting a war. Allied with social justice activists, they aim to counter state violence with a total mutation of terms. This war is not waged in brute force; there are no civilian casualties and no infrastructure is destroyed. Rather, these gentle guerrillas operate in the name of public space, in the name of ecology, and their worst offence is tending otherwise forsaken properties without permission. Why claim this activity as a form of militant resistance? As a first step towards a more fulsome evaluation of the contributions of urban gardening to anticapitalist, social justice movements, the present writing looks to the historical origins of military metaphors for gardening, interrogates the professed aspirations of these appropriations, and attempts to square this heritage with the current popularity of one of guerrilla gardening's most popular weapons, the seed bomb.

In *The Three Ecologies* (2000), Félix Guattari argues that environmental crises are necessarily related to social and political systems on multiple scales (23). Guattari's three ecologies are social (political, economic); mental (symbolic, subjective); and environmental. In this formulation, ecology is not restricted to environment or 'nature' in its popular romantic sense, but is equally attentive to the dynamics of the human social world. Understood in this way, the proliferation all things 'green,' 'eco-friendly' consumption-cum-environmental-activism, and financial instruments such as the 'cap-and-trade' of carbon emissions do not contribute to substantial, long-term ecological improvements. If the three ecologies are truly linked, or 'transversally' related, the theory and practice of ecology needs to become increasingly politicized, and these politics need to be of a specific anticapitalist order. With urban gardening as a case study, it will be argued here that the witty, critical, and loving employment of military metaphor can both invalidate state monopoly on the use of force *and* recast the terms of struggle in favour of radical democratic politics.

Figure 1. *Plant the Piece* (2004-present), Three Miles/Christopher Humes and Noah Scalin.
Photo courtesy of Christopher Humes.

The Green Guerillas: "Bringing the War Home"

To the United States Air Force and the Republic of Vietnam army, the dense jungle surrounding the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and Cambodia was impenetrable, chaotic, and dangerous. In an attempt to get a handle on this unruly situation, they had to strip the trees naked with a devastating array of chemical defoliants. Conversely, to North Vietnamese troops and Vietcong, the trail was a highly organized and logical transportation network that enabled the scale and force of their military resistance. Likewise, Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement troops relied on the dense vegetation of the Sierra Maestra mountains to protect their elaborate camp during the lead-up to the Cuban Revolution.

Perhaps the special importance of vegetation in these recent revolutionary struggles can help to explain why, in the early 1970s, a group of Lower East Side community gardeners began calling themselves the Green Guerillas.¹ Besides prefiguring the guerrilla gardening movement proper, the appropriation of this militaristic term made explicit the political aspirations of this particular group. Simultaneously, it signalled the transformation of urban gardening from a state-sponsored activity (as with the "war gardens" of WWI and the "victory gardens" of WWII) into a form of grass-roots politics. With a word, the gardeners suggested that their activities be considered in the same political sphere as those of militant anti-imperialists. They stated a desire to not only challenge state violence but to do it on their own terms, which is to say, by digging, sowing, tending, and harvesting.

The Green Guerillas were one group of adherents to a rapidly-spreading practice of community gardening across the United States, Canada, and certain Western European countries. Building on the American tradition of urban allotment gardening established during the first and second World Wars and the Great Depression, as well as making use of the imported agricultural skills of new immigrants, the community gardening movement that began in the 1970s was a specific response to national trends of disinvestment, property abandonment, and municipal bankruptcy that were at their most acute in New York City.

