

Maria Alice de Rezende  
Muscaris sp. (grape hyacinth) with two bees  
2019

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# OAK SPRING: SEEDING ARTISTS

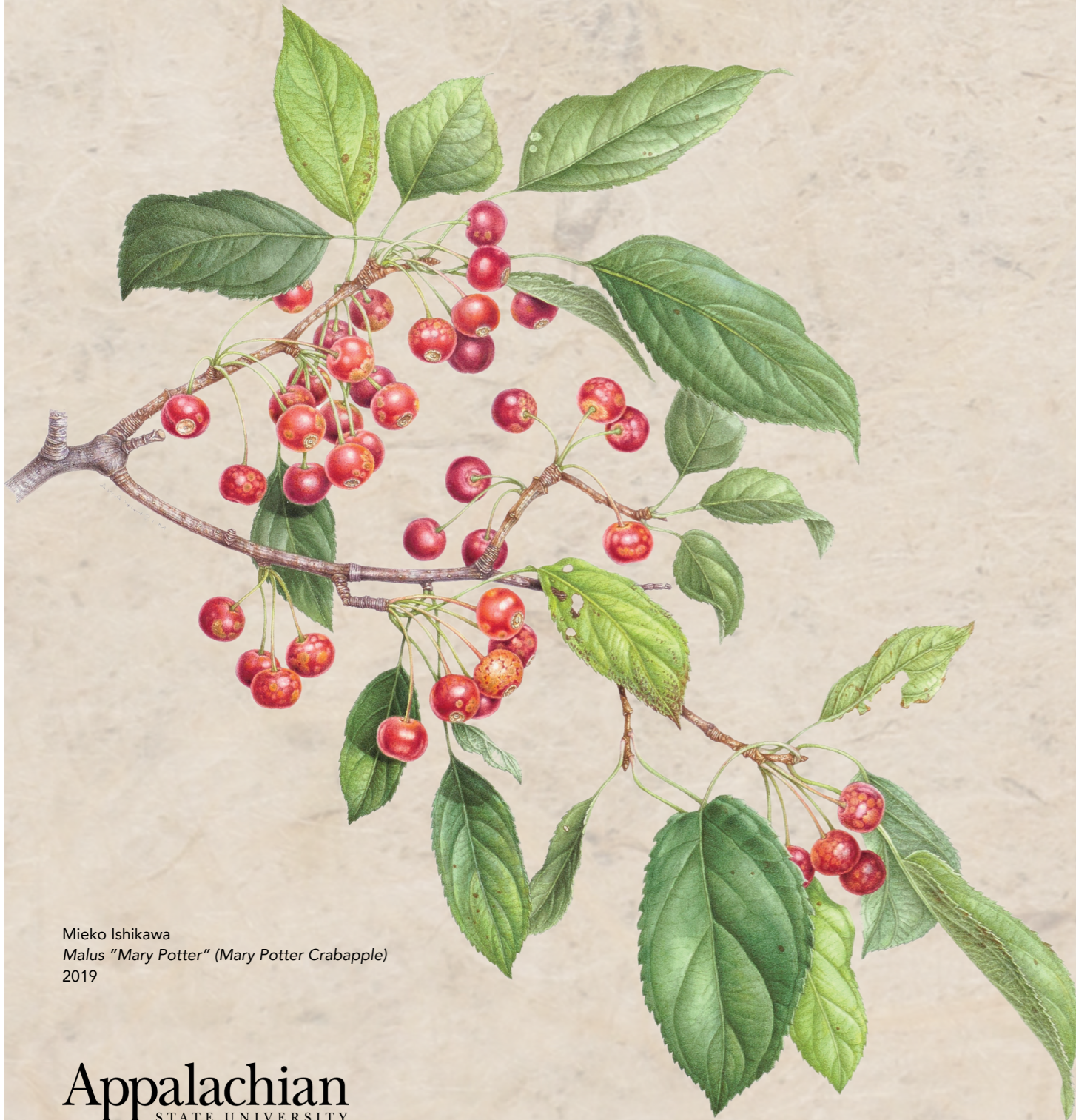
FEB 7 2025 - MAY 24 2025

HODGES & COMMUNITY GALLERIES

*No food or drinks permitted in the galleries at any  
time at the request of the lending foundation.*

