



# Uncovering hidden figures at the Marshall University Herbarium through inter-disciplinary collaboration

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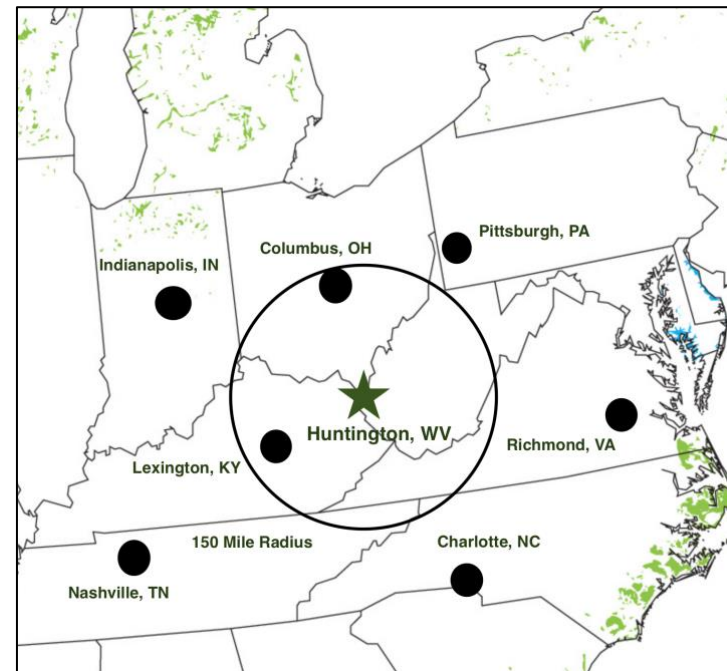
# MUHW is the second largest Herbarium in WV

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- Marshall is located in the westernmost side of WV
- Most of our student population comes from the tri-state area



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# 52,000 specimens, mostly vascular plants

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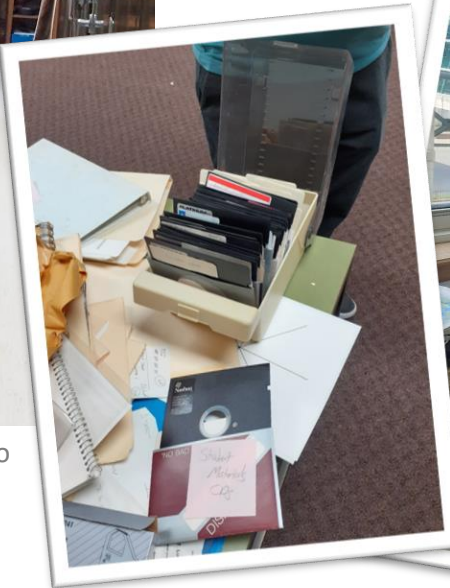
- We also count with small collections of non-vascular plants, fungi, algae, fossils, and ethnobotanical artifacts



