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Community garden

- How can community gardens be a learning tool?



Allotments

- How do allotments enhance biodiversity?

Introduction

Nomadic museum

This project is born from my desire to spend more time in Nature and work with organic materials.

Living in the city, I get easily stressed and overwhelmed, battling with thoughts and anxiety because I am surrounded by noise, people, concrete, demands and so on. In contrast, being in Nature, I feel content, at peace and grounded thanks to the very humbling aspect of Nature.

Sadly, in this modern society I was pushed apart from Nature. I learnt in schools about everything Man made, control, human history but not about the fauna and flora with the same intensity. I grew to be a working adults who knows very little about the flora surrounding me.

During the first half of the semester, I researched allotments and community gardens. Being in those biodiversity havens, I felt very nourished and disconnected from the city. That's when I knew I would want to create a project that would get me outside in Nature.

With this project, I want to learn about the flora and how relevant it has been and still is to our human history. I want to blur the separation between the human and Nature with practical, stimulating and educational pieces that we can easily incorporate in our daily lives and which push us outside to explore.





What?

Nomadic museum, a practical botanical guide to the dutch flora from before, during and since human exploitation, focusing on 5 plants: Heather, Horsetail, Reed, Rapeseed and Scots Pine.

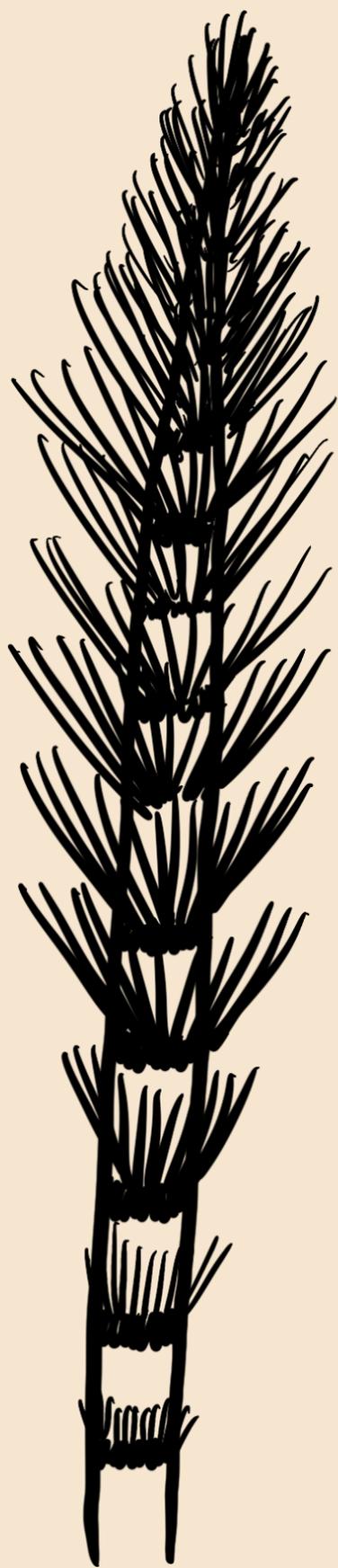
Ceramic handbuilt tableware functioning as a herbarium ; silkscreen printed textile kitchenware functioning as a botanical and historical guide.



Why?

A set of educative tableware and kitchenware that is practical and accessible ; to stimulate people's curiosity to go out in Nature, explore, learn and reconnect with their deeper human instincts.

It becomes a **nomadic museum** for all to buy as a souvenir of the Netherlands in shops, tourism centers, restaurants etc... ; but also for restaurants or residents to use as a part of their dutch identity and showcase it. This project is ageless and aimed at anyone curious about their natural surroundings.



How?

Desk research and interviews with botanical passionates to select relevant historical storytelling plants and further develop their story.

Foraging to make sure the flora selection is realistic and accessible withing Eindhoven and its close surroundings.

Material research to uncover the optimal characteristics for the ceramic making, develop the color palette for both ceramics, textile and silkscreen printing inks.