Mieko Ishikawa  
Malus "Mary Potter" (Mary Potter Crabapple)  
2019

Akiko Enokido  
Poncirus Trifoliata (hardy orange)  
2019





# OAK SPRING: SEEDING ARTISTS

Driving back and forth between the Oak Spring Garden Foundation in Upperville, VA, and Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, one gets a sense of the landscape traversing the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, especially if one forgoes the interstate for the backroads and blue highways, or the legendary Blue Ridge Parkway which encourages more leisurely meanderings. A small segment of the extensive Appalachian Mountains, the Blue Ridge Mountains, extend from Carlisle, Pennsylvania through Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina to Mount Oglethorpe in Georgia. The Blue Ridge is slight in comparison to other mountain ranges, just between five miles at its narrowest to 70 miles across at its widest in North Carolina, with average elevations between 2,000 and 4,000 feet before reaching its highest elevation at Mount Mitchell at over 6,600 feet. Both the Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) in Upperville and Appalachian State University in Boone are tucked into these intensely beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains; both institutions share a commitment to the preservation of the landscape.

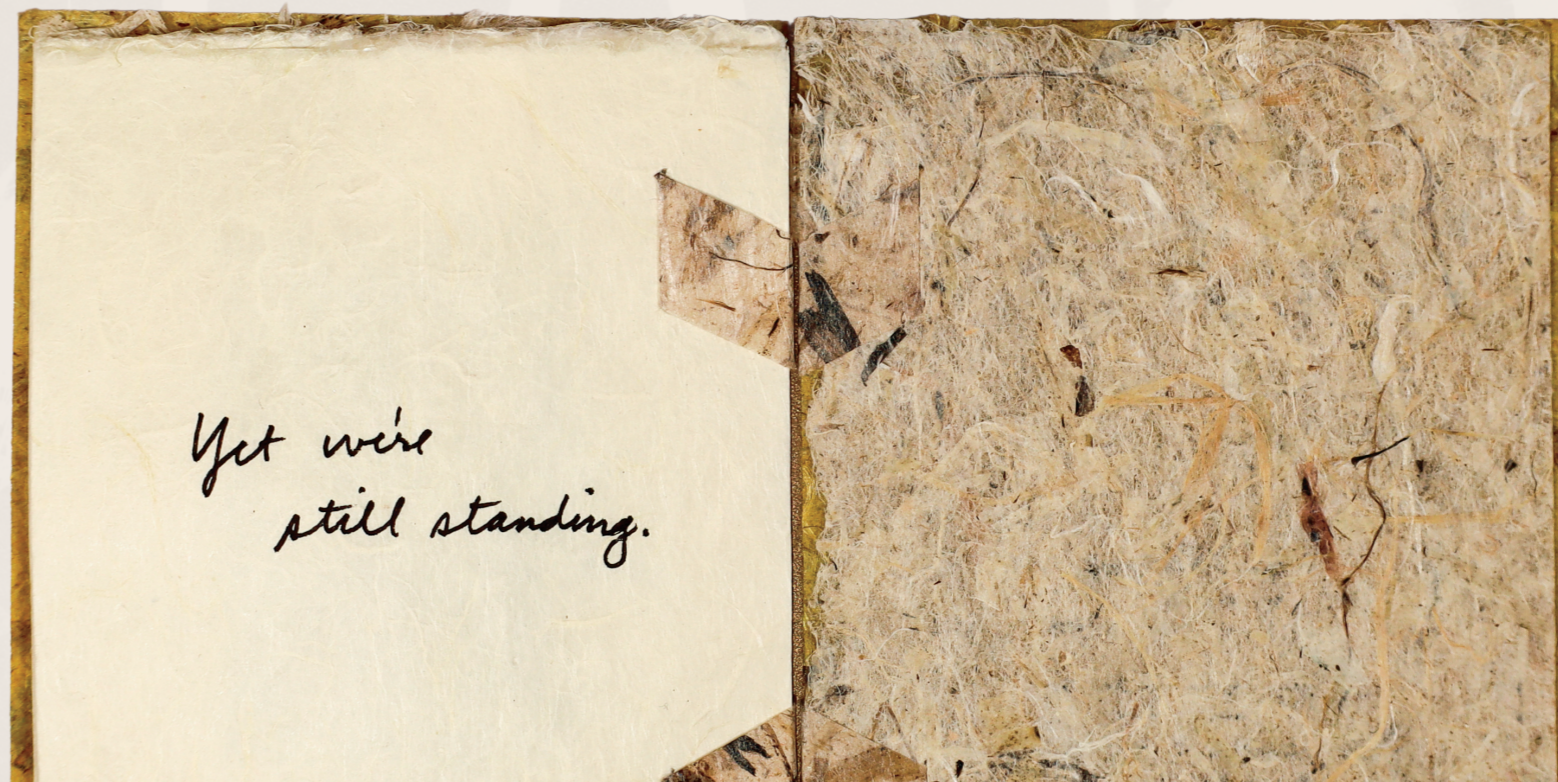
Rachel (Bunny) Lambert Mellon (1910 – 2014) – heiress, horticulturalist, art and rare book collector, and philanthropist – and her second husband – the philanthropist, art collector, horse breeder and champion trail rider – Paul Mellon (1907 – 1999), were lifelong supporters of the arts and environmental causes. The Oak Spring Garden Foundation is one of the many legacy gifts of Mrs. Mellon. First, she built the Oak Spring Garden Library to house her growing collections of rare books, manuscripts, and art – focused primarily on the art and culture of landscapes, gardens, and plants. Then in 1993, she established the Oak Spring Garden Foundation with the specific purpose of sharing her extensive collection, which dates to the 14th century, as a resource for scholars and artists. Bunny Mellon cultivated her library with the same care she cultivated her gardens, providing resources that would ensure both would be available in perpetuity. Her horticultural legacy continues as the Foundation currently offers residencies and fellowships to artists, writers, scholars, and researchers whose work is influenced by nature and “that speaks to our relationship with the natural world,” to cultivate their creative practices at Oak Spring. Much of the artwork by the residents has been collected by the library and exhibited in the Gallery. Originally called the “Memory House,” the Oak Spring Gallery was built in 2011, when Bunny Mellon was 100 years old and still supporting the arts and tending her gardens.

