

# COLOR OUR COLLECTIONS

LuEsther T. Mertz Library

Black  
Foodways



NYBG

#ColorOurCollections  
#NYBGLibrary

**Cover:** *Sesamum indicum* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 1:** *Allium cepa* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 2:** *Capsicum annum* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 3:** *Oryza sativa* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 4:** *Musa paradisiaca* L.  
L'Obel, Matthias de, *Plantarum seu stirpium icons*. Antverpiae, 1581.