Finalising the process with an outdoor picnic and botanical tour.



Research

Research process divided into 3 parts:

-Desk research to have a deeper overview and get professional expertise by botanists' thesis, books and so on. Helped to already start a selection of the plants I would be focusing on and discussing during my interviews.

-Interviews with botanical passionates to hear different expertises, levels of knowledge and refine the final storytelling and further refine the selection of plants.

-Material research with clay and pigments (both bought in the Netherlands and not foraged myself) and the plants. Understand the possible color palette, what is feasible, how thick/thin the clay should be and how to properly press the plants for optimal details.

Interviews

3 interviews done with botanical passionates.

The first interview was with Leo, the selection of plants hasn't been decided yet. After discussing with him, I gathered a lot of data on Heather, I also discovered Horsetail and thought the story of it being as old as the Jurassic era to be fascinating and very relevant to the topic. That's when I decided to pick these two before selecting the 3 others based on desk research, and further developing the 5 plant profiles with the next 2 interviews.

**“South of Eindhoven
would be a heather
forest without the
sheeps grazing from it
during the Middle Ages”**



*“Rapeseed is a nice protein for
animals and is great for oil”*

*“Horsetail is a primitive plant from before the Ice
Age, it is one of the first pioneer plant of NL”*

Leo

One of the leader of the food forest Het Kloosterbostuin, used to be a teacher so brings a strong desire of sharing which also translates to his approach of gardening.

“The ancestors of the horsetail are where we got coal from during the Carboniferous period”

“Wood tools making were very good for mental and tactile development due to their intricacy”

“Mugwort (armoise) had narcotic qualities and romans would put them in the sole of the feet to handle blisters. As they walked around Europe, they would sow the seeds so that they could always harvest them wherever”

“Reed and Papyrus are from the same family”

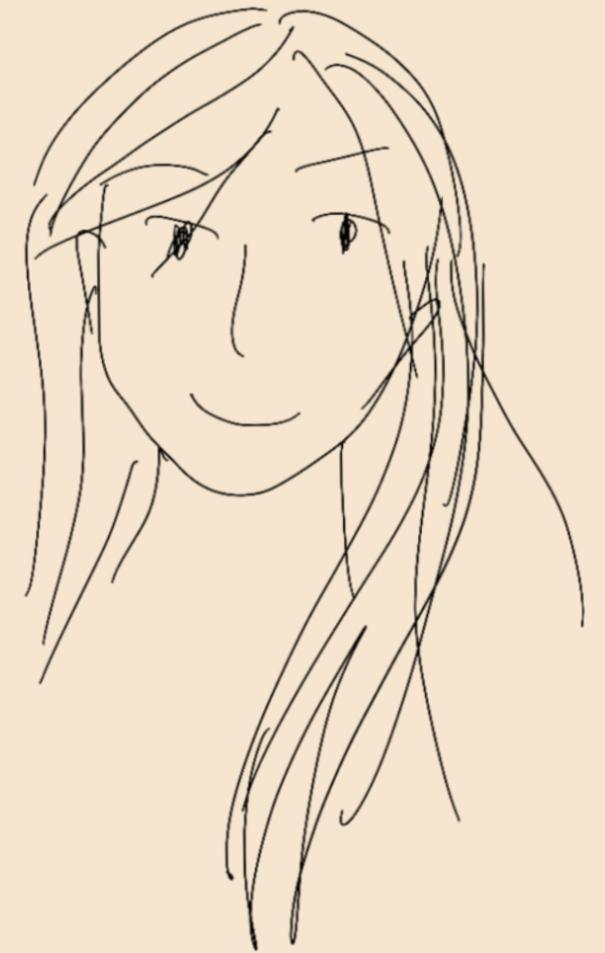


Arno
Volunteer in the food forest Voedselbos and programmer, bringing back this mindset to his everyday life and understanding to the flora.