The appropriation of the term *guerrilla* to describe an activity that seems at first blush to have very little in common with any form of militarism indicates a refreshing playfulness and particular political aspirations. The radical politics of urban gardening, at least in the Western cultural tradition, are inherited from the Diggers, a group of seventeenth century British communalist anarchists. The guerrilla appropriation in particular is a self-consciously political act that emphasizes the systemic violence of private property—insists, in fact, that it is a kind of war in which we are forced to defend ourselves. Taking 'little warriors' as a namesake, the gardeners signalled their sympathies towards anti-imperialist struggles and their desire to identify with them in solidarity.² Like all other appropriations, this is also a political tactic that risks doing a disservice to its source intentions. Cynthia Young describes this as a risk of reproducing the "homogenizing tendency of Western imperialism and colonialism" (2006, 12). In identifying their activities with those of militant radicals, largely in the Global South, the Green Guerillas not only stated allegiance but, to a certain extent, laid claim to their politics. This is a consequence that merits more full attention than I can give it here.³

In an effort to contextualize this formative act of appropriation, we must consider the peculiar experience of war for American civilians, people who are implicated by citizenship in wars they do not necessarily experience or support directly. Can dissenting Americans contest their country's military aggression by engaging in a kind of guerrilla war against their own neoliberal state? What

is the appropriate form of force to take down such a beast? Urban gardening may offer a compelling response, especially in relation to projects that re-conceptualize the everyday experience of war for Americans. Artist and writer Martha Rosler's phrase "bringing the war home," and the project from which it comes, suggests that the realities of American military ventures overseas are more closely connected to the domestic quotidian than is immediately evident. Rosler's *Bringing the War Home* (1967-72; 2004) consists of two separate photomontage series that superimpose news images from the Vietnam and Iraq wars onto highly designed interiors of middle-class American homes, as if the soldiers and bloodied civilians were actually sitting in leather chairs or rushing through the kitchen. The strength of these images is in their insistence that the war is not a distant reality, but is always-already at home.

The conceptual force of Rosler's images finds reinforcement in Beatriz Colomina's *Domesticity at War* (2007), in which she details the reappointment of military technologies for civilian domestic use during and after WWII. Notably, Colomina draws attention to chemical weapons turned into home garden insecticides and herbicides, the invocation of militaristic language to describe their use, and the introduction of ration-supplementing and patriotism-inducing allotment gardens in the form of war gardens and victory gardens. Urban gardening itself, Colomina shows, has a profound debt to the extension of militarization to the home front. In this light, *Bringing the War Home* is simply the realization that the home front itself is a state of perpetual warfare, manifested in the most everyday of landscapes and experiences. From that point forward, the ethical conundrum lies in deciding how to engage in an activism on the home front that both offsets and counters state violence, which could be aptly termed making *war-fair*.⁴ The response of the Green Guerillas, I suggest, is to garden.

The initial appropriation of militaristic terminology by the Green Guerillas has continued to inspire the development of new forms of urban gardening. Currently, there is a widespread enthusiasm for what has become known as guerrilla gardening. Richard Reynolds, one of the movement's most outspoken enthusiasts, defines the practice simply as "the illicit cultivation of someone else's land" (2008). Despite the practice's clear reference to radical politics, as outlined above by the Green Guerillas' appropriation of the same label, it is important to remember that this reference does not guarantee contribution to the practice of radical ecology. We will shortly return to a more detailed examination of the politics of contemporary guerrilla gardening, but will benefit from first fleshing out the concept of radical ecological praxis.

Radical Ecology and Values

The science of ecology is fundamentally concerned with relationships. For Guattari, these relationships occur across multiple scales simultaneously, from the emotive micro-environments of individual organisms, right up to human politics on a global scale. He argues, "an authentic political, social, and cultural revolution... must not be exclusively concerned with visible relations of force on a grand scale, but will also take into account molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire" (2000, 20). Mainstream environmentalism, at the time of Guattari's writing as in ours, has a tendency to focus only on the environmental aspects of ecologies, prioritizing, for example, notions such as wilderness, habitat conservation, or biodiversity. Guattari insists that radical ecological praxis must develop transversally across the *three* ecologies: mental, social, and environmental.