Photos by P. Puppo

# MUHW has a modest library and many documents

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Photos by P. Puppo



# And other special collections...





## And other special collections...

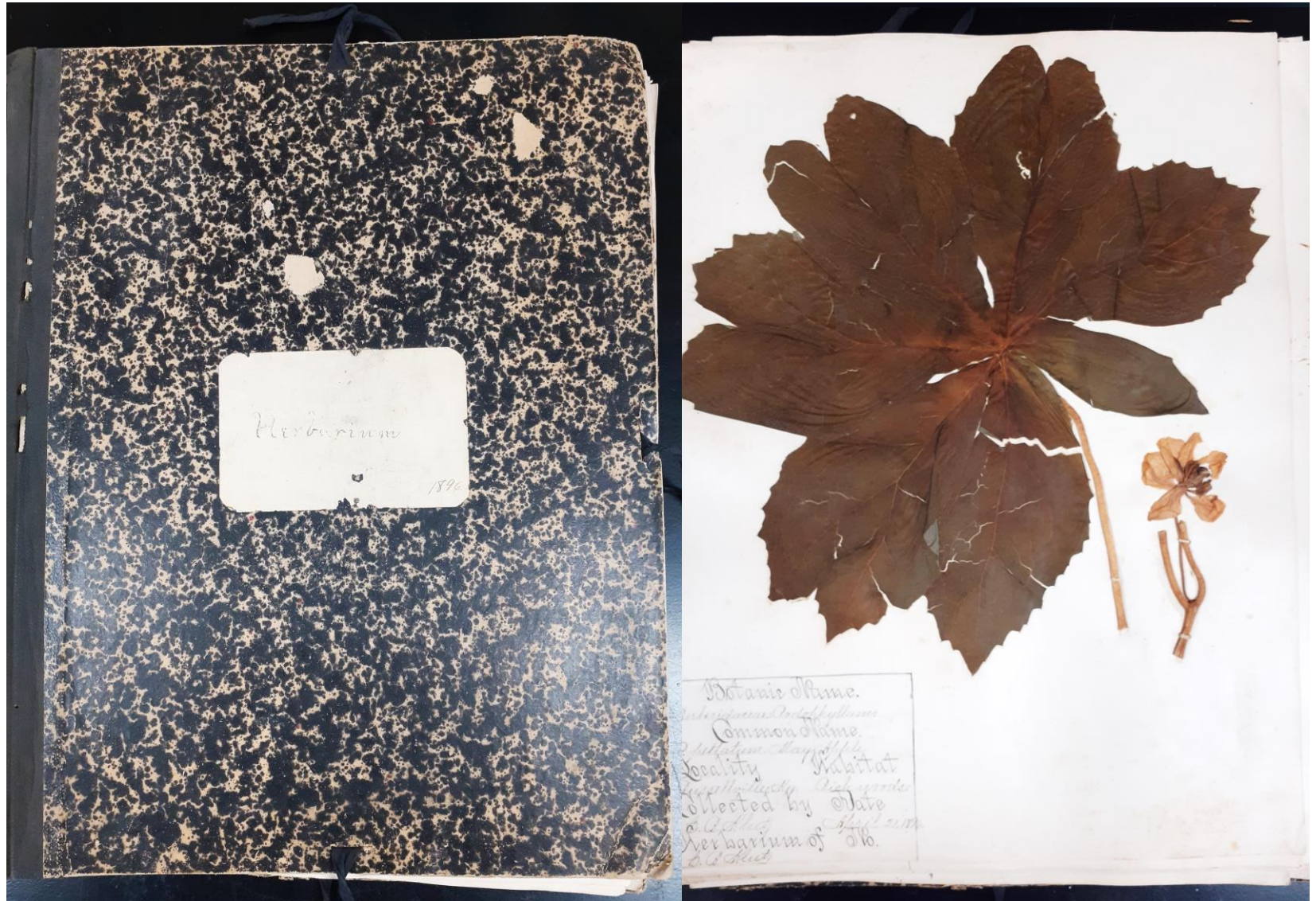
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## And other special collections...

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# The start of a partnership



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## HST 640 – ARCHIVES SEMINAR

Spring 2021

### COURSE BASICS

Meets Tuesday 4:00 – 6:20  
Morrow Library 309

**Instructor:**

Lori Thompson  
(she/her/hers)  
Morrow Library 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
thompson39@marshall.edu  
304-696-6611

**Office Hours: M-F**

ONLINE by appointment

### TEXTBOOK

Blouin, Francis X. Jr., and  
Rosenberg, William G.  
*Processing the Past:  
Contesting Authority in  
History and the Archives.*  
New York: Oxford University  
Press, 2011.

ISBN: 9780199740543

Additional Readings will be  
made available to students on  
Blackboard. For bibliography  
see end of syllabus.



Image National Archives  
Clark, Bob. "FDR, Archivist: The Shaping of the National Archives." *Prologue Magazine* Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter 2006):  
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/winter/fdr-archivist.html>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Archives and Special Collections (3 credit hours) will introduce the student to current practices and procedures used in the creation, preservation and management of archives and manuscript collections. Students will be introduced to the principles of arrangement and description of materials through extensive hands-on work, including the physical processing of a manuscript collection. The course will also explore the use of archival material and manuscript collections as public history resources. Emphasis will be placed on using the skills learned in the course to improve the efficiency of the student's research efforts in primary source materials.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Because this is a seminar course, your attendance and participation are crucial, and form a significant portion (30%) of your final grade. However – this is pandemic times – please see COVID policy.