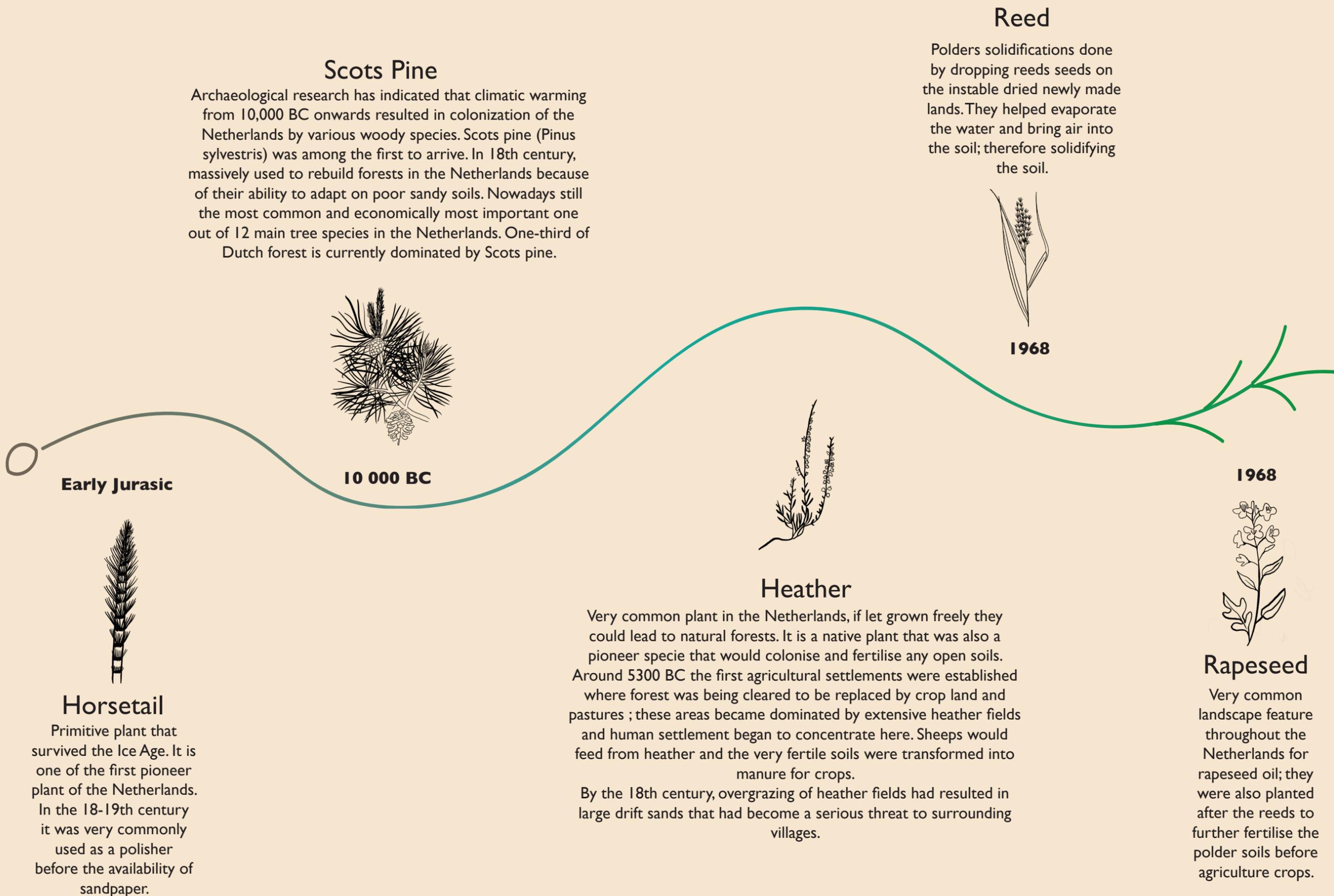
“Horsetail is kinda a fibonacci plant with its structure having mathematical infinity, it can also treat bone breakage”

