



For Immediate Release: August 15, 2023

Contact: Tana Elias, Marketing & Digital Services Manager, Madison Public Library,
608-266-4953, telias@madisonpubliclibrary.org

Get Rooted in Nature this September with the Naturalist-in-Residence Program at Madison Public Library

MADISON, WI – Madison Public Library’s popular Naturalist-in-Residence program returns for its second year this September! In partnership with Madison Parks, nature-based programs for all ages will take place in libraries, parks and natural areas across the city of Madison from September 1-30, 2023.

“We’re so thrilled to bring back the Library Naturalist-in-Residence project this year,” said Community Engagement Librarian Kristina Gómez, who developed the program and has helped facilitate it each year. “This unique residency centers environmental learning while building and deepening individual and community connection to nature.”

Madison-based doula, writer, agriculturist and mixed media artist, Qwantese Winters, is the 2023 Naturalist-in-Residence. Her work is centered around inspiring black folks to connect with the land, and heal from land-based trauma through the use of joyful engagement with nature, and land practices. Winters may be a familiar face to some, as she appears regularly on PBS Wisconsin’s *Let’s Grow Stuff* program to help folks learn to grow their own vegetables and herbs and provide helpful tips for beginning gardeners.

“Qwantese brings a wealth of expertise and lived experience to the project; along with a joyful and wonder-filled approach to re-educating and re-imagining our connections to nature in culturally relevant ways,” said Gomez. “Attendees of Qwantese’s programs will have fun while learning with hands-on activities, having space to reflect and reconnect, and growing together in community.”

This year’s theme is **Rooted in Nature**, and Winters chose it because she said it resonated with her on many different levels.

“Throughout my life, I confronted stereotypes that discouraged me from embracing nature and partaking in outdoor activities. These activities were often labeled as ‘white,’ and were seemingly in conflict with my identity as a black person. Yet, amidst these challenges, my

connection with nature remained undeniable,” said Winters. “I have chosen the theme Rooted in Nature for the residency as a way to extend a heartfelt invitation to all those who have felt detached from the land or who have lost their wonder when engaging with nature. This call gently urges each person to come and be rooted—to reconnect with the land, to embrace their heritage, and to rediscover the awe-inspiring wonder that resides within each of us when we are one with nature.”

The Rooted in Nature theme is brought to life visually by artist Alina Puente, who created limited edition posters in English, Spanish and Hmong that can be picked up in any Madison Public Library location, including the Dream Bus, beginning on September 1. Puente is an Afro-Latina immigrant, who is known for her use of bold hues and textures in her visual art. Her work is influenced by Abstract Expressionism - in particular, the work of artists like Cándido Bidó, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Mark Rothko.

More than a dozen events are planned throughout the month of September.

Upcoming Events:

- September 1: Meet the Naturalist, 6-7pm | Troy Farm
- September 2: Infusion Workshop: Rosemary and Rose Petal Hair Rinse, 2-3PM | Central Library
- September 8: Nature Writing & Meditative Walk, 6-7PM | Edna Taylor Conservation Park [802 Femrite Dr.]
- September 9: Weeds and their Bounty, 1-2:30PM | Meadowridge Library
- September 15: Nature Writing & Meditative Walk, 6-7PM | Heritage Prairie [5414 Queensbridge Rd]
- September 16: Infusion Workshop: Digestive Bitter, 2-3PM | Meadowridge Library
- September 22: Foraged Friends, 6-7:30PM | Lakeview Library
- September 23: Nature Study Workshop, 2-3PM | Sequoya Library
- September 29: Infusion Workshop: Herbal Tea Blend, 2-3PM | Alicia Ashman Library
- September 30: Nature Study Workshop, 2-3PM | Goodman South Madison Library

Registration is required for most events, and capacity will be limited for some activities.

Registration opens two weeks prior to each event.

Register for programs, browse Naturalist-in-Residence book lists, and explore more ways to get involved online at madpl.org/naturalist.

The Naturalist-in-Residence program is hosted in collaboration with the City of Madison Parks department and is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Madison Public Library.

About the Naturalist

Qwantese Dourese Winters

Qwantese Dourese Winters is a doula, writer, agriculturist, and mixed media artist based in Madison, Wisconsin. Her work is centered around inspiring black folks to connect with the land, and heal from land-based trauma through the use of joyful engagement with nature, and land practices. With a deep appreciation for food sovereignty, and agriculture Qwantese incorporates these elements into her doula practice, earning her the moniker The Food Doula. From empowering mothers to connect with the land through nourishing foodways, teaching adults how to grow their own food on PBS Wisconsin's show *Let's Grow Stuff*, or showing children how to make the perfect mud pie, her diverse skill set and unique approach aims to create a positive impact in the Madison area and beyond. Qwantese believes that nature and its bounty are for everyone to enjoy and aims to give marginalized people the tools to dissolve years of exclusion, and barriers to the outdoors in order to get outside and fall in love with nature just as she did.

About Madison Public Library

Madison Public Library's tradition of promoting education, literacy and community involvement has enriched the City of Madison for more than 145 years. Visit the library online at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org, [madisonpubliclibrary](https://www.facebook.com/madisonpubliclibrary) on Facebook, [@madisonlibrary](https://twitter.com/madisonlibrary) on Twitter, or [@madisonpubliclibrary](https://www.instagram.com/madisonpubliclibrary) on Instagram.