In addition to the pursuit of strictly environmental projects, Guattari's radical ecological praxis must take capitalist processes of valuation to task. Guattari (echoing Gregory Bateson, among others)

takes issue with the tendency of capitalist processes of valuation to “[flatten] all other forms of value” (Guattari 2000, 43). While values based on, for instance, ethics, pleasure, or social justice can have enormous importance for individual people and communities, under capitalism these values are marginalized for the sake of purely economic profit. In terms that are still relevant two decades past the date of his writing, Guattari characterizes the effects of this flattening as the “dramatic dead ends” of capital (20–23). In this bleak condition, “it is not only species that are becoming extinct but also the words, phrases, and gestures of human solidarity” (29).

In contrast, an ability to both take stock of and produce value on many different scales is crucial to radical ecological praxis. For Guattari, these projects of valuation are driven by social and aesthetic profitability, which are linked to the micro-politics of creativity and desire. An “ecology of resingularization,” Guattari argues, would make it possible to envision and cultivate forms of desire and systems of value not subservient to capital (42). Resingularization is characterized as an unpredictable radical opening of the individual and social self, a cultivation of particularity and alterity elsewhere described by Gilles Deleuze and Guattari as *becoming*. This process requires sufficient mental space to reconceptualize relations—the kind of space created, for example, when metaphors transfer meaning from one place to another, providing new sensory information through unexpected configurations.

Our metaphors, anchored in material experiences and operating dialectically with them, are one way we make sense of our world. This complicated and generous understanding of metaphor is enriched by David Harvey’s arguments regarding metaphor and social change. Harvey places special emphasis on the importance of carefully-wrought metaphors in determining the politics of particular projects of valuation (1996, 174). He argues that ecological values, far from inhering in nature, are expressive of ideologies. For example, ecological notions of “equilibrium, plant succession, and climax vegetation” tell us “as much about the human search for permanence and security as the quest for an accurate and neutral description or theorization of ecological processes” (163).

Harvey offers the following provocation: perhaps we should inspect arguments in the environmental-ecological debate, and the metaphors they employ, “not for what they have to say about environment or nature but for what they say about political-economic organization” (176). In other words, any process of valuation developed in the service of environmental goals is equally a political project, reflecting and affecting particular human ideologies. If applied to our “green” guerrillas, what results would this line of inquiry yield?

Genealogy of the Seed Bomb

Seed bombs seem to be everywhere these days. In the spring of 2009, they were the centre of an elaborate marketing campaign for the cosmetics company Lush, through its “Seed the Nation” contest. In 2008–2009, seed bombs were featured in a major exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), *Actions: What You Can Do With the City*, and in an article in the Los-Angeles based *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. Seed-bomb-making workshops were part of the CCA exhibition,⁵ the Baltimore conference *The City From Below*, and Montreal’s *Festival of Anarchy*. Recent bomb-based artists’ projects by The National Bitter Melon Council, Three Miles (Noah Scalin and Christopher Humes), and Kathryn Miller have been featured in exhibitions and public performances. Digging into the history of this peculiar tool will allow a closer examination of the politics of metaphor.

In New York City in the 1970s, if you lived in the Lower East Side or Harlem or the Bronx, living conditions had deteriorated to the point where it was pretty much impossible to sit back and



Figure 2. *Protest Rocket Launcher* (2005), N55. Photo courtesy of Ion Sørvin.

do nothing about it. Responding to massive disinvestment, building deterioration, demolition, and landlord arson that left many lots empty and accumulating rubble, residents across the city began to establish gardens (Staheli and Mitchell 2008, 98). The community gardening movement that emerged at this time was influenced both by the history of urban gardening in the United States—particularly the victory gardens campaign of WWII—and the imported skills and habits of new immigrants (Lawson 2005; von Hassel 2002; Carlsson 2008, 83; Woelfle-Erskine 2002).

Malve von Hassel describes community gardens as “a kind of canary indicating economic and political fluctuations in the country” (2002, 36). Like the victory gardens campaign, and other nationwide gardening programs that came before it, the community gardening movement emerged in response to prevailing economic and political conditions that created both a need for productive greenspace and the derelict land upon which it could be established (Lawson 2005; von Hassel 2002; Carlsson 2008, 83). Community gardens were distinct from previous state-sponsored, urban gardening initiatives largely due to their grassroots character; while earlier campaigns had been sponsored by either the state or charity organizations, the new community gardens relied on the time, labour, and skills of residents (Lawson 2005, 207; von Hassel 2002, 32).

