

# **BLACK EARTH: RESISTANCE, ANTI-RACISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**GREEN  
CARE  
PACKAGES**



We are MISSING that  
RELATIONSHIP with the LAND



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# PROJECT INTRODUCTION

black earth: resistance, anti-racism and the environment is a research project in partnership with tiata fahodzi and watershed with funding from the national lottery community fund and watford borough council.

originally intended to explore how the creative sector can respond to the climate crisis while centring the experiences of black and global majority artists and people. as the project progressed it became clear that many of the participants had never felt safe or listened to in existing climate movements and so the project shifted to one about creating space, community, and joy for black and brown people.

we hope that this green care package will be an opportunity for people to learn about climate justice, understand it through a lens that is relevant to your experiences and the experiences of your friends, families and loved ones, and allow you to engage with radical self-care while keeping creativity and collective joy at the heart of what you do.

this package will take you on a journey of learning with explainers, tasks to do in your community, sharing experiences and acts of creative resistance. we have also included herbal remedies and recipes to allow you to care for yourself and those around you as you explore this challenging, difficult and emotional topic.

we hope you find the path in the climate justice movement that works for you.

with love and solidarity,  
the tiata fahodzi team

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# CLIMATE JUSTICE EXPLAINER

## what is climate justice?

climate change is not simply a scientific or technical challenge. like many other issues, it is deeply tied to systems of injustice and so the severity of its impacts are also unevenly felt. the people who are least historically responsible for the climate crisis are the first to feel its effects.

climate justice is a term which is used to describe this concept, and is a global movement to centre perspectives and solutions from the most vulnerable people. **but climate justice can mean different things to different people.** understanding what it means to you is often very useful to know how to engage with the climate crisis movement.

## who is responsible?

the roots of the climate crisis lie in colonialism and capitalism.

as european colonisers spread around the world, they stole land, people and resources. the theft of land meant that indigenous people who had once lived alongside the natural world were evicted, and the environment and cultures destroyed. people were enslaved and transported around the world, and resources such as oil, minerals, and crops were extracted, all to fuel profits, and industrialisation in europe.

the wealth of the global north and polluting industries, and the ability for us to live carbon-intensive lifestyles can be traced back to these crimes.

many of our industries, such as finance, real estate, and manufacturing are built on colonial theft and fossil fuel extraction. the historical carbon footprints of britain, europe, and the usa since the dawn of the industrial era dwarf those of other regions, making clear the huge responsibility these countries have to urgently reduce their carbon emissions and to support others to develop fairly and sustainably.

this requires a huge shift in how money, power, and land are shared across society, taking from the wealthy and distributing back to the exploited.



## what are climate impacts?

although we often talk about climate change as something that will happen in the future, many people around the world are already feeling its effects.

climate change makes severe weather events, such as hurricanes, heatwaves, extreme cold waves, floods and wildfires more frequent and more severe. these impacts are more pronounced in the global south because of their locations (they could be in warmer regions, on low lying land, small islands, etc). colonisation also left many countries in massive amounts of debt, slowing their development and leaving them less able to adapt or respond to climate disasters.

impacts are also felt over time, through the slow evaporation of vital water sources; changing seasons affecting food crops; and the decline of the animals, insects, and marine life important to ecosystems. this drives many people to migrate - the united nations estimates there could be 1.2 billion climate refugees around the world by 2050. as wealthy countries are building walls, the vulnerable are once again left without support.

the difference in how climate change is felt happens on a local scale as well as a global one. people of colour in britain are significantly more likely to live in areas of high air pollution, closer to toxic factories, and with less access to nature. this makes those communities more prone to developing severe asthma, cancer, and many other health issues.

when severe weather events such as heatwaves, floods, or cold snaps happen, working class people, people of colour, and disabled people are more likely to struggle because their homes are not built to withstand extremes and they have fewer options for moving to safer areas.

the way that governments, militaries, and capitalist corporations such as shell and bp treat the natural world also impact our ability to respond to climate disasters: cutting down mangrove forests that shield communities from typhoons and floods; polluting precious freshwater with plastic and chemicals; destroying rainforests that take carbon dioxide out of the air; and drilling further into the ground for oil and gas, poisoning the land and water surrounding extraction sites, often in territories belonging to indigenous people or in marginalised neighbourhoods.