“Heather can sit underground for decades and come out when the area is left undisturbed. That is the reason why we are now seeing a surge of heather in Brabant, that has been taking greener efforts”

“Reed was connected to wealth and beauty standards in architecture. Rich people would make roof from it while poor people would weave baskets with it”

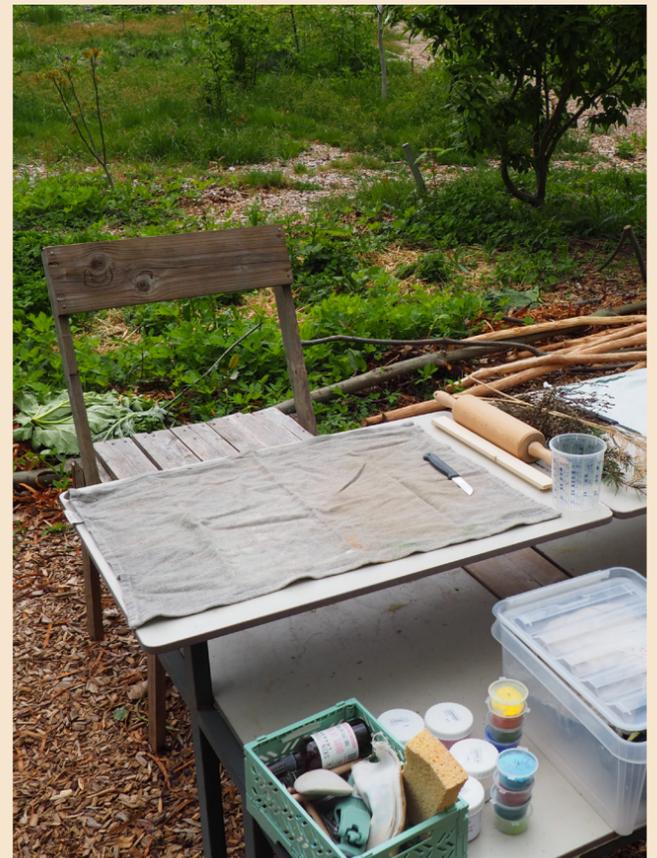


Sterre
Passionate of the medicinal properties of plants and of mathematics, bringing these aspects into her studies of the flora.



Plant selection and first summarised data

First overview on the selection before completing all the interviews



Foraging

Traveling around the VGNP to collect some of the plants and localise them all. This was an important part of the process, it was stressful at times because I thought reed and rapeseeds were hard to find. I also couldn't find horsetail because it hadn't grow out of the ground yet.

At the end, I managed to find all plants which guaranteed that I could move forward with my selection.

Making

Outdoor work session in the community garden for easy access to the freshest plants, because I discovered that horsetail and rapeseed didn't last well over time.

I did plenty of color samples which helped me pick my favorite for the proper production. I also saw that very thin samples didn't work well, they broke which also made me decide on producing thicker plates for better details and to avoid breakage.







Visual identity

Developing the identity of the project through graphic and logo design.

At the end, I chose the circle one (just like seen on the front and back cover) because I thought it was a more unique and joyful logo which I also hope my project can be seen as.

The focus is on Heather - *Calluna Vulgaris*, because of its resiliency symbol, relationship with Eindhoven and extensive fields of heather in the South, leading to a whole natural reserve being named after the plant.

It is a symbol of resilience of plants, but also of the Netherlands and dutch culture.

It also tells a powerful story of Noord-Brabant. Indeed, Heather sits underground and comes out when Nature is left alone, though it wasn't very common in the region anymore, until some years ago when Nature has been given time and space to reclaim itself. Nowadays, we can find extensive fields of Heather in the south of Eindhoven, leading to a national reserve being named after it.

The color palette is composed of very deep and rich natural hues found throughout my foraging experience.

