

# 7th International Youth Exchange for Food Sovereignty

*Connecting Across  
Generations &  
Borders*

**May 28 — June 2, 2019**  
**Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Santa Clara,  
California**



# Table of Contents

What is <i>Intercambio</i> ? .....	3
Goals and Vision .....	4
Members of the Network .....	5-10
Visit to Santa Clara .....	11
Arrival Fun .....	12
Day 1 .....	13
Establishing Intentions & Defining Terms.....	14
Visit to Pie Ranch .....	15
Reception to Santa Cruz Coffee Roasters.....	16

Day 2.....	17
Zine.....	18
Lunch with Dining Hall Union.....	19
Visit to Amah Mutsun Garden.....	20
Presentations.....	21
Seeds in Migration .....	22
Day 3.....	23
Giant Redwoods.....	24
Cocina Compartida.....	25

Day 4.....	26
Visions.....	27
Visit to Community Gardens.....	28
Mutual Workshops .....	29
Dinner and Closing .....	30
Group on the Last Night.....	31
Declatorio.....	32
Summary of Workshop.....	33
Link to Zine.....	34
Evaluation of Intercambio	35-38

# What is the International Youth Exchange (*Intercambio*)?

The Community Agroecology International Youth Network hosts an international exchange (*intercambio*) that rotates between partner organizations in Mexico, Nicaragua, and California. Here, we share experiences, knowledge, and practices and we organize with our cooperative communities or other organizations focused on food sovereignty. Since the last exchange was three years ago, we have organized the 7th *Intercambio* in Santa Cruz and Watsonville. This year 20 youth leaders and young people from rural areas participated. The three regions had the opportunity to get to know each other, as well as university students, organizations and local producers in California that are working to make food systems more sustainable and just. The days were comprised of a variety of activities in Santa Clara, two days on campus at UC Santa Cruz, and two days in Watsonville in Santa Cruz County

# Goals and Vision

For seven years, RIAC-Juvenil has worked to build food sovereignty in their communities through participatory action research, regional encuentros and the promotion of home and school gardens, seed banks, artisanal fertilizers, solidarity markets, and the recovery of native seeds to name just a few. They have taken a leading role and woven solidarity relationships between regions by implementing alternative models. These activities are the daily practices that recover campesino, indigenous and migrant dignity, protect the ancestral wisdom of Mother Earth and create opportunities for youth.

With this exchange, CAN continues its effort in opening spaces for learning and dialogue on issues identified as a priority for the Network, such as agroecological diversification, gender justice, solidarity economies, cooperativism, defense of seeds and territory, and more.

- Strengthen the structure and function of the Youth Network (*La Red*)
- Improve capacities in practices that strengthen food security and sovereignty in our communities, and that increases leadership capacity among the youth.
- Strengthen alliances between different partner organizations within CAN and the Youth Network.
- Exchange knowledge and capacity building between youth and the network
- Learn from local experiences in each region that will allow youth to strengthen their projects.
- Develop strategies to raise funds to support the development of the network.
- Share experiences and solutions for social justice and food sovereignty

# Members of the Network

## CAN (The Community Agroecology Network)

Network of organizations committed to the transformation of the food system through agroecology and participatory action research (PAR). Together, CAN promotes food sovereignty in rural communities through sustainable agricultural practices; local control over the production, distribution, and consumption of food; alternative models of commerce; and the empowerment of rural and indigenous youth and women catalyzing these initiatives.



Who we are and what we do....

## CESMACH (Ecological Peasants of the Sierra Madres de Chiapas S.C./ Campesinos Ecológicos de la Sierra Madres de Chiapas S.C.)

Organic, Fair Trade coffee cooperative focused on environmental conservation and success of the biosphere.

### Focus:

- Integration of PAR into meetings with producers and sellers of coffee every month
- Invite people who share how make shampoo, soap, etc.
- Organize organic and diverse native seed banks
- Cook and experiment with native food with municipalities in our network
- Map and discuss seasonal food to improve diets and avoid shortage
- Collaborate with university engineers to find creative ways to protect chickens



## Members of the Network

### CII-ASDENIC (Information and Innovation Center-The Social Development Association of Nicaragua, Las Segovias)

#### Focus:

- Water, food security and production
- Accompany youth through the process of cultivating products, processing them, and marketing them
- Work with youth on small-scale strawberry production
- Connect with the entire community, university, and organization
- Solidarity and cooperation: communicate research findings in accessible formats
- Contact with nature: get university youth interested in community realities
- Farm model: demonstration area where they grow a variety of species, agroecology capacity, against youth leaving agriculture
  - Entrepreneurship and human talent- youth discovering what they want to do with life