## what are governments doing about it?

the united nations framework convention on climate change (unfccc) is an international government body made up of 197 countries or states. the unfccc helps negotiate treaties between governments. the most well known is 2016's paris agreement, which was made official at the 21st conference of parties (cop) held in paris.

this was signed by 194 countries, and its aim is to limit global warming to below 2c - believed to be the point at which we won't be able to manage the effects of the crisis.

however, this target leaves billions of the most vulnerable people and species in the world devastated. 1.5c degrees is thought to be a much 'safer' level of warming - although half a degree doesn't sound like much, every fraction of a degree matters when we are working on a global scale. this target requires immediate action to reduce our carbon impacts, and is what governments of countries most impacted by the crisis are calling for. however, these global agreements are not legally binding - the uk is set to fail its own targets, and the government is currently increasing licences for fossil fuel extraction through fracking.





## what can i do about it?

there are of course many other campaigns, laws, and ideas to get involved with locally and nationally. the climate justice movement is broad, and connects to many other issues - like food security, energy prices, migration, housing, and health.

**the climate crisis is about the deep rooted system of capitalism, which can only be dismantled through community, creativity, and collective action.**

climate action can happen on the scale of the global, the national, or the local. you could set up or join a community garden, for example. this is a great way to connect with nature and our neighbourhoods. large-scale agriculture is one of the most polluting industries globally - it relies on chemicals to produce bigger crop yields, reduces biodiversity, and generates significant waste. **community gardens give us an opportunity to think more deeply about what we eat, how to choose seasonal foods when we can, and reduce the distance that our food travels before it arrives at our plates.** having access to biodiverse spaces also reconnects us with the ways that our ancestors used the natural world, as building and textiles materials, or as herbal remedies. these are important recipes to preserve.

**taking action on the climate crisis might feel like too big a challenge, or you may feel scared about climate breakdown - this is called eco-anxiety.**

it is normal to feel grief, anxiety, panic, or hopelessness, especially for those of us connected to areas already experiencing climate impacts. it is important to acknowledge those feelings, stay connected with each other, and seek mental health support where we can. the resilience project is an organisation dedicated to supporting young people to cope with eco-anxiety and has a library of free resources on their website.

we hope that the information contained within this booklet will help you to understand what climate justice means to you, connect with those who may share similar experiences and start to build ways with which you can engage with the climate justice movement from within your communities.

Check out the Resilience Project's resources on eco-anxiety



# CREATE A WORKING DEFINITION OF CLIMATE JUSTICE

## what does climate justice mean to you?

### group exercise

now we have worked through an explainer on climate justice, we'd like to offer you an opportunity to create your own definition and understanding of what climate justice means to you, your friends and family, loved ones and community.

before you begin, here are some useful values to help guide your discussions.

sometimes you may tackle challenging and difficult subjects. while we acknowledge that you may not be able to guarantee an always safe space, we should all aim to do so.

instead, we hope that you can create a brave space for people to discuss and share their experiences. with that in mind, to ensure a comradely spirit is maintained through any discussions, we offer a few simple suggestions.

### ■ **listen more than you talk**

everyone should feel comfortable participating and engaging. please, be aware of how much you are talking and make sure that others have a chance to speak.

### ■ **take responsibility for each other's safety**

only share what you're comfortable with and be careful how you relay discussions outside of your group. be mindful that everyone has different knowledge, values, and experiences.

### ■ **assumption of goodwill**

even if someone is saying something you disagree with, assume they are doing so with the best interests of the discussion at heart and disagree with kindness and respect.