The majority of the New York City gardens were established on land appropriated by the city once it had been abandoned by its original owners and had fallen into tax arrears. Not having the funds to maintain the 11,000 lots transferred to its ownership during the fiscal crisis, the city allowed many buildings to deteriorate and then demolished them (Staheli and Mitchell 2008, 98). A few landlords, put off by the prospect of gardens being established on their property, began to put up fences (Tracey 2007, 34). For the gardeners, the erecting of fences signalled a new, openly

antagonistic phase of the deteriorating relationship between landowners and themselves. Property owners, be they private or state, could no longer be seen as simply dismissive of the needs of residents but in active opposition to them, and the fences preventing them from gardening became a potent symbol of this antagonism. This first clear act of defence was read as a declaration of war and, in response, the gardeners needed a weapon. Enter the "seed green-aid," as engineered by the Green Guerillas.⁶

In 1973, the Green Guerrillas published a fact sheet detailing two different recipes for seed green-aids/grenades. The instructions were simple: fill either old glass Christmas baubles or balloons with time-release fertilizer, peat moss crumbs, and seeds, and lob them over the offending fences. A scanned copy of the original typewritten recipe is easy enough to find these days, on the internet and in at least one print publication (Tracey 2007, 94). von Hassel sees seed bombs as primarily symbolic, explaining that they were

... tossed over fences into vacant lots to start a literal grassroots revolution on 'acres of opportunity', as they were called by one Green Guerilla member. It is a strategy still used on occasion, more for its powerfully symbolic content than for the actual chance of success; seeds do not do well in rubble and debris. Since the 1970s undoubtedly many of these balloons, actual and conceptual, landed on stony ground (von Hassel 2002, 22).

In fact, the roots of the seed bomb go back much further than the Green Guerillas, and the original recipe is designed specifically to help seeds germinate and thrive in adverse conditions. In the 1940s, Masanobu Fukuoka began to direct-sow seeds enveloped in clay pellets as part of his organic farming methodology, known to permaculturalists today as the Fukuoka Method. Fukuoka's use of clay-coated seeds was a revival of the ancient Japanese *tsuchi-dango*, or earth dumpling. Fukuoka's pellets, like the original *tsuchi-dango*, are ingeniously designed balls of clay, organic matter such as compost or manure, and seeds.⁷ If, as von Hassel rightly claims, today's seed bombs are falling on stony ground, it's less because of a technical problem than a strategic or social one.

For Fukuoka, seed bombs were primarily a labour-saving agricultural technology that helped optimize seed sowing. Returning to Guattari's description of the three ecologies, we can see how the origins of seed bombs correspond to an overtly environmental goal. In such an incarnation, the technology could serve a social function in terms of the conditions of agricultural labour and the resulting production process. For the Green Guerillas, the seed bombs were about taking the offensive of private property seriously. An act of retaliation tailored to the offending property owners, the seed bombs were powerful because they illustrated persistence visually, as a spreading unstoppable force of green. The real genius of the Green Guerilla appropriation of the technology doesn't lie there, but in the potency of their chosen metaphor.

It is the muddled ontological status of seed bombs—plant/tool/weapon, nice/nasty—that makes them such a beguiling metaphor. Of course, calling un-warlike things warlike is nothing new. We regularly *defend positions*, *deploy strategies*, *battle illness*, *shoot down arguments*, and so on. When it comes to gardening, this metaphorical transfer is nonetheless refreshing, its contrast bright and strong. It is productive because it foregrounds and activates the politics of a practice that might otherwise remain benign. Besides the complicated question of how such metaphors may affect our willingness to accept war as an acceptable solution to all kinds of conflict, there is something else at stake in these transfers of meaning.⁸



Figure 3. Slow Food Nation Victory Garden, San Francisco (2008), Future Farmers/Amy Franceschini. Photo courtesy of Amy Franceschini.