Lorena Cruz Santiago  
*Thistle from Oak Spring*  
2022

The 700-acre Oak Spring Garden Foundation, established in 2016, is nestled between the Bull Run and Blue Ridge Mountains, extending to both sides of Rokeby Road (State Route 623). It includes both Little Oak Spring where the primary Mellon family estate and famous formal gardens can be found, with Rokeby Farm on the other side of the road that includes a biocultural conservation farm and garden and the buildings that encompass the artist residency studios and homes. The landscape that now hosts Oak Spring Garden existed long before it was inhabited by people. As the Foundation notes: “Successive human occupants have all left their mark. The long Native American presence was almost extinguished by European colonization, and after the Civil War, with the collapse of the slave-based agriculture economy, the equine pursuits of the Virginian Hunt Country came to the fore. Today, protected by conservation easements and planning restrictions, northern Fauquier County is a haven for plant and animal life.”

The Mellons would agree that the act of creation is a tangible belief in the future; that art, writing (both fiction and non-fiction), and poetry are acts of regeneration and cultural memory, much needed as we seek solutions to the climate crisis in relationships of reciprocity.

Aimee Lee  
*The Drama of a Few Square Feet*  
2020



The Turchin Center is pleased to host an exhibition of works showcasing the work of many of the resident artists supported by the Oak Spring Garden Foundation. Since 2018, the Foundation has hosted over 120 residents. Their programs include the Interdisciplinary Residency, Botanical Artist Residency, Plant Conservation Science Fellowship, Plant Science Research Fellowship, Stacy Lloyd Fellowship for Bibliographic Studies, and the Eliza Moore Fellowship for Artistic Excellence. As Sir Peter Crane, president of the OSGF has written, the mandate of the Foundation is “to use this remarkable legacy to serve the public interest—by facilitating scholarship, inspiring public dialogue, and encouraging meaningful engagement with the history and future of plants—including especially their contributions to human well-being and significance in the culture of gardens and landscapes.”

The staff at the Turchin Center encourages visitors to engage with the works of art – many about plants and their impact on our lives – that are on display in the galleries, and to spend time in the small community library before going back into your own wild landscapes and cultivated gardens here in the High Country to create your own artwork and gardens.

The staff at the Turchin Center is indebted to everyone at the Oak Spring Garden Foundation for their enthusiastic support of this exhibition. A special thank you to Sir Peter Crane, President of the Foundation for giving his blessings to sharing the creative work of the resident artists with the extended Appalachian State University community. Danielle Eady, Program Director; Tony Willis, Head Librarian; and Carter Hulinsky, Metadata Librarian and Special Collections Cataloger at the Foundation were instrumental in shaping the exhibition.

Mary Anne Redding, Senior Curator