### ■ **call out bigotry**

we encourage everyone take responsibility to challenge bigotry when it is spotted while being mindful that we are all here to learn as well as to share our experiences.

we recommend taking about an hour to discuss these ideas with your community. climate justice can mean many things to many people. we hope this will get everyone on the same page.

## exercise 1

to begin with, ask your group the following question: what feelings does 'nature' evoke? what do you think of, what are your fond or not so fond memories in nature? what feelings do you have about nature? what comes to mind when you think about nature?

we suggest taking time in a group to come up with instinctive words, thoughts, and feelings. don't spend too long on this.

**tip:** someone should note down everything people are saying. it will be useful later

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## exercise 3

for the next section, we'll ask you to reflect upon what you think climate change is? you may want to reference the what are climate impacts? section from earlier in this booklet. ask yourself and your group: what is climate change? what is the ecological crisis?

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## exercise 2

now ask your group: what do you feel when you think about the climate, present day or historically? what are your thoughts on climate change?

remember, there are no right or wrong answers. we're talking about feelings. be brave. be honest.

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## exercise 4

next we turn our attention towards the word justice.

here is a definition for justice to act as a provocation:

justice (noun)

- fairness in the way people are dealt with
- the fair treatment of people
- the quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness: to uphold the justice of a cause

what is justice and how can we create it? is justice the best word? are there alternative terms?

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## exercise 5

finally, we ask you to consider environment action and what the fight for justice looks like. what does creative environmental action and climate justice mean to us in our homes, community, family, friend group, workplaces, to strangers?

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## exercise 6

now you have these notes on the various topics, points and areas of climate justice, we ask that you put it all together. take the discussions you've had and try to formulate them into a single paragraph or sentence to define what climate justice is.

here is a example:

now you have these notes on the various topics, points and areas of climate justice, we ask that you put it all together. take the discussions you've had and try to formulate them into a single paragraph or sentence to define what climate justice is.

it is about framing climate change through the prism of colonialism and empire, acknowledging that those who are most affected are the least responsible, recognising how climate change multiples existing oppressions, and advocating solutions that redistribute power and centre the most affected communities.

## what did you and your group come up with?

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# CREATIVE RESISTANCE

creative resistance is one of the key ways that we can engage with the climate justice movement. we can use our own understanding of climate justice to help steer the way we connect.

creative resistance isn't just about art but about all forms of creativity.

we encourage you to work with your communities, based on your own collective understanding of climate justice, to consider how you might creatively engage with the climate justice movement. below are some examples that you might consider.

read the julie's bicycle  
creative climate justice guide



## trash academy, philadelphia

*trash academy* is a project of mural arts philadelphia's environmental justice department. the city is sometimes referred to as "filthadelphia". litter is the visible symptom of how black and brown communities are neglected and devalued. trash academy designs intergenerational programmes, which connects the issue of litter with deeper understandings of how resources are extracted, consumed, and wasted on a planetary scale.

their implosion project takes everyday objects like toilet paper and plastic bags, and works with young people to creatively illustrate how the object is formed of environmental, political, material, historical, racial and economic contexts. the aim of this work is to uncover the hidden systems that impact our lives, and build a movement which is intergenerational and multi-dimensional.

[www.trashacademy.org/implosion](http://www.trashacademy.org/implosion)

## kitchen cultures

*kitchen cultures: recipes for inter-cultural survival* is a collaboration between artist kaajal modi and zero-waste chef fatima tarkleman. they worked with migrant women, pairing them up to uncover pickling and fermenting traditions from their homelands and to develop new recipes to reduce food waste in their new homes in the uk.

the outcome of the project is a recipe and poetry book, including the womens' memories of their homelands, and reflections on their connections to the rhythms of nature through cultural food traditions.