# “Meet your collection: Trash or treasure?”



# “Meet your collection: Trash or treasure?”

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Photo by Caroline Bruce



Photo by P. Puppo



# Students created a finding aid



John Marshall  
Chief Justice of the United States (1801-35)

## Marshall Digital Scholar

Scholarship, Publishing, and Preservation



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## GUIDES TO MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

The Marshall University Special Collections Department is home to manuscript materials covering a wide range of subjects reflecting historical events, business, education, arts, and sciences. While many of the materials are related to West Virginia, several collections are regional and national in scope.

This gallery provides access to downloadable finding aids for the department's processed collections.

For more information or to use any of these collections, contact:

Special Collections, Morrow Library  
Marshall University  
One John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755  
(304) 696-2343  
[speccoll@marshall.edu](mailto:speccoll@marshall.edu)

### Finding Aids

- [PDF](#) [0001: Robert Gilchrist Family Papers, 1783-1957](#), Marshall University Special Collections
- [PDF](#) [0002: Laidley Family Papers, 1834-1944](#), Marshall University Special Collections
- [PDF](#) [0003: Taylor County, West Virginia, District School Commissioners Reports, 1857-1859](#), Marshall University Special Collections

### Container List:

Container	Contents
Box 1, Folder 1	Letters 1926-1928
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters 1929-1932
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters 1933-1935
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters 1936
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters 1937
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 8	Lister Letters 1889-1929
Box 1, Folder 9	Weston Letters 1926-1929
Box 1, Folder 10	Sturgis Letters 1926-1927
Box 1, Folder 11	Smith Letters 1926-1928
Box 1, Folder 12	Meylan Letters 1927
Box 1, Folder 13	Haensler Letters 1927, Wann Letters 1927
Box 1, Folder 14	Elliot Letters 1927-1928, Muenscher Letters 1927
Box 1, Folder 15	Hagelstein Letters 1927-1929, Linder Letters 1927-1929
Box 1, Folder 16	Wetmore Letters 1927-1929, Lyman Letters 1927-1935

[https://mds.marshall.edu/sc\\_finding\\_aids/](https://mds.marshall.edu/sc_finding_aids/)

# Students also did an appraisal of the collection

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Estimated cost for processing the two  
filing cabinets:

Avg \$170 per drawer (per student)  
X 9 students

= **\$1,530.00**

Want to know more?  
Read our article in  
The Vasculum! →



Photo by P. Puppo



# MUHW – Early Years

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- Records from previous curators indicated that MUHW was founded ca. 1930 by Dr. Frank Gilbert
- However, the Catalogue of Marshall College mentions the existence of an Herbarium of sorts already in 1896–1897:



***"Already arrangements are on foot for collecting a large School Herbarium for the convenience of students in the department of Botany (...) Some of the private herbariums of the students this year excelled those of any we have ever seen outside of the collections of specialists".***

1896-1897 Catalogue of Marshall College, pp. 23-24.

# MUHW – Early Years

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- Dr. Frank Gilbert was hired in 1927 to chair the incipient Botany Dept. at Marshall College

***"For taking care of our newly organized department of Botany we have under consideration Dr. Frank A. Gilbert"***

Letter from President Shawkey to H. Weston Jr., June 16, 1927

***"We have something of an herbarium of tri-state flora and I imagine the opportunities for work along this line are rather good"***

Letter from President M.P. Shawkey to Dr. F.A. Gilbert, June 24, 1927



- Gilbert increased the size of the Marshall Herbarium to 15,000 specimens (Boone, W. 1965. A History of Botany in West Virginia)
- Gilbert was at Marshall for 17 years. He resigned in 1944



# The Marshall College State Normal School

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- The Marshall Academy opened its doors for the first time in the 1838-1839 term, but the Civil War forced it to close for several years
- In 1867, the now West Virginia Legislature opened the school again as the State Normal School of Marshall College, to train teachers



THE MARSHALL COLLEGE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

***“The initial purpose of a normal school is to prepare persons for the important work of teaching. This is the main purpose for which Marshall College exists (...) the preparation of teachers for the rural schools, the graded schools and the high schools (...)”***

Records from the Normal School 1837–1917, Marshall College  
Bulletin, 1917, p. 12

