



# Denise Cusack, BA, PDC



## Using Mutual Aid to Create Seed Systems to Grow Food and Medicine

Explore the intersection of food justice and health equity in this presentation. Discover how mutual aid systems empower communities to establish accessible seed networks, fostering communal growth and resource redistribution to cultivate gardens. Hear how one national seed grant program, active since 2017, works to distribute food and medicine seeds assisting communities in growing local gardens. The talk delves into the program's innovative approach, spotlighting community-based mutual aid models that prioritize collaborative networks over financial systems, ensuring community empowerment. Uncover the transformative power of local seed systems in preserving culturally relevant and vital uncommon seeds. Explore how these initiatives contribute to reclaiming food and medicine, emphasizing the integral connection between community, health, and sustainable agriculture.

**Speaker Bio: Denise Cusack, BA Columbia College, Permaculture and Advanced Social Systems Design Certificate (PDC) - Permaculture Women's Guild, Certified Aromatherapist - Aromahead Institute, Seed Seva Mentorship, Teaching in Nature's Classroom Certificate, and many more.**

Denise is a clinical herbalist, certified aromatherapist, and permaculture & advanced social systems designer (PDC) and has over two decades of expertise in the natural health and wellness realm. A dedicated advocate for sustainability, community development, and plant conservation, Denise channels her passion into diverse volunteer programs.

Denise currently serves as Executive Director of [Herbalists Without Borders](#). Since 2017, she has volunteered as the [HWB US Seed Grant Coordinator](#), managing a national seed program, cultivating medicinal, food, and native plant seeds for the network, providing seeds and technical support. From her farm, [Wholly Rooted Permaculture Education & Regenerative Herb Farm](#), Denise oversees the [HWB US Donation Distribution Network](#), supplying free clinics and community outreach programs. In her free time, Denise tends to hundreds of medicinal herbs, spends time with her family, bakes bread, explores various artistic mediums, and immerses herself in the garden, embodying her commitment to regenerative practices.