

## **Mehmet Öztan, Ph.D.**

Website: <https://seedkeepers.faculty.wvu.edu/>

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### **Service Assistant Professor**

Dean's Office, August 2021 – present

Department of Geology & Geography, August 2018 – May 2021

Eberly College of Arts & Sciences

West Virginia University (WVU)

- Increased Eberly College's and WVU's profile in the fields of food and environmental justice through publicly engaged activities, workshops and media appearances which also helped close the communicational gap between the university and communities in and beyond West Virginia.
- Initiated and organized Seedy Talks for Eberly College at WVU, a nationally known speaker series for community engagement and outreach purposes with a focus on topics related to environmental, food and health justice, seed and food sovereignty, local economies, story telling, and food and farm traditions of underrepresented minoritized communities.
- Organized workshops for faculty to improve their skills and knowledge in publicly engaged scholarship and research and for students to improve their educational experience at WVU.
- Collaborated with faculty across colleges at WVU in a way that benefits from my service activities in the state to write interdisciplinary grants for historically underserved communities, including communities of color, in West Virginia.

### **Organizer and facilitator**

#### *Speaking events*

- Seedy Talks 10, [Social justice and community work in McDowell County](#), West Virginia, Guest speakers: Jason Tarrt and Amelia Bandy, WVU, 27 October 2022.
- Seedy Talks 9, [The importance of Indigenous worldview in climate adaptation and policy](#), Guest speakers: Rebecca Sinclair and Tiffany Traverse, WVU, 22 March 2022.
- Seedy Talks 8, From garden warriors to good seeds: Native American food and seed sovereignty movements, Guest speaker: Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, WVU, 26 January 2022.
- Seedy Talks 7, Our fields, our seeds, our meals, Guest speakers: Kristyn Leach, Aileen Suzara, and Mehmet Öztan, WVU, 28 October 2021.
- Seedy Talks 6, [Hunting while Black](#), Guest speakers: Dr. Jonathan Hall, Mike Costello, and Amy Dawson, WVU, 6 April 2021.
- Seedy Talks 5, 110 days, 100 degrees Fahrenheit, Guest speaker: Noah Schlager, WVU, 28 January 2021.
- Seedy Talks 4, Race, culture, and language of seeds, Guest speaker: Kristyn Leach,

WVU, 3 February 2020.

- Seedy Talks 3, Appalachians don't owe these companies anything, these companies owe Appalachia the world, Guest speaker: Mike Costello, WVU, 19 November 2020.
- Seedy Talks 2, When you plant a seed, you are growing a story, Ken Greene, WVU, 07 October 2019.
- Seedy Talks 1, I have a dream of good seed and access to good food for everyone, Guest speaker: Ira Wallace, WVU, 12 April 2019.
- Morgantown Seed Preservation Library inaugural panel, WVU, 12 April 2019.

### *Workshops*

- Publicly Engaged Communication, workshop for *New Faculty Academy*, Eberly College of Arts & Sciences, West Virginia University, Spring 2024.
- *How to write for the public (and not just your academic peers)*, workshop for Eberly College of Arts & Sciences, WVU, Presenter: Dr. Cynthia Greenlee, 21 September 2022.
- Growing seeds and seeds' cultural significance, workshop for senior citizens at the Westside Senior Center, Westover, WV, 15 April 2022.
- Seed saving, workshop for Morgantown community members, Morgantown Public Library, Aull Center, Morgantown, 5 April 2022.
- *Uprooting Racism in the Food System*, training for Eberly College of Arts & Sciences, WVU, (Facilitators: Naima Penniman and Leah Penniman, Soul Fire Farm), 20 January 2022.
- Seed saving, workshop and farm tour, Reedsville, WV, organizer, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023.

### *Other events*

- Meetings between WVU faculty and Valscreek (McDowell County, WV) community for grant applications and future collaborations, WVU, Organizer, 27-28 October 2022.
- *Eberly Eats!: Celebrating Our Communities*, A college community dinner with a focus on community engagement, Eberly College of Arts & Sciences, WVU, 26 October 2022.
- Seed of Art exhibit, WVU Downtown Campus Library, Morgantown, WV, Organizer, October-November 2019.

### **Collaborator**

- [WVU Appalachian Futures exhibit](#), August 2019-June 2020.
- Impact of agrobiodiversity on food security in Appalachia, Heritage Harvest Festival, Charlottesville, VA, (other participants include Ira Wallace and Karen Washington), 21 September 2019.
- Seed swap at the Northeast Organic Farming Association-NY winter conference, Syracuse, NY, 19 January 2019.

- Annual, regional seed swap at the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center, Livingston, TN, 6 October 2018.
- Seed swap at the Heritage Harvest Festival, Monticello, VA, 20-21 September 2018.

### **Committee service**

- Slow Food USA Ark of Taste Committee for the South, Member, January 2018-January 2022.
- WVU Eberly College Social Justice Think Tank Committee, Member, Fall 2020.
- WVU Department of Geology & Geography, DEI Committee, Member, Fall 2019-Spring 2020.

### **Interviewer**

- [They Think Racism is a Figment of Our Imagination](#): An Interview with Nagi Koyama, 27 April 2021.