

Small World, Shared Ground

Lacey Anderson

Artist's Statement

These photographs were captured in the GRO.UND Learning Gardens, where I work as a garden fellow. I designed the garden and collaborated with staff and volunteers to plant, tend, and care for the space: building not only beds for food and flowers, but habitat for pollinators and moments of shared attention. The gardens exist because of a shared commitment to providing space, resources, and intention for cultivating living, ecological learning environments.

As I worked, I photographed alongside the labor itself, moving slowly, observing closely, and sharing time with pollinators as they moved through the worlds we were collectively creating. Most of these images were taken with my iPhone in the midst of daily garden work. They were not staged or orchestrated, but captured in passing moments, reflecting the world as it exists when we pause long enough to notice it.

These photographs only exist because this space exists. They speak to what becomes possible when institutions invest in gardens not as decorative landscapes to be observed from a distance, but as living places that invite participation, care, and relationships. While food is

grown here and shared back with the university and the broader community, the learning gardens do more than feed us. They cultivate place-based connections, ecological awareness, and an ethic of care for the land itself. Gardens belong on university campuses not simply as amenities, but as spaces where people work, teach, learn, and come to love the land together. Like our social worlds, gardens thrive through biodiversity, sustained attention, and collective responsibility.

Through these photographs, I aim to make visible the quiet beauty of these small worlds and to invite viewers to slow down, reflect, and notice what often goes unseen. They are an open welcome into the gardens themselves: an invitation to step closer, to care, and to belong.

At Home in the Garden



Gathering Abundance



Resting Place



Lacey Anderson is a photographer whose work draws attention to the natural world through intimate images of plants, animals, and pollinators encountered while gardening. A PhD student in educational foundations and research, she also serves as a garden fellow with the GRO. UND Learning Gardens, where her photographs were captured. Her work highlights biodiversity in everyday landscapes, revealing the beauty and complexity of the small worlds beneath our feet. Through close observation, Anderson's photography invites care, curiosity, and deeper attention to native plants, pollinator habitats, and the living systems that sustain us.