# Herbarium Book from 1896

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- The Herbarium book from 1896 was made by Cora B. Klutz and most plants collected by her
- The book is composed of 50 pressed plants with handwritten labels, 41 collected in Kentucky (mostly Russellville), 9 from "Frontman's" North Carolina
- We think she might have been a student enrolled in the Normal School





# Herbarium Book from 1896

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- There was a Botany class taught as part of the Marshall College State Normal School

***"(...) Fifty specimens of wild flowers is the minimum number required for the herbarium of each member of the class. These must be carefully selected, carefully pressed showing foliage, flower, and root, and carefully and neatly mounted on heavy card board purchased especially for this purpose (...)"***

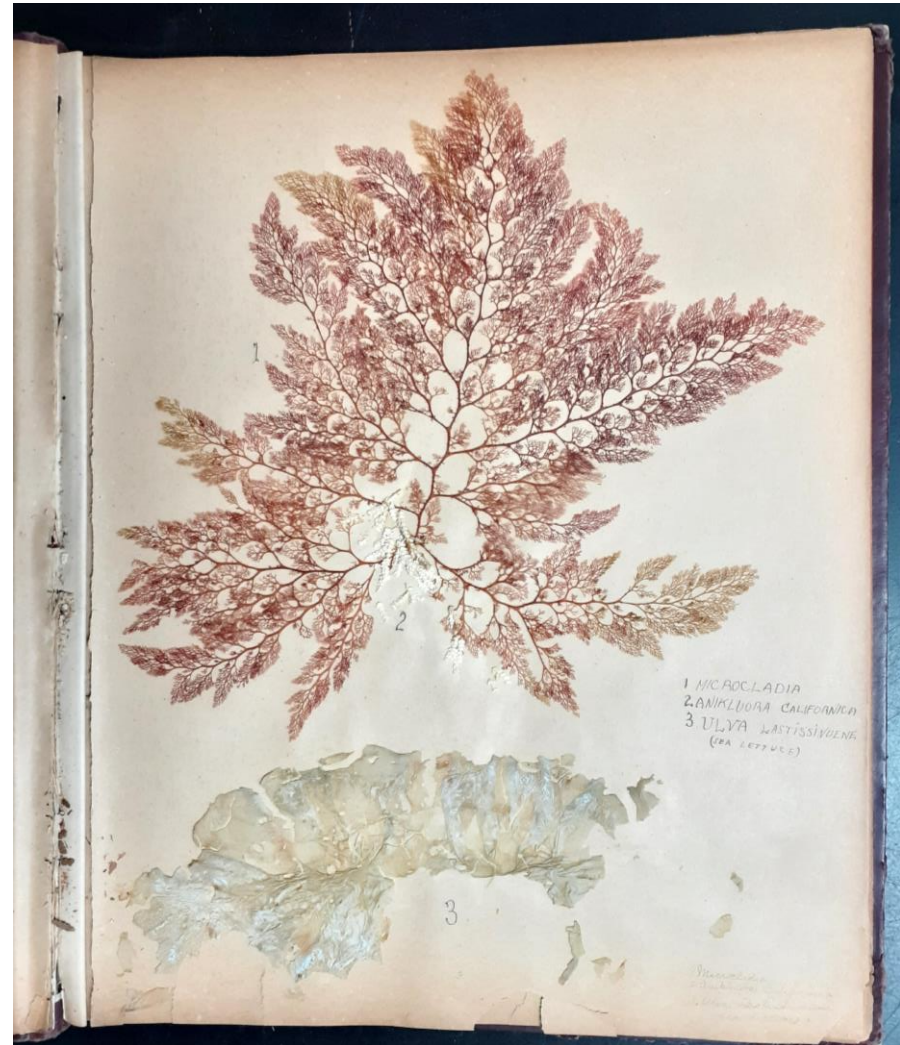
Annual Catalogue of The Marshall College State Normal School, 1899, p. 33

- There is record of a Cora Shepard from Ashland, KY in the Marshall College State Normal School Alumni Record, Class of 1897 (could it be her?)