It is perhaps a little too easy, however, to turn the symbolic potency of seed bombs into a kind of cultural capital that smacks of revolutionary cachet without having any meaningful connection to resistance movements. The moment of the seed bomb's incorporation in the Lush Cosmetics ad campaign is an apt example of what happens to a metaphor when it is crafted lovingly and then abandoned in ideological wastelands; in that case, seed bombs are deployed in the service of corporate profits—no matter that they are called weapons. If, instead, we follow Guattari in the insistence that political action must be carried out across the three ecological registers, and at multiple scales, perhaps these metaphors can be kept active or even adapted to more nuanced and compelling forms. Military metaphors, if and when they are crafted and placed with a sufficient level of care, wit, and heart, can actually foreground the violence and oppressive force of war in a disruptively critical manner, opening up new fields of action.

The Green Guerillas, in an admirable if somewhat awkward attempt at this kind of *détournement*, chose the appellation seed "green-aids." This appropriation and adaptation flirts with militancy while forcing a mutation, perhaps even a cultivation, in meaning and intent. In another instance, *Plant the Piece* by Three Miles (Christopher Humes and Noah Scalin; 2004-present) makes the ontological shiftiness of the seed bomb explicit with an overtly pacifist message (figure 1).

Their seed bombs take the form of revolvers, which when sprouting recall the iconic confrontation of a gun barrel and a cut flower. Danish collective N55 takes another approach to exploring the offensive potentials of seed bombs with their *Protest Rocket Launcher* (2005), which launches capsules of Heath Bunting's "superweed" seeds, designed to cross-pollinate and evolve gradually into a strain of plants resistant to widely used chemical herbicides such as Roundup® (figure 2). The N55/Bunting collaboration directly confronts the attack on functional biodiversity mounted by Monsanto et al, while playing on the public's general fussiness about weeds.⁹

Richard Reynolds, Britain's self-proclaimed poster boy for the guerrilla gardening movement, is a champion of the seed bomb. Reynolds recently published *On Guerrilla Gardening: A Manual for Gardening Without Boundaries* (2008), a flashy volume whose great strength is in the admirable catalogue of contemporary guerrilla gardening practices on a global scale, as well as a rare overview of its prehistory and history. The text of *On Guerrilla Gardening* is rich with military references: "assaults," "offensives," "attacks," "arsenals," and so on. While Reynolds professes allegiance to a certain anti-authoritarianism, and is clearly interested in challenging exclusive private property relations, he is equally drawn to the fact that gardening is not inherently ideological. In public appearances, Reynolds is chiefly concerned with encouraging people to get involved, which means playing down guerrilla gardening's more obviously oppositional aspects. At other moments, as in his published historical account, Reynolds insists on the subversive nature of the practice by appealing to its activist history. This appeal can be misleading. While guerrilla invasions of privately owned land *could* effectively claim space in the name of a public, stating and performing anarchic and communalist commitments, they could equally express bourgeois dissatisfaction with the aesthetic qualities of one's neighbourhood and cooperate with, if not contribute to, gentrification processes. This non-ideological ambivalence is arguably part of what makes gardening in general such a widespread pastime. Using this rhetoric certainly doesn't deprive guerrilla gardening of its capacities to contribute to particular political projects. It *does* confuse matters somewhat, in that sprucing up a barren road median can pass for the effective creation of democratic space, regardless of how this action is implicated in other socio-economic conditions in the neighbouring area.