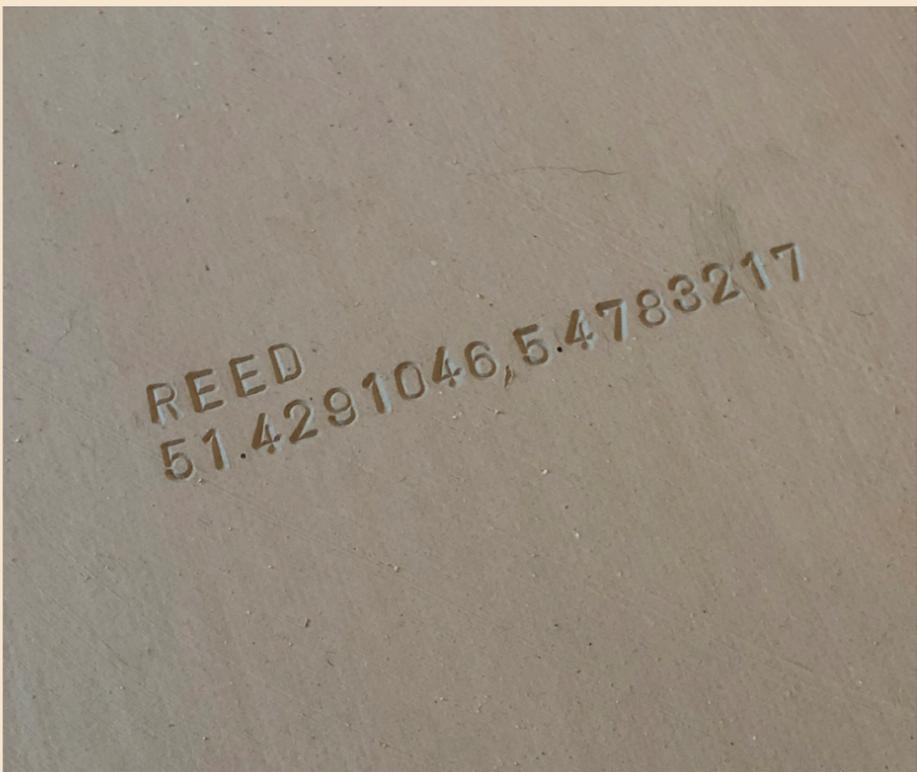


Visualising & Materialising the plant's locations

This allows for people to be curious and encouraged to get out in the open and forage, hunt for the plants and discover Eindhoven and its surroundings with a new eye.

- Stamping plant's coordinates behind the ceramic plates.
- Tablecloth botanical guide and walking tour map.

It's also a nice packaging for the ceramics or to take away the plates for a picnic at one of the locations.



Making of the ceramic plates

Clay was colored by hand mixing pigments (material bought in NL) and the color palette chosen was different levels of green and purple in reference to the green common to all plants and the purple of heather. They are also very organic and soft colors, gentle on the eye to leave the spotlight on the plants themselves.

The shapes are organic, simple and minimalistic and the plates are handbuilt from slabs, a slow process just like Nature. Once again with the aim of mimicking a natural relationship to the materials.

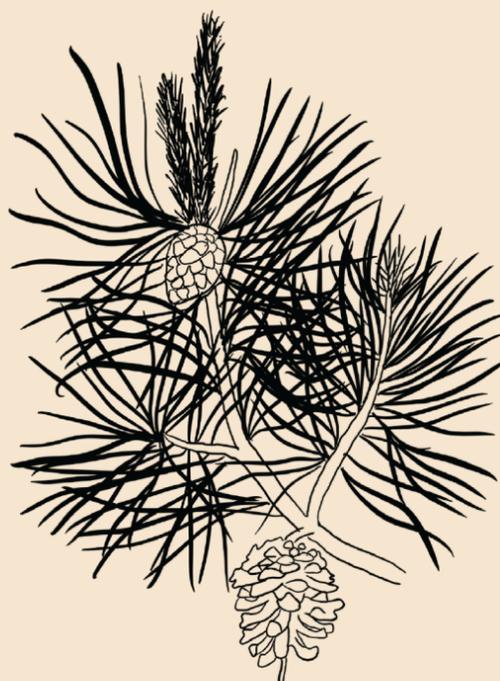


Horsetail - Equisetum Hyemale

Horsetail dates back to the Jurassic era, back then it used to be as tall as trees and is a decedent of the coal family species.

