Growing food, kids, and community since 1996.

Moonflower Seeds to Start Grant Report
Summer 'Table Talks' Series

Summary

Our Summer 'Table Talks' Series experienced great success in 2026, with all four workshops reaching or exceeding our 20-participant capacity! We were able to reach 63 participants in total, with 87% of them being first-time YGP workshop participants (many of whom returned for one or more additional workshops). This summer, attendees learned about backyard honey beekeeping and Moab's early fruit-growing legacy, refined their skills in building healthy garden soil, and practiced identifying & arranging edible flowers. Workshop attendees also enjoyed delicious, garden-fresh dinners prepared by our Farm Programs Director, Sarah Bowen, which were themed to complement each workshop topic and connect learned skills to nutritious seed-to-table dinners.

This report describes our use of the $1000 Seeds to Start grant provided to us by Moonflower Community Cooperative during the 2026 calendar year. With these funds, we were able to offer our first Table Talk workshop free to participants; to purchase locally sourced dinner ingredients from Moonflower and regionally sourced ingredients from City Market; to purchase supplies to sustain future Table Talks series; and to evaluate whether we could sustain the program long-term with a ticketed $30 price and a capacity increase to 30 participants per workshop.





Our Edible Flowers workshop & dinner with Jess Oldham and Melisa Morgan on August 26, 2026.

The Workshops

July 15 – Honey Bees: An Evening of Foraging with Jerry Shue



This was our third workshop on honey beekeeping with Jerry, so we decided to offer this one for free. 15 participants learned about the benefits and challenges of honey beekeeping, and learned key steps to starting their own backyard beekeeping practices. Sarah's dinner menu featured local honey, edible flowers, and garden-fresh produce that relies on the work of honey bees to grow. Dishes showcased zucchinis and squash blossoms, tomatoes, peaches, apples, and more.

This was our only workshop with no-shows and last-minute cancellations; our seasonal staff filled the remaining seats. Despite having 8 people waitlisted, only 15 participants ended up attending the workshop. We suspect that the heat and the free ticket price factored into this.

August 12 – Building Healthy Soil with Cory Farnsworth

22 participants learned about healthy garden soil composition, and were guided through hands-on practice identifying soil types and texturing soil throughout the garden. Folks took notes and came prepared with questions to address problems in their own gardens or resolve hesitations around starting gardens. Over half of the people who came to this workshop considered themselves to be first-time gardeners!

Sarah's menu highlighted what 'grows' down underground, highlighting seeds and root vegetables like carrots, potatoes, and beets. Though we advertised that each workshop was limited to 20 attendees, we decided to accommodate up to 25 people for this workshop and succeeding ones.





Participants practice texturing soil (left) and learn about how soil composition affects orchards (right).

August 26 – Edible Flowers with Jess Oldham and Melisa Morgan
23 participants joined Melisa in a discussion of the meaning, symbolism, and traditional uses of flowers, and were then guided through a tasting and arranging of fully edible flower bouquets by Jess. This workshop was beloved by all, especially since participants got to take home their bouquets for display and use in future dishes. Sarah's menu utilized dozens of edible flowers as both crucial ingredients and garnish; amaranth, for example, was used to make a gluten-free peach tart crust, and garlic flavors were substituted for with chive flowers.

September 23 – Peach Days: Moab's Fruit Legacy with Sally Satterfield
24 participants joined us for our last Table Talk of the season, which explored the history of Moab's early orchards and fruit-growing efforts through stories, photographs, and articles brought by Sally from the Moab Museum. Folks loved learning about Moab's history as an agricultural town, and enjoyed comparing historic photographs of orchards and farms to their modern counterparts.

Sarah's menu incorporated many of the season's best YGP-grown fruits, preserved from the previous months, into mocktails, jams, sauces, and dressings. She also used a historical recipe for peach ice cream published in a local newspaper, with which folks went home with a copy.





Our workshop on Moab's fruit-growing legacy on September 23, 2026.