[www.kaajalmodi.com/kitchen-cultures-eden](http://www.kaajalmodi.com/kitchen-cultures-eden)

## the bonita chola

the bonita chola is an instagram account developed by angela camacho, a south american indigenous artist, community organiser, and "ancestor in the making" based in london. angela uses collages she makes using free apps on her phone to reclaim the beauty and joy of her indigenous traditions. her art and the accompanying captions tell the stories of environmental defenders and political activists across south america, connecting their stories with the struggles of the diaspora communities in the uk. she also uses this platform to raise money for political organisers on the ground in south america, providing much needed financial support in times of crisis.

[www.instagram.com/thebonitachola](https://www.instagram.com/thebonitachola)

# HERBAL REMEDIES

## \*disclaimer

please do not use if you are pregnant or lactating.  
the effects of the herbs contained in these products and recipes may vary from person to person. this product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. for educational purposes only. tiata fahodzi takes no responsibility for any reactions or adverse effects as a result of using these products.

one area of creativity that we encourage people to explore is herbology. with a focus on our connection to nature through growing, often in community with others, as well as creating remedies which have physical and mental health benefits. we believe this to be a wonderful act of resistance. it allows us to connect with the here and now, while also reconnecting to the ways that our ancestors interacted with the natural world.

these recipes are developed in collaboration with the afrofuturist apothecary, a british-african herbalist where plants native to the uk and africa are cultivated not only for their medicine, but for their adaptability to urban ecosystems, tolerance of dry and poor soil and hardiness.

liberated from the oppressive hierarchies that propagated colonialism, plants and people find ways to thrive during times of increased physiological and psychological stress – where increasing agency in relation to climate justice is not an act of revolution but of everyday magic.

in the midst of a crisis that was not of our creation and struggling with the despair caused by environmental degradation, we do not steel ourselves with resilience but ask: how can we cultivate joy? how can we rest and dream? how can we regenerate in our activism?

[www.afrofuturistapothecary.com](http://www.afrofuturistapothecary.com)

## oat and coconut bath soak

a truly british-african blend of oat and coconut that hydrates skin and calms inflammation. oats in all forms are a tonic for the nervous system and are particularly helpful for people prone to burnout and exhaustion.

- 1 cup oats
- 1 cup powdered coconut milk
- optional: 5 drops geranium essential oil

place in an old pair of tights – tie onto the tap and let the water run through



photo: tijana drndarski on unsplash



photo: jernej graj on unsplash

## chamomile and hibiscus bath tea

chamomile promotes wound healing, calms inflammation and the nervous system. likely native to west africa, hibiscus is a potent antioxidant that regenerates tired skin.

- 3 chamomile tea bags (available from pukka teas)
- 2 hibiscus tea bags (available from hampstead teas)
- 1 cup epsom salts

as if making a brew – place chamomile and hibiscus in a large bowl, add hot water and allow to sit for 15 mins – stir into the bath with epsom salts.



photo: naoaki inada on unsplash

## tired soles foot soak

photo: zoe laureen palmer



linden tree, or lime tree flowers soothe the nervous system whilst rose has potent anti-inflammatory properties. linden trees are common in urban areas and parks.

- 2 handfuls of lime flowers
- 1 handful rose petals
- 1 cup baking soda

place in a large bowl of hot water – allow to cool and enjoy 20-30mins of rest as your tired soles soak.

## winter moon milk

this blend of oats and warming spices can be enjoyed at night to calm body and mind, and promote sleep. the rooibos plant is native to south africa – its tea is caffeine free and high in antioxidants.

- 1 cup oat milk (or your preferred dairy free milk)
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 whole star anise
- 1 rooibos tea bag (available from most supermarkets)
- pinch of cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of salt

place milk, coconut oil and spices in a saucepan on low heat until bubbles form around the sides. remove from heat, add rooibos tea and stir in honey. infuse for 5 mins. strain and enjoy.



photo: blackshoot on unsplash



## lemon balm iced tea

lemon balm is native to northern africa and western asia and is a prolific herb that's easy to harvest in the uk. it supports brain health, eases stress, anxiety and insomnia.

