Increasingly health-conscious Americans have an appetite for change. This special symposium explores innovative ways to build a healthier, more resilient food future that provides fresh, nutritious choices while protecting public health and sustaining our environment. Join us for a wide-ranging conversation about sustainable farming, the impact of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the conservation of heritage seeds, and traditional indigenous approaches to the environment and harvest. Speakers include Ricardo Salvador, senior scientist and director of the Food & Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists; Clayton Brascoupe of Tesuque Pueblo, director of the Traditional Native American Farmers Association; and Robin Kimmerer, award-winning writer, scientist, and professor. Tim Johnson, National Museum of the American Indian Associate Director for Museum Programs and Executive Committee member of the Smithsonian’s Living in the Anthropocene Initiative, will moderate the program.

Please join us after the symposium in the Mitsitam Coffee Bar for a wine tasting with the Cedar Band of Paiutes featuring their award-winning certified sustainable wines, Twisted Cedar. These fine wines are a tribute to a proud people.
CLAYTON BRASCOUPE, from Tesuque Pueblo, is the director of the Traditional Native American Farmers Association. Based in the indigenous communities in New Mexico, but with projects as far afield as Belize, the Traditional Native American Farming Association is a leading voice for food sovereignty, with many successes getting farmers back on the land, farming organically, and revitalizing traditional methods. Brascoupe works to preserve and increase community access to heirloom/traditional seeds and to educate the public on traditional seed saving and the GMO threat to our traditional seed heritage.

TIM JOHNSON (Mohawk) is Associate Director for Museum Programs at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. Johnson manages a department that encompasses all aspects of the visitor experience, from exhibitions, education, publications, symposia, and lectures, to cultural and performing arts programs. Previously, Johnson served as executive editor of Indian Country Today, where, over the course of six years, he led the remaking of the publication into the nation’s leading American Indian newspaper, noted for its original reporting, analysis, and commentary on matters of American Indian policy and its steadfast defense of American Indian economic interests. He is an Executive Committee member of the Smithsonian Institution’s Living in the Anthropocene Initiative.

ROBIN KIMMERER, an enrolled member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi, is a scientist, award-winning writer, and Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York. Dr. Kimmerer is the founding Director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, whose mission is to create programs which draw on the wisdom of both indigenous and scientific knowledge for our shared goals of sustainability. Her research interests include the role of traditional ecological knowledge in ecological restoration and building resilience for climate change. In collaboration with tribal partners, she and her students have an active research program in the ecology and restoration of plants of cultural significance to Native people.

RICARDO SALVADOR, descended from indigenous Zapotec and German-American farming families, is an internationally renowned agronomist with more than 20 years of experience working to build a healthier food system. As the senior scientist and director of the Food & Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, Dr. Salvador works with citizens, scientists, economists, and politicians to transform our present food system into one that grows healthy foods while employing sustainable practices. He previously served as a program officer for Food, Health, and Wellbeing with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation where he partnered with colleagues to create programs that addressed the connections between food and health, environment, economic development, sovereignty, and social justice.

Green chile plants in waffle garden at NMAI. Photo by Robert Alexander.