



Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea)

The SHP Sustainability & Regenerative Practices Toolkit

Sustainable Herbs Program
AMERICAN BOTANICAL COUNCIL



Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea)

REGENERATIVE FARMING

Increasing the resilience of farms is a key strategy to address the climate crisis and ensure a more stable source of raw materials for your business. Regenerative agriculture builds soil health which in turn supports greater socio-economic health and resilience, which in turn supports farmers as they adapt to changes in climate. Innovative initiatives are taking these ideas further and thinking not just about regenerative agriculture but regenerative businesses, thinking about their business not as a machine, but as a living system.

Three-quarters of the world's food supply comes from just twelve crops and give livestock species. Medicinal herbs grow well in mixed cropping or agroforestry and they potentially add tremendously to agrobiodiversity.*

Biodiversity and Agriculture

- **The Agrobiodiversity Index** is a tool to measure agrobiodiversity and recommend action to support biodiversity in food and agriculture. The first **Agrobiodiversity Index Report: Risk and Resilience** published in 2019 brings together these data from 10 countries to measure food system sustainability and resilience.
- **Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity in Sustainable Food System** — Produced by **Biodiversity International** and published in 2017, this book and website summarizes evidence on using agrobiodiversity to develop more resilient food systems, reversing environmental degradation, combating climate change, and reducing poverty and malnutrition.
- **The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture** — A summary of the 500-page report, this is the first global assessment of biodiversity for food and agriculture produced by the WHO's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Highlights from the report are shared on the **FAO website**.

*Impact on Human Health: Through direct and indirect exposure, an estimated 20,000 unintentional deaths occur every year as a result of pesticide poisoning 35, while causing acute adverse health impacts to anywhere between 1 and 41 million people 36. **TEEB for Agriculture and Food Interim Report** 2015, page 7.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) root harvest



Regenerative Agriculture in the Natural Products Industry:

Below are some excellent resources to get you started in understanding the concepts of and principles of regenerative agriculture:

- **Rodale Institute** has resources on their research into the science to uncover the most effective, efficient, and regenerative farming practices.
- **Kiss the Ground** provides educational content on regenerative farming. It has resources and trainings targeted to farmers and rancher, chefs, business leaders, and others.
- **General Mills regenerative** has a wealth of detailed resources available, including overviews of **Regenerative Agriculture** and **Ecosystem Health** and the **Regenerative Agriculture Self-Assessment v2.0**. In partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), General Mills published **Re-thinking Soil: A Roadmap to Soil Health**. The webinar, "**How Big Food Can Drive Big Change: General Mills' Commitment to Regenerative Agriculture**," discusses broad issues about regenerative agriculture with specific examples from how General Mills is implementing these practices.
- **Pure Strategies** produced the report, **Connecting to the Farm: How Companies are Engaging in Agriculture to Build Regenerative and Thriving Supply Chains**. This report describes the efforts of five companies—Danone North America, Dr. Bronner's, Sun World, The North Face, and Wrangler—to advance regenerative agriculture in their supply networks, best practices used, and advice to help other companies support sustainable agriculture.
- Kirschenmann Lecture at Stone Barns, "**How Big Food can Drive Big Change: Scaling Regenerative Agriculture for Everyone**," provides a broader perspective on the food system and our need to change.
- **Climate Collaborative's webinar: The Regenerative Toolbox: Developing and Implementing Self-Assessment Tools**.

For resources specific to the natural products industry:

- New Hope Network and the Climate Collaborative have organized a series of



Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) flowers drying



discussions focusing on the role of regenerative agriculture in addressing climate change. Live stream videos as well as shorter summaries of the various panels and presentations can be found at **Climate Collaborative**. **“Moving Toward Regenerative Agriculture”** (videos of the session [here](#)) is a 2018 panel at ExpoWest that was held in a room filled to capacity. The complete 2019 Climate Day recording is [here](#).

- New Hope has a **series of posts** on regenerative agriculture targeted to natural products companies, including **9 Ways Your Brand Can Support the Regenerative Movement** with some great suggestions to get started, if this topic is new for your company.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*) crop



For additional information on two new certifications see:

- **SHP’s interview with Matt Dybala**, Farm director for Herb Pharm, about Herb Pharm’s participation in the ROC standard. **Dr. Bronner’s**, **Patagonia**, and **Rodale Institute** are leaders in developing a **new standard for regenerative agriculture**. Several companies are part of a pilot program to test this standard. The **standards** are available for everyone regardless of whether you choose to be certified or not and offer an excellent and thorough guide for improving your farming practices.
- Read **SHP’s interview with Tom Newmark** about the **Soil Carbon Initiative**, an outcome-based, verifiable standard designed to improve soil health and build soil carbon by encouraging the shift to regenerative agricultural practices. This initiative, led by **Carbon Underground** and **Green America**, champions a practice for measuring soil health that can be used by certified organic and conventional farmers to improve soil quality.

ACTION

- **Pick a cultivated plant and trace to its source.**
 - Are there plants that are traceable to the source?
 - Are there sources that are certified organic? Are there any that are grown regeneratively? Is it possible to grow this plant regeneratively by working with farmers using cover crops like milky oats that can be harvested and sold?
- Make a climate commitment to the **Climate Collaborative** for agriculture. Join Climate Collaborative’s **Rooted Community network** and get the guidance and support of some leaders in this field.

DIG DEEPER

- **Sustainable Food Trading Association** serves as a hub for businesses to learn, improve performance, communicate results, share common metrics and best practices. Membership includes access to metrics and indicators, templates for reporting, toolkits for sustainability programming, measuring and reporting, and much more. Costs are based on gross annual revenue. Information on membership benefits and applications can be found [here](#).
- **Support Farmer Training** — If your company is not vertically integrated, there are still ways to support the shift to regenerative farming practices, either through your supplier networks (see New Chapter's case study of working with suppliers) or for supporting organizations that are helping farmer's transition to regenerative practices.
 - Make a donation to **The Farmland Program**, a program of Kiss the Ground, which provides a scholarship that funds farmers and ranchers to attend an agricultural training program that best fits their needs and context.
 - Pay for farmers in your network to participate in **regenerative farming workshops through Rodale Institute**.
 - Share these **free training tools (videos)** for farmers to begin implementing regenerative farming practices.
- **Glyphosate Residue Free** — Find out more about the certification. **What Is Glyphosate? And What Does Glyphosate Residue Free (GRF) Labeling Mean?** by Mega-Food is a clear, informative explanation of why we should be concerned about glyphosate, what the labeling means, and why it is important.

Milk thistle seeds (*Silybum marianum*)