Gardening comes with a built-in set of metaphors referencing care, growth, and health ('cultivating' peace, 'planting seeds' of hope, and so on). To these, the slogans of state-sponsored WWI and WWII gardens added "our food is fighting"; "sow the seeds of victory"; "dig on for victory"; "every garden a munitions plant," and so on.¹⁰ Guerrilla gardening's use of metaphor spins this nationalism, defence strategy, and state aggression to conceptualize a grassroots political movement. These metaphorical innovations, according to Guattari's analysis, are generative of radical ecological potential. The great disappointment with seed bombs lies in the fact that the metaphor is so active—explosive, even—that people seem to think it can be left alone to do its work. This may explain their popularity with artists, who frequently garner much of their particular powers through metaphorical transfer. If the restriction of seed bombs to the level of metaphor can account for their relative infertility where the furthering of anticapitalist politics is concerned, it may be possible to reinvigorate them still through connections to other forms of ecological activity. In order to really consider the subversive effectiveness of guerrilla gardening and urban gardening more generally, we would need to ask how well they are able to access all three registers of ecological praxis.

Making War-Fair: Gardens for a Postcapitalist World

At best, gardening-as-politics allows dissenting citizens *not* subjected to the overt daily violence of warfare to build a rich social movement using skills that enable economic autonomy and the creation of new systems of valuation, while taking advantage of the resources at hand. An account of the contributions of urban gardening to social justice and anticapitalist activism would be an essential follow-up to the historical and theoretical analysis developed in the present writing. While we cannot do justice to such an examination here, it may be possible to produce a sketch according to projects which highlight three important themes in such activism: the "right to the city"; environmental justice and food security; and the fostering of alternative processes of valuation pertaining to labour and resources.¹¹

As alternative processes of valuation have been central to our arguments regarding radical ecology, we should note that many gardening initiatives contribute to them in some way. For instance, urban gardening networks encourage resource and skill sharing; recycling of materials, organic wastes, and excavated soil; seed saving; food donations; relationships with soup kitchens; and appropriations of private property. Combining social justice concerns, innovative approaches to land use, and conscientious ecological interventions, these initiatives provide an important model for small-scale food production in cities that is profoundly threatening to large-scale industrialized farming. The following examples flesh out such contributions further.

Right to the City: Property Relations & the Creation of Publics

David Harvey, in a recent essay published in the *New Left Review*, proclaims that "the right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey 2008, 23). Over the past thirty years, the increasing neoliberalization of the global economy has affected the lives of city-dwellers in general, as our cities "increasingly consist of fortified fragments, gated communities and privatized public spaces kept under constant surveillance" (32). As such, the right to the city has a lot to do with the creation of new relations of labour and property—new publics—that do not operate according to the capitalist model. As previously discussed, most of the gardens established in New York City in the 1970s occupied fallow land owned by the city. These community gardeners literally seized and then defended property in order to establish new publics. In their book, *The People's Property?*, Lynn Staeheli and Don Mitchell describe community gardens as "*publicized* property that fosters a certain kind of community, and thus has its own effects on how the public is structured and who is included in it" (2008, 95).

Participation Park, a community gardening and art project in Baltimore, is an example of a contemporary initiative that takes into account the complex politics of property rights as they relate to the establishment of functional publics. Initiated by the Baltimore Development Cooperative (Scott Berzofsky, Dane Nester, and Nick Wisniewski) in 2007, Participation Park is located in East Baltimore. The garden, now entering its fourth season, is maintained wholly by volunteer labour and focuses on cultivating produce that can serve as a nutritious resource for its neighbours. Berzofsky explains the group's position with respect to property: "...we've decided against going the conventional route for gaining land security, which would be to either buy it or put it into a community land trust... Both of these approaches reinforce the dominant relations of private property ownership that we want to question. So, instead we're explicitly squatting as a form

of direct action" (Berzofsky 2008). Here, the struggle for the creation of a public is stressed above and beyond other concerns; even though it may jeopardize the long-term stability of Participation Park, the gardeners take the distribution of the right to the city as a political goal of the utmost importance.

Edible Gardens: Environmental Justice & Food Security

For Jason Corburn, "contextual intelligence," or intimate local knowledge, is an asset in the struggle of city residents to meet their needs through environmental health justice projects. As highlighted by Corburn in his book *Street Science* (2005), such projects aim to identify and remediate the uneven health effects of industrialization and postindustrialization on poor urban communities.