# Herbarium Book from 1926

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- The Herbarium book from 1926 was made by Edward H. Dietsch from Huntington, WV
- The book is composed of 21 sheets, each including a composition of 1–6 algae specimens, no visible collection locality
- We think he might have also been a student at the Normal School as we have not been able to find any records of him in the Marshall College Catalogue





# Future Directions

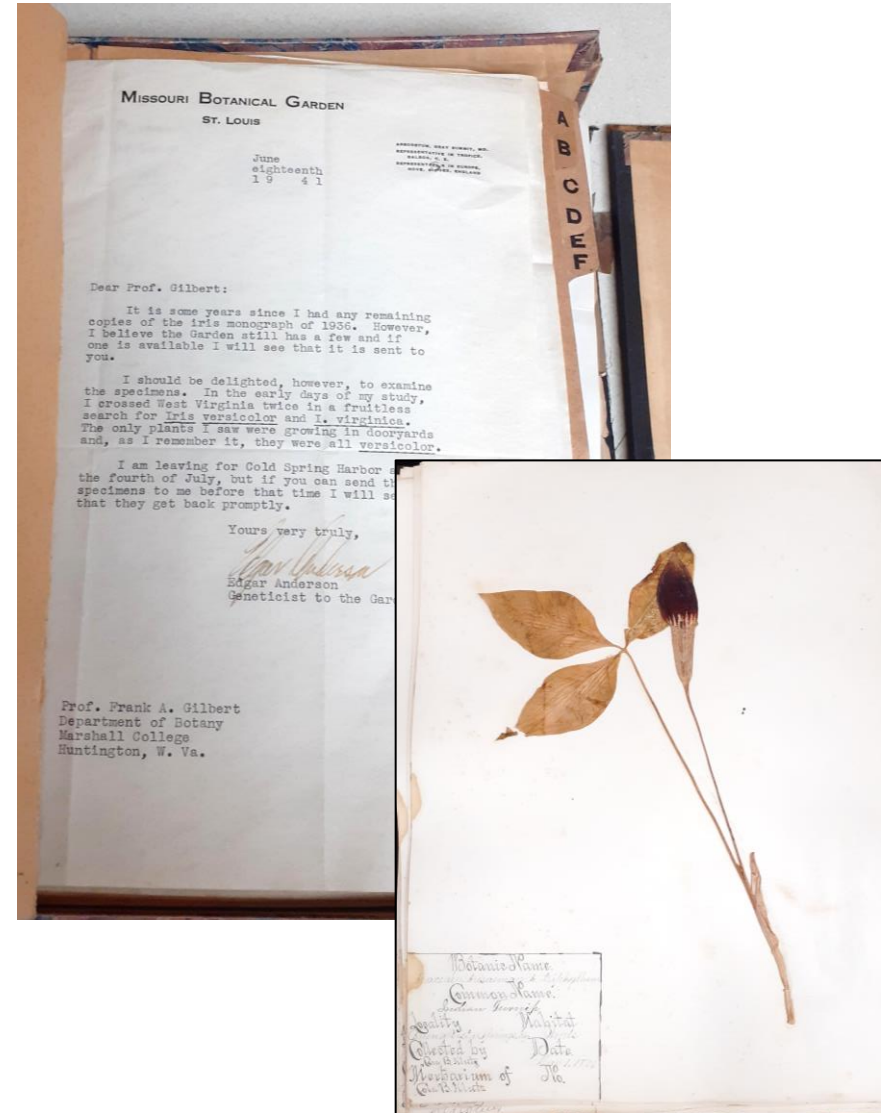
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- We will continue to work on the history of Botany at Marshall and the Marshall University Herbarium
- Concretely, looking on the lives and legacies of former curators Dr. Edward Lewis Plymale (1946–1974) and Dr. Dan K. Evans (1974–2012)



# Interdisciplinary collaboration is important!

- This partnership has allowed us to see our collection with new eyes and to bring new awareness to its importance
- Archivists are history-focused. They are interested in the persons and their connections to MU, the city, or state
- Historically-relevant documents might be housed in the Special Collections rather than the Herbarium





# Thanks!

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## **HST 640 Students – Spring 2021**

Caroline Bruce

Jed Basler

Ethan Tackett

Sara Browning

Payton Salmons

Hallie Knipp

Patrick McCoy

Spencer Nicholas

Jared Ross



Thanks to Dr. Andrea Weeks (GMUF -Plants), Dr. Shawn Zeringue-Krosnick (HTTU) and the SISRIS project for the invitation!

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