# Growing Justice (Cultivando Justicia)

Youth group with a commitment to food system justice in Watsonville, CA

Focus:

- Urban gardens, food justice, and community well-being in Watsonville and Pajaro, CA
- A team of primarily adolescent youth working alongside gardeners in order to create an understanding of the interrelated challenges El equipo de jóvenes de primaria a adolescentes acompañan a jardineros para crear una comprensión de los desafíos interrelacionados de la inseguridad alimentaria, la violencia y la contaminación del medio ambiente; evalúan la importancia de los jardines comunitarios, la recuperación de prácticas tradicionales de crecer, procesar, comer, y compartir la comida.
- Diálogos de saberes sobre el sistema alimentario



# Members of the Network

## FoCAN (Friends of Community Agroecology Network)

Enfoque:

- ‘Cultivando una revolución diaria’—para concientizar a estudiantes sobre los temas de los sistemas alimentarios, y creando alianzas con otras organizaciones
- Transmitir información sobre el modelo transparente de Café de AgroEco
- Gestionar talleres para compartir temas que surgen de proyectos de lxs miembros de la RIAC
- Coordinar el Intercambio Juvenil
- Mantener la cultura que todos tenemos y comer juntos con estudiantes



# KKMM (Ka'Kuxtal Much' Meyaj A.C. )

## Focus:

- Role of youth: collective commitment that we develop with the community
- Cultivate colectivity and union between communities
- Strengthen knowledge on both sides- university and community
- Rescue seeds with Seed Festivals
- Maya Thought
- Workshops by youth for youth: worm composting, agroecology, work with kids
- Changes: the whole family gets involved, community of learning- cultural themes, agroecologies, youth in Mayan ceremonies
- **Goals:** Bring university youth to communities, see the realities we hadn't seen before. Strengthening between all. Right now we are seeing results.



# Members of the Network

## UIMQROO (Maya Intercultural University of Quintana Roo)

## Focus:

- Students of agroecology exchange knowledge and effort in order to get to know campesinos
- Practice in the Maya language
- We make exercises and share trainings in agroecology
- Work in market gardens with kids and communities
- We show what to do, and those that want get together with farmers, producers, and markets/sellers
- Keep bees and study plagues
- Maintain cornfields (Milpas), chickens, and other animals





## UCA San Ramon (La Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias/ The Union of Agricultural Cooperatives)

San Ramón, Matagalpa, Nicaragua

- Network of promoters that are responsible for replicating projects
- Grows coffee, beans, basic grains, vegetables
- Focus on cooperativism, generational relief= inheriting from our ancestors
- Economic entrepreneurship of women and youth
- Youth networks; Alliances
- Pioneers in agroecotourism
- We work on marketing; with CAN we work on AgroEco, with two cooperatives that are working for sustainable and social justice
- Gender equality
- Organic component to generate a quality product



## Members of the Network

### VIDA A.C. (Vinculación y Desarrollo Agroecológico en Cafe/ Linkage and Agroecological Development in Coffee)

Non-profit organization in Veracruz, Mexico, whose mission is to promote social change among campesinx families that produce organic, shade-grown coffee. Through agroecological practices, we humanize the commodity chain, promote campesinx roots, and connect them with new generations to build a coffee culture that will be a sustainable way of life



# CAN Youth Network 2019

CAN

FoCAN

Growing  
Justice

VIDA

KKMM

UCA San  
Ramon

UIMQroo

CESMACH

CII-ASDENIC

# Visit to Santa Clara, California



David (CESMACH) showing off a coffee plant in a greenhouse on the Santa Clara University campus



Santa Clara University students in Dr. Chris Bacon's class shared their projects about diversification



# Arrival Fun



A visit to Natural Bridges and the tidepools



Making posters

Day 1



Jose Alejandro (UIMQroo)