An example of this type of project is the Watchperson Project's participation in a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study on risk exposures to environmental pollution in the Williamsburg-Greenpoint neighbourhood in Brooklyn. The Watchperson Project helped identify the subsistence fishing of many Puerto Rican and Dominican families as a significant source of exposure to heavy metals and other toxins. Along with EPA officials, the Watchperson Project created and conducted a survey that exposed the full extent of fishing in the East River, while analysis of fish species commonly consumed showed significant levels of contamination. As the EPA struggled to include this data in their larger risk assessment of neighbourhood toxin exposures, the Watchperson Project initiated an educational campaign and a community garden. The garden provided a supplemental source of food for the residents, reinforcing diets heavily reliant on contaminated fish.

The Watchperson Project garden illustrates the role of urban gardening and food security in environmental justice projects. Through the garden's relationship to an education program, the gradual re-evaluation of a necessary cultural habit (fishing), and its couching within a wider analysis of uneven resource—and waste—distribution, it begins to offer real promise as a site for radical change. While the next step in this project is to go 'upstream'—holding the producers of pollution responsible for long-term management of remediation projects—immediate grassroots activity such as the Watchperson Project garden can establish robust and long-term alternative infrastructures that can support their communities regardless of state and industry reform.

Alternative Processes of Valuation: Labour and Resources

Projects of valuation are taken up in even more explicit ways through gardening initiatives that experiment with labour and resources. Nance Klehm, a self-described "radical ecologist, designer, urban forager, grower and teacher" based in Chicago, runs a living seed archive that involves a network of people growing crops from 'loaned' seed, saving the next season's seeds, and returning a quantity to the archive for further distribution. Unlike the headline-making Svalbard Global Seed Vault opened early 2008 in Norway, the fact that "seeds are alive" is central to Klehm's public seed archive.¹² Seeds are recognized as a resource optimized through use, not conservation. The practice values the ecological benefits of a diverse seed stock that is able to resist disease in ways genetically identical monocrops cannot—not to mention the pleasures of unique tastes and shapes resulting from many generations of open-air pollination.

Since the labour of community and guerrilla gardeners is unwaged—not productive of capital—it is potentially generative of other types of value. In his catalogue of radical urban practices that

"invent the future today," Chris Carlsson argues that the freely-given labour that keeps community gardens planted, watered, and weeded "fundamentally alters the subjective experience of work" because it is defined by the satisfaction of the labour itself, the relationships it creates, and the unmediated and localized use of its products, rather than by "coercion, by autocratic management and obedience, by the reward of wages" (2008, 95). Qualitatively valuing experience and utility rather than profit, Carlsson's freely-given labour is distinguished from labour under capital. As such, perhaps the garden creates a kind of rehearsal ground for what labour might look like when not subservient to capital. Additionally, food gardens yield objects for consumption that are not destined for the market, but are valued in other ways (e.g. nutritive value, tastiness, low fuel cost, and so on).

A project with these intentions is *Victory Gardens 2010+*, initiated by Amy Franceschini and the Future Farmers in San Francisco. The project was initially inspired by the prolific wartime production gardens of the same name, in which American civilians worked twenty million gardens, supplying 41% of the national food supply (Franceschini and Ulke, 2008). *Victory Gardens 2010+* started as a "pilot project funded by the city of San Francisco that supports the transition of backyard, front yard, window boxes, rooftops and unused land into food production areas," and eventually included the establishment of a massive multi-organization garden in front of the San Francisco City Hall (Franceschini and Ulke 2008; figure 3). But Franceschini, an artist, founded the updated victory gardens in the interests of food security rather than national defence. Aspiring to the politics of "reclamation and redefining an idea or program," Franceschini redefines *victory* as "building an alternative to the American industrial food system which we view as injurious to ourselves and to the planet" (Franceschini and Ulke, 2008).