It is one of the rare plants that survived the Ice Age, therefore becoming one of the first pioneer plant of the Netherlands, meaning it would colonise and fertilise any open soils.

In the 18-19th century it was very commonly used as a polisher before the availability of sandpaper. It was also used to scrub pots and pans due to its high levels of silica.



Scots pine - Pinus Sylvestris

From 10 000 BC onwards, after the Ice Age, migration of woody species from Southern Europe to the Netherlands happened. Scots pine was among the first ones to arrive.

During the dutch golden age, 16th to 17th century, the Netherlands was a great wood importer with Scots pine being a major material, since peat rather than wood was used as a burning material. The intensive use of peat lead to the creations of Lakes in the Netherlands like Vinkeveen lake.

Unfortunately, by the 16th century, most of the Netherlands was deforested for the industry, and in the 1800, Scots pines were massively used to rebuild forest thanks to their adaptability to poor sandy soils, therefore accounting for one third of the current dutch forests.

Heather - Calluna Vulgaris

Heather is a native plant that was also a pioneer specie just like Horsetail was. It can sit underground the soil for decades, and come out when the land is left undisturbed.

Around 5300 BC the first agricultural settlements were established in the southern loam soils, where forest was being cleared to be replaced by crops and pastures ; these areas became dominated by extensive heather fields and human settlement began to concentrate here. Sheeps would feed from heather and the very fertile soils were transformed into manure for crops.

By the 18th century, overgrazing of heather fields had resulted in large drift sands that had become a serious threat to surrounding villages.



Reed - Phragmites Australis

In 1968, the polder Zuidelijk Flevoland was reclaimed in the Netherlands. Polders solidifications were done by dropping reeds seeds on the instable newly made lands. They helped evaporate the water and bring air into the soil; therefore solidifying the ground.

Reed was also used to make baskets, as well as the typical dutch reed roofs.