# Establishing Intentions and Defining Terms

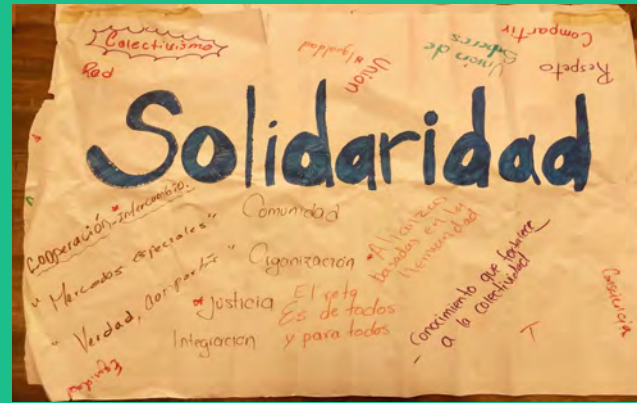
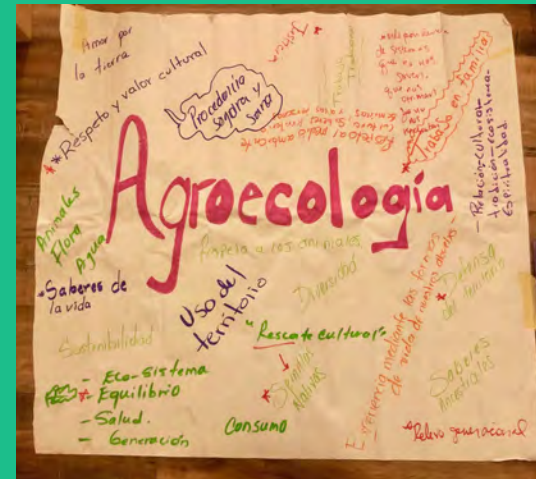
The first day began with an acknowledgement of the original stewards of these Awaswas territories. We continued with a conversation about the history of the Youth Network, emphasizing the use and importance of participatory action research (PAR). We reflect on where we are in the fight for agroecology and we dialogued in order to agree on our path, opening it up for the course of the next 4 days.

Considering our community involvement, we defined terms central to the communities and organizations where we come from:

Food Sovereignty

Agroecology

Solidarity





The group visited Pie Ranch on the coast north of Santa Cruz. We learned about their farm stand, CSA boxes (a community economic model supporting the farm) and the educational programs they organize for young people, along with collaborations with regional groups such as the Amah Mustsun Tribe. We began by visiting Amah Mustun garden, where intergenerational learning and teaching takes place.

The farm manager told us about the rotation practices they use with their crops and about his traditional knowledge of coordinating the use of water in Oaxaca.

## Visit to Pie Ranch





For dinner a good Ajiaco with salad

## Intercambiando and Welcome Reception at Santa Cruz Coffee Roasters



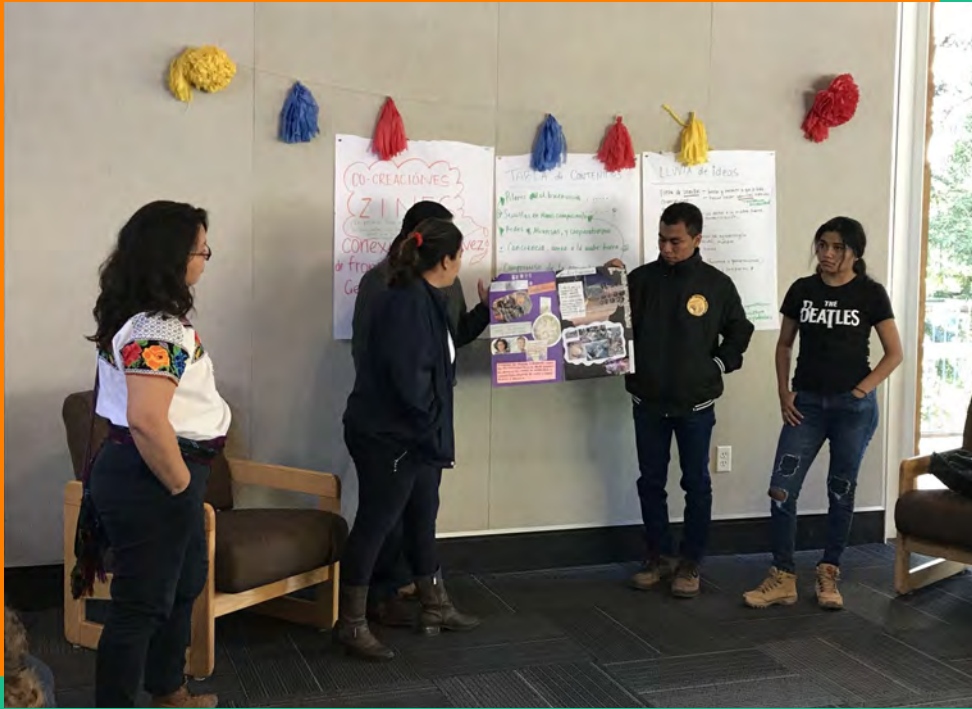
Bronson invited participants and supporters of the youth and Exchange network to a reception at the SCCR Café in downtown Santa Cruz. The young people shared what RIAC is for them and why it is important to bring everyone together and Bronson shared that his solidarity with AgroEco is important for creating transparent trade model where everyone participates.