- 1 cup lemon balm
- 1 cup mint
- 1 tbsp ginger
- 1 lemon, freshly squeezed
- 1 tsp honey

place in a teapot and add boiling water. allow to cool then strain, add honey and refrigerate. serve on ice cubes.

## hopjito

bitter and earthy hops are widely used to reduce anxiety and promote sleep. this mocktail is a great alternative to beer.

- 1 tbsp hop flowers
- juice of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp coconut palm sugar
- sparkling water

place hops in a teapot and add boiling water. steep for 10 minutes. strain, add coconut sugar and lime juice and refrigerate. add sparkling water and mint to serve.



# dream pillows

the afrofuturist apothec<sup>∞</sup>ry

## REST. DREAM.

### individual exercise

in a world in which our dreams have been colonised, collectively venerating our dreams is a radical act. during times of climate transition working with local plant allies can help us cultivate our inner dream gardens, creating space for the land to dream through us in regenerative cycles between our inner and outer climates, opening our hearts and minds to intuitive ways of knowing.

before dreaming, give your pillow a gentle squeeze to release its fragrance then breathe it in and invite the plants to infuse your dreams.

you may wish to set an intention or visualise the scent as a colour moving through your heart, mind and belly.

you might also wish to keep a dream journal by your bedside.

contains herbs grown in the uk by the afrofuturist apothec<sup>∞</sup>ry, widely used for their beneficial effects on the nervous system and known to enhance dream states: hops, lavender, lemon verbena, mugwort, rose, rosemary, sage.  
contains organic buckwheat husks.



photo: zoe lauren palmer



# CALENDULA SKIN SALVE

as well as using herbal remedies as an introduction to herbology, we encourage you to consider growing. we've included a calendula skin salve along with a batch of calendula seeds so that you can grow your own and follow this method to create a simple salve.

to find out more about the from seed to salve collective medicine method used by community apothecary, please follow this qr code.



## general method

infuse fresh or dried homegrown calendula flowers in a stable oil of your choice, using the cold, warm or sun method (described below).

strain out the oil into a measuring jug, noting the volume.

measure out beeswax into a bowl, in a ratio: grams of wax to millilitres of your oil volume.

1 part wax to 5 parts oil will give you a harder balm,  
1 part wax to 10 parts oil will give a softer one. you can decide the ratio according to the consistency of the balm you want to make, which part of the body it is for, the season (winter or summer).

so for example if you have 100ml of oil, and you want a softer balm, you would measure out 10g of beeswax (1 part wax: 10 parts oil) while for the harder one you would measure out 20g of wax (1 part wax: 5 parts oil)

into the double boiler, put your oil and weighed beeswax and warm gently over heat until all the wax is melted and the mixture is completely liquid

pour the mixture into your container(s) and leave in a cool place until the balm is set and solid - do not put the lids on until it is fully cooled. this will take up to an hour depending on the temperature where you are. at this stage, before or after pouring the liquid into the container, you can add drops of essential oil you choose and stir well with e.g. a chopstick to spread it throughout the balm.

label the container with the balm name, date, ingredients and any usage instructions. also any safety/allergy information if you have used a nut oil like almond for example.



# infusing herbs in oil for skin preparations

we make infused oils for various purposes - for culinary use (garlic, rosemary, chilli, basil) and for therapeutic use (massage oil, skin balm, muscle or chest rub, cream) for our skin, muscles, joints, airways and sinuses

they can give healing action like being relaxing (lavender, chamomile, hops, mugwort), antiseptic or antifungal (yarrow, oregano, thyme, calendula) anti-inflammatory (comfrey, chamomile), tissue healing (calendula, comfrey, plantain), warming (rosemary, chilli, nettle seed), decongesting (bay leaf, thyme)

we can easily make them at home with commonly used oils (olive, sunflower, rapeseed), and herbs that we can find and grow and gather close to us in our gardens and wild spaces.