Rapeseeds - Brassica Napus

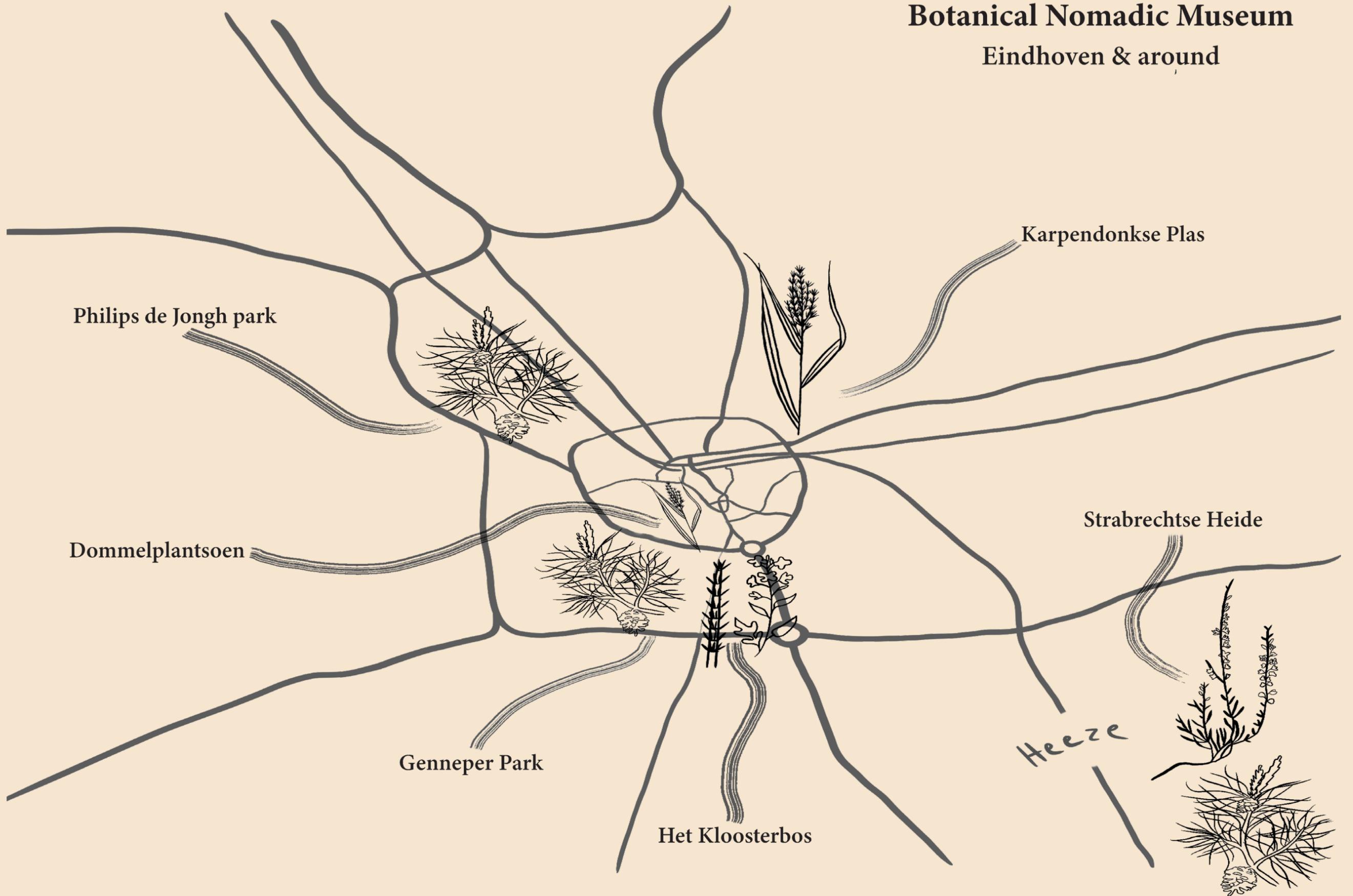
Very common landscape feature throughout the Netherlands. Also used to make rapeseed oil. In 1968, during the polder constructions ; rapeseeds were planted after the reeds to further fertilise the soil, before welcoming agriculture crops.

Designing the tablecloth botanical guide and walking tour map

One side with illustrations of the plants, storytelling and historical context.

Botanical Nomadic Museum

Eindhoven & around



Designing the tablecloth botanical guide and walking tour map

Other side with a map of Eindhoven, a general pinpointing on where to find which plants and the name of the locations.







Silkscreen

The first step was the selection of the tea towels, I first started with a choice of gold ink because I liked the luxurious feeling it adds, for me it was a nice way of leveling up the aesthetics of the textile.

I first started on light green and dark blue fabrics, gold didn't pop on the green but looked amazing on the dark blue so I selected this color.

With time and reflection, I decided the dark blue and gold ink didn't really make sense with the plants and color palette I chose accordingly for the plates.

So I bought yellow and light green fabric again and used purple ink.

Light green and purple being the colors I already had with the plates and yellow as reference to the rapeseed flowers.







Reed (*Phragmites australis*)



Horsetail (*Equisetum*)
Primitive plant that survived the Ice Age. It is one of the first pioneer plants of the Netherlands. In the 18-19th century it was very commonly used as a polisher before the availability of sandpaper.

Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

From 10,000 BC after the ice age woody species migrated from Southern part of Europe to the Netherlands. Scots pine was among the first to arrive.

In 18th century used to redden their sand.



Horsetail (*Equisetum*)

Primitive plant that survived the Ice Age. It is one of the first pioneer plants of the Netherlands.

Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Reflection

My aim with this project was truly to be surrounded by Nature, learn about the flora, make with materials and through processes that bring me joy.