# Día 2



With leaders of the dining hall workers union at UC Santa Cruz



With inspiration and support from the student group People of Color Sustainability Collective (POCSC), the group made a handmade zine, in the tradition of covering topics normally excluded by the commercial press.

Here they declared the pillars of good living, food sovereignty and the importance of alliances, organization and connection in the network.

\*\* The Zine is included in the link at the end of the Memoria



## Zine: Connecting Across Borders and Generations



Lunch was with Nico and Becky, union leaders of AFSCME 3299, We heard about the struggle for fair wages and benefits by union workers in food service at UCSC. A group of women working in the dining hall also joined to share their experiences fighting and making gains with the union, within an institution that uses more and more external contractors to avoid paying living wages, in a region facing a housing crisis .

Throughout the discussion, there was solidarity between service and production roles in the food system, and among representatives of several countries.

## Lunch with Members of the Dining Hall Worker's Union





The group visited the Amah Mutsun garden in the arboretum at UCSC. It is a space where members of the local Amah Mutsun tribe and allies care for the land with ancestral practices.

We have always been part of nature, the current system makes us think that we are not part of the ecological cycles.

Recognizing their traditional practices of stewarding the land, the group also understood the Agroecology of the indigenous peoples of this region.

## Tour of the Amah Mutsun Garden



**Darling (UCA San Ramon) Presentando**

We heard from the groups involved in the production and distribution of AgroEco. VIDA and UCA San Ramón shared their stories with agrarian reforms, the importance of cooperativism in the struggle to defend land, and the connection of agroecology and community sovereignty with issues of gender and reproductive rights.

FoCAN and the Café for the People student groups shared their commitments to building awareness on campus and support solidarity economies in the process.

**Panel: La Vida Campesina, Agroecology, y Gender**



We learned about the participatory action research projects that CESMACH and UIMQRoo do with young people and farmers to support diversification through agroecology and build greater community resistance against climate change and unpredictable markets.

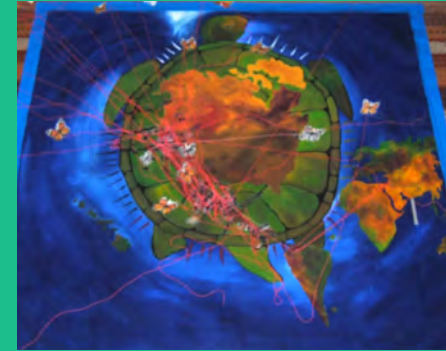
**Presentation: Agroecology Diversification and Community Resilience**



Jose Alejandro (UIMQroo), Camilo (KKMM), David (CESMACH), y Natalia (FoCAN)

## Seeds in Migration: A World Without Borders

The group joined UCSC students to map their roots from birth to where they found themselves above Abya Yala, the earth on turtle's back. We flew like butterflies to identify the regions where we have been situated. We shared our experiences with migration, the personal and structural barriers we face, and where we want to "fly" next. There was a consensus that the activity was beautiful, but also heavy with the reality of the losses we face: the loss of language and connections to the community social fabric as a result of migration and dispossession. This Exchange was part of the reconnection.



"Migration can be seen from many perspectives. Like a dream. Something clear is that we seek the common good. And this is something that motivates us. We are going to spread learning where we are going." Selena (Ka'Kuxtal)<sup>22</sup>



# Día 3



Nixtamal of blue corn, brought by immigrant communities to California from the central region of Mexico



Part of the group at the lunch table and inside the heart of one of the world's largest trees; a sequoia

We had lunch under the big and quiet redwoods. There we talked in a space held especially for the young people of the network, without structure or theme, with the fluidity of the desire to spend time together and get to know each other.