Conclusion

The previous examples indicate how gardening initiatives can be incorporated into social justice projects in order to further anticapitalist goals. Exceeding the framework of *The Three Ecologies*, the arguments developed here show that more strategic employment of metaphor would further enhance these practices' contributions to radical ecological praxis. Guattari emphasizes resingularization as a force to confront capital, and the fruitful disruptiveness of metaphor can contribute greatly in this regard. The power of specially crafted metaphors to rearrange horizons, commitments, and desires cannot be underestimated, making their judicious use critical to projects of anticapitalist valuation. *Victory Gardens 2010+* is an exemplary case of an initiative that manages to work transversally across the micro-politics of metaphor, desire, and pleasure; city-scale negotiations of public space; and consumptive patterns with global economic implications.

The critical examination presented here emerges, first of all, from a confusion of terms. The Green Guerillas insisted that urban gardening was a form of militant struggle, but they equally showed that resistance can be pleasurable and environmentally profitable. Because similar appropriations continue to characterize contemporary guerrilla gardening, they must be evaluated for their ability to catalyze processes of resingularization that actually challenge capitalist valuation. At their best, these metaphors insist on a mutation of militarism that has the potential to change how activists conceptualize their resistance. If metaphors truly are key components of ecological praxis, they must be fostered as forces that can change the prevailing conditions of struggle—in the hopes of making war-fair.

Notes

1. Thanks are due to Quinn Slobodian for helping to draw out these historical connections.
2. *Guerrilla* is the Spanish diminutive for *Guerra* or war.
3. This calls for a separate but related critique of the 'guerrilla' appropriation. While making claim to radical leftist politics, this appropriation doesn't forge practical alliances across national borders (or race and class divisions within the United States). This type of allegiance would no doubt be one way for gardening to develop the scope of its radical politics. Cynthia Young defines radical as having "profound counter-hegemonic effects in the social world" (2006, 11).
4. A term appropriated from the Italian Autonomists, c.1960s.
5. For purposes of full disclosure, this workshop was led by the author at the artist-run centre DARE-DARE.
6. Donald Loggins, *Green Guerrilla*, notes that "the seed grenade was renamed seed green-aid after 9/11" (personal correspondence, February 2010).
7. The pellets offer several benefits for arid or otherwise hostile growing environments. The dried hardened clay allows for digless sowing, stops the seeds from blowing away in the wind, and protects them from birds and other munching predators (Fukuoka 1985, ii). Out in the elements, the seeds will be protected until optimal germinating conditions arrive. Once sufficiently moistened, the clay softens, admits oxygen and water, and the seeds begin to germinate. The spouting seeds develop roots that further loosen the clay. The molecular composition of clay is ideal for assisting nutrient transfer from the organic matter to the new roots, thus sustaining the plants through their most fragile stage of development. As long as the plant is a hardy one and its roots have got somewhere to go once they get too big for the clay ball, the seed bomb has succeeded in establishing the plant.
8. For more on the implications of the use of military metaphor, readers should consult Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, and Schaffner and Wenden, 1995.
9. As any urban ecologist worth her salt will tell you, a weed is just a subjective interpretation of a plant that's growing somewhere that it wasn't wanted. Often, "weeds," such as mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), play important ecological functions, altering the chemical composition of the soil, making it more amenable to other vegetation. See the "Manuals" section of N55's website for more information regarding this and other projects (<http://www.n55.dk>).
10. Poster slogans from the victory gardens campaign.
11. Amy Franceschini and Daniel Tucker's forthcoming volume, *Farm Together Now* (2010), promises to include a much more thorough catalogue of urban gardening practices, along with accompanying critical dialogue.
12. See the "Times Topics" section of *The New York Times* online for a comprehensive list of news coverage relating to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. More information about Klehm's seed archive can be found on her website: <http://spontaneousvegetation.net>. Non-profit volunteer organizations in the United States (Seed Savers) and Canada (Seeds of Diversity) have been pursuing similar projects on a larger scale for multiple decades.

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