At first I was overwhelmed by all the possibilities, the first focus was on edible plants which is super vast. Anchoring the research, around a relationship of Dutch history and floral uniqueness, really brought a clear vision.

I discovered many new green areas while also discovering more aspects of the city I've been living in the past 3 years. Enriching my knowledge of Eindhoven.

I also got to meet and talk with wonderful people, all equally deeply passionate about botanics. I got to share a part of their world that I am grateful for.

The ceramic process was very frustrating due to the full capacity at the workshops, any firing took 3 weeks to happen which resulted in getting the samples AND plates last minute, without a possibility to improve from them. The green pigments turned much brighter than expected, while the purple disappeared. I also noticed that reed didn't turn out clear enough. At least I know what I can look into in the future.

Working in collaboration was also very valuable as it taught me more on adaptability, relying on others and flexibility. All the brainstorm sessions we had together clearly sharpened the whole concept and helped me take many steps back to make better design decisions.

Regardless, This project brought me a lot of joy, pride, satisfaction, groundness and made me feel close to my core self; it is a concept I will expand to other countries in my future career 100%.



Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

From 10,000 BC after the ice age woody species migrated from southern part of Europe to the Netherlands. Scots pine was among the first to arrive.

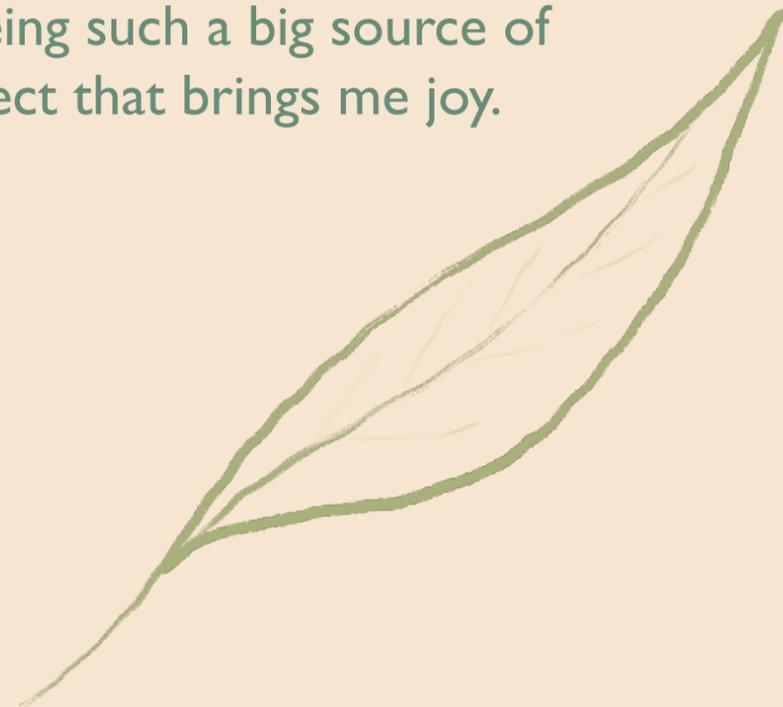
18th century, massive forests in the Netherlands because of its ability to adapt on sandy soils. Today still the most important one out of the species in the country - third of Scots pine.

Special thanks to Arno and Sterre for their time and knowledge.
Thank you Leo for the interview and also for giving us the wonderful
opportunity of accessing the stunning Kloosterbos throughout our
process.

Special thanks to Daisy with whom many parts of the projects have
been collaborated with.

Thank you Marie for the delicious homemade pastries and thank you
Kate, Flo, Hattie and Edie for joining the picnic.

Last but not least, thank you to Nature for being such a big source of
inspiration and allowing me to make a project that brings me joy.



Horseshair
(Equisetum)
Primitive plant
that survived
the Ice Age. It
is one of the
first pioneer
plants.



Quality
Paper

Scots Pine
Sue



*Pinus
austriaca*

1000 BC after the ice
species migrated
from the Netherlands.

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All images and illustrations were made by myself, Marion Cévaër.

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