We walked in the forest, learning a little about nature. We located a banana slug, and one of the trees allowed us all to enter into its heart

## Una Tarde en las Secoyas Grandes





Camilo, Jose Alejandro, Arely, preparing corn for the dough; Katherine cutting the cilantro

## Cocina Compartida

Always a favorite event of Intercambio, Cocina Compartida (The Shared Kitchen) was a moment for everyone to join together, cook, eat and share traditional and favorite recipes from their home regions. Recipes included Quesadillas Mexicanas (with squash flowers), Indio Viejo (Nicaragua), Tomato with Pumpkin Seed (Mexico), Handmade Tortillas, Banana Bread (CA) and much more!



Selena, Selina, Camilo, (Alvaro) cooking a suckling pig

# Día 4



Dinner inspired by ingredients and recipes from California and Mesoamerica: Baked carrots, zucchini, blue tortillas, blueberry and quince salad, pipian turkey, chocolate with marigold flower nuggets, blackberries and coconut!

# Visions

## What to expect?

- Share ideas and vision of cooperation.
- Value ancestral knowledge and spiritual issues (what we were, what we are, what we will be)
- Share, trust and learn together to share with young people of my municipality
- Strengthen the youth network.
- Return and share with the youth of our regions.
- Discuss agroecology as struggle and movement.
- Emphasize:
  - Collective well-being, Good living
  - Taking into account future generations
  - Move toward autonomy
  - As complementary
  - Emotion
  - Sound

## What do we see?.

- Power and strength of the people and groups of the network
- Agroecology, Struggle and Movement
- Life struggle, always something to do better
- Whatever we do, think about future generations
- With desire
- Recognition of what we have always been
- There are many threats - to farmers, vulnerable communities, indigenous communities
- Exchange in order to confront threats





Ashley showed the group the River Park garden

Ashley (Growing Justice) and her mother Beatriz shared their story of claiming an empty lot to turn it into a community garden. Growing Justice youth have 9 boxes and are part of the creation of community in the garden. Growing Justice's youth also shared their mobile art exhibition focused on community testimonies about lived experiences working and living alongside the agroindustrial system of the Pajaro Valley. It is an example of the effort of a peri-urban community, most of whom are migrants and campesinos claiming a way to plant with their customs.



Eliodoro presented his garden plot

The group visited the Mesa Verde garden, Mi Jardin Verde. There, gardeners with many years of experience shared their plots and shared their history with agriculture that they brought from Mexico and Central America, the techniques they use, and the exchanges they make to carve a space in the fight against industrial agriculture and monocultures .

## Visit to the River Park and Mi Jardin Verde Community Gardens

# Talleres Mutuos



Agroecological Markets Workshop

Katherine (IIC-ASDENIC) and José Alejandro (UIMQroo) presented on maintaining sovereignty and love at the center of markets. For the farmers with whom CII\_ASDENIC works, having access to land but moving to the market is difficult, and young people are working in commercializing through direct networks and markets. Some are starting to produce strawberries.

Jose Alejandro shared his story with his dad's milpa and his efforts accompanying his family and other producers memories of his grandfather's grandparents, before the agrochemicals



Workshop on the Defense of Seeds and Territory

Ka'Kuxtal shared a workshop on the work of their communities and the defense of native seeds and their legacy against corporate take-over through soy transgenics. The youth of the team shared about seed festivals, women's economic autonomy, and knowledge recovery. We reflected on an activity on the process of dispossession and how we can respond in a community-based way.

"What does a seed mean?"

Food; germination; sacred; information; memory; lifetime; it's very open "Jesus (Ka'Kuxtal)





Jaque, Hugo and Carmen playing music during dinner



On the last night we ate dinner with the gardeners of Mesa Verde. We ate a feast prepared with love, accompanied by the guidance of our ally Madeline Thompson. It was intimate and the last of the activities after four days ended with harmony, music, and celebration. Upon closing the event, the members of the network and some new friends shared their thoughts on the most important moments and the things they learned. Many youth shared that they were returning to their communities inspired.

## Community Dinner and Closing





The group on the last night in  
Watsonville



# Declaratory

During the four days, the group created shared definitions of important terms and discussed the main problems we face in our work.

In the end, we also created proactive proposals towards our 5-year vision.