## methods of oil infusion

### cold

prepare your herb(s) that you want to infuse and place them in a sterilised glass jar (there is info about how to sterilise online; i usually wash jars in hot soapy water, rinse clean then put in a hot oven for 10 minutes). preparing herbs might involve stripping leaves or flowers off stems, chopping or tearing them up into smaller material, or drying them. in the case of our calendula we are using picked flowerheads from our gardens, that have been air-dried for about a week.

herbs can be either fresh or dried; it depends on the herb and the time of year as to which of these is preferable. some herbs have a higher water content which will guide how you decide to use them. e.g. chickweed, abundant in the spring and used to make cooling anti-itch infused oil, is very juicy and watery, so is better to infuse dried, or with the warm method (below), to get rid of the water content which can cause an infused oil to spoil (water being a medium for microbial growth). rosemary on the other hand is quite a dry herb and has antimicrobial essential oils in it, so can be used fresh with less risk.

cover the herb material with your oil, choosing an oil that is stable and will not go rancid quickly. make sure that all the plant material is completely submerged - any that is poking out above the oil will go mouldy as it is in contact with the air. put the lid on your jar and label it with the contents, date and instructions for the next stage

leave the jar in a cool dark place, out of direct sunlight, for 4-6 weeks. after this time, strain out the oil through a strainer and muslin cloth, squeezing out as much as you can with clean hands (as the herb material will have absorbed a quantity of the oil).

store your oil in a dark glass container, or if clear glass, in a cupboard or somewhere where the sunlight will not fall on it. write a label again with the date, ingredients and usage instructions. the plant material remaining you can either compost, or make a bath scrub with!

use within 1 year maximum. it is good to make an amount that you will use up in a few months, then make again, rather than making large amounts that may go to waste. oils are always better the fresher they are. you will notice a change in smell if they are starting to denature or go rancid.

## **warm**

as above, prepare your herbs (known as 'garbling')

set up a double boiler or water bath (bain marie) on your stove or heat source. this is where you have a larger container into which you put water, and a smaller container above that can sit in this water. you put the herbs and oil into the smaller container, and then heat up the water. the idea is that you are very gently warming the oil - not cooking it.

this method enables you to make an infused oil in a few hours rather than a few weeks - it speeds up the extraction of the aromatic and medicinal plant compounds from the herb into the oil.



i usually do a warm infused oil later in the day, leaving the water simmering gently for 2-4 hours. then i turn it off and leave the whole thing to sit overnight so the residual heat keeps the infusion going. then i would strain it out the next morning. it doesn't have to be like this - you choose the timing most fitting for you, but the key thing is that the oil should be warmed at least for a few hours.

## **sun**

this is a method used for a few herbs of the summer season, who have an affinity with the sun and the light. mainly these are calendula flowers, st john's wort flowering tops, lemon balm. plantain leaf might also be infused this way.

you do exactly the same as the cold method, but in this case you place your jar in a sunny place like a windowsill, or outside, through the hot summer months (which is when you would be picking these herbs in their potent blooming season). with st john's wort i tend to do this from midsummer until the end of august. you will always be putting the herbs fresh in this case, though you can lay them to wilt overnight after picking, to reduce a little of the water content.

## essential oils you might use in a balm

lavender	relaxing, skin healing, antiseptic
tea tree	antifungal
bay leaf	decongesting
rosemary	warming, antimicrobial, uplifting, clearing
lemon balm	antiviral e.g. for a lip balm for cold sores
peppermint	cooling, skin calming, anti-itch
helichrysum (curry plant)	scar healing

### your own notes

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check out our youtube learning channel (search community apothecary)

# THANKS

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**tiata  
fahodzi**

the afrofuturist apothecary



**WATERSHED**



Illustrated by  
**CAMILLE AUBRY**

*This sh\*t  
is SOCIAL!*

LOVE always finds  
its way HOME



*Take time to REST!*



Be TRUE to  
YOURSELF

*You OWE IT  
to your BODY*

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