Looking Ahead

In 2027, we plan to offer four Table Talk workshops & dinners on topics identified and requested by this year's participants, which may include: edible native plants, fermentation, tea-making, zero-waste cooking, growing gardens from table scraps, edible insects, local foraging, Indigenous farming techniques, and the history of victory gardens. We plan to accommodate 30 participants per workshop with a $30 ticketed price, which will cover the cost of ingredients, staff time, and speaker compensation. We're also looking into ways to record the workshop portions of each Table Talk and post them on our website the following day to increase the accessibility of gardening education, pending our website's redesign.

Program Goals and Outcomes

In our application, we identified the following goals for this series in 2026:

1. For at least 50% of surveyed participants to be first-time YGP workshop participants
2. For at least 80% of surveyed participants to rate the quality of each workshop and dinner as high or very high
3. To evaluate whether the perceived value of each Table Talk matches a ticketed $30 price per participant
4. To evaluate if the Summer Table Talks series can be sustained without future grant support long-term with a $30 price per participant

We received only 10 survey responses, but we're happy to report that:

1. **87% of all 63 workshop participants were first-time YGP workshop participants.** 11 of those 55 first-time participants returned to one or more additional workshops!
2. 100% of surveyed participants rated the quality of each workshop and dinner as high or very high.
3. 100% of surveyed participants reported that a ticketed $30 price per participant felt appropriately matched to the value of their experience.
    Note: 50% of surveyed participants noted that they felt the value of their experience was worth *more* than $30. Still, they were appreciative of the affordability of a high-quality, community-based learning experience.
4. YGP is confident that our Table Talks can be sustained long-term with a $30 price per participant, with 30 attendees per workshop.

We received lots of comments in our surveys, as well as verbal feedback from participants during each workshop & dinner and immediately afterwards. Some highlights included:

- "This is the best night of my life!"
- "We had so much fun at the peach dinner tonight. Thanks for creating such an enriching experience for the community."
- "Hace mucho no probaba un menú completamente vegetariano. Lo mejor, con vegetales del huerto de mi pueblito. Provecho a todas las familias México-Americanas."
    - *"It's been a long time since I tried a completely vegetarian menu. The best part is that the vegetables came from the garden in my small town. Wishing a good meal to all Mexican-American families."*
- "Thanks for that beautiful event. And the chef cooked an excellent meal for everybody. I was very impressed."
- "I am new to the area and everyone made me feel so welcomed. I will be back for sure. Thank you."
- "Thank you so much for a fabulous evening. What a great influence on my week!"
- "Please continue to do these. They are so amazing."

Spending Summary

Dinner Ingredients	**Budgeted: $880**	**Spent: $808.54**
Workshop 1		
7/9/26	Shamrock Foods: $59.44	Ingredients
7/14/26*	City Market: $26.15	Ingredients, supplies
7/15/26	City Market: $29.81	Ingredients
7/17/26*	City Market: $126.34	Ingredients
**receipts processed late*		
Total	**$241.74**	
Workshop 2		
8/2/26	City Market: $10.29	Sea salt
8/10/26	City Market: $104.99	Ingredients
8/10/26	Moonflower: $51.00	Ingredients
Total	**$166.28**	
Workshop 3		
8/24/26	City Market: $160.66	Ingredients
8/26/26	City Market: $22.39	Ingredients
Total	**$183.05**	
Workshop 4		
9/22/26	City Market: $200.71	Ingredients
9/23/26	City Market: $16.76	Ingredients
Total	**$217.47**	

Kitchen Supplies	**Budgeted: $120**	**Spent: $228.50**
7/9/26	Walmart: $48.07	Beverage dispensers (x2)
7/16/26	Amazon: $8.99	Gummy worm molds
7/24/26	Webstaurant Store: $45.80	Dry erase buffet table signs
9/29/26*	Walmart: $125.64	Mocktail glasses
**for future Table Talks*		
Total	**$227.78**	

Total Spend	**Awarded: $1000**	**Spent: $1037.04**