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# Collective responses of the Seeds in Migration workshop



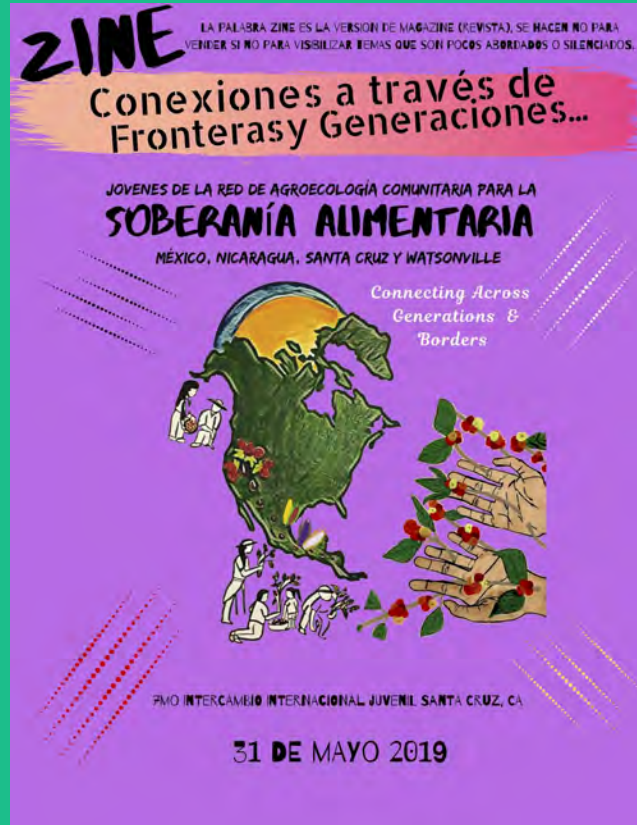
## INTERCAMBIO INTERNACIONAL DE JOVENES SOBRE LA SOBERANIA ALIMENTARIA : SEMILLAS EN MIGRACIÓN SANTA CRUZ Y WATSONVILLE 30 DE MAYO -2 DE JUNIO 2019



<p>VENIMOS DE...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAMPECHE. SOY INDIGENA MAYA Y DE PADRES CAMPESINOS</li> <li>• VENCO DE ZAMORA MICHOACAN</li> <li>• PUEBLO INDIGENA, NIC. VENGO DE WATSONVILLE Y MIS RAÍZ SON VERACRUZ MEXICO</li> <li>• DESIERTO Y TRÓPICO LOS ANGELES</li> <li>• MIS RACIES SON TIERRAS CHATINAS Y ZAPOTECAS. NACÍ EN SAN DIEGO E IMIGRE A SANTA CRUZ Y SALINAS</li> <li>• MIS PADRES VIENEN DE MICHOACAN.</li> <li>• I COME FROM BOYLE HEIGHTS, RACIES DE OCOTLAN, JALISCO Y SAN JOCIQUIN, QUERETARO</li> <li>• TIERRAS MAYAS DE LA PENINSULA DE YUCATÁN</li> <li>• NICARAGUA. VIVO EN ESTELÍ, NACÍ EN RIVAS</li> <li>• LA CULTURA MAYA. CHUNHUB, Q. ROO, MÉXICO. ¡AJUA!</li> <li>• "XMABEN". "MAYA" "MAIZ"</li> <li>• LA MADRE TIERRA</li> <li>• SAN FRANCISCO, CA (TIERRA MIWOK, POMO, OHLONE). RAÍCES DE EUROPA.</li> <li>• VENGO DE UNA MADRE Y UN PADRE DE VERACRUZ. (WATSONVILLE)</li> <li>• SOY DE PACIFICA, CERCA DE SAN FRANCISCO. MIS ANCESTROS SON DE CENTRO AMERICA Y EUROPA</li> <li>• LA SIERRA DE MILPILLAS Y GUANJUATO COMO SEMILLA A EL CENTRO URBAN DEL SURESTE DE LOS ANGELES DESDE EL MAIZ, NOPAL, Y PIÑON</li> <li>• RAICES: VERACRUZ NACIDA: WATSONVILLE, CA</li> </ul>																												
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Link to the Zine



[https://issuu.com/communityagroecologynetwork/docs/zine\\_riac\\_soberania\\_alim\\_2019\\_esp](https://issuu.com/communityagroecologynetwork/docs/zine_riac_soberania_alim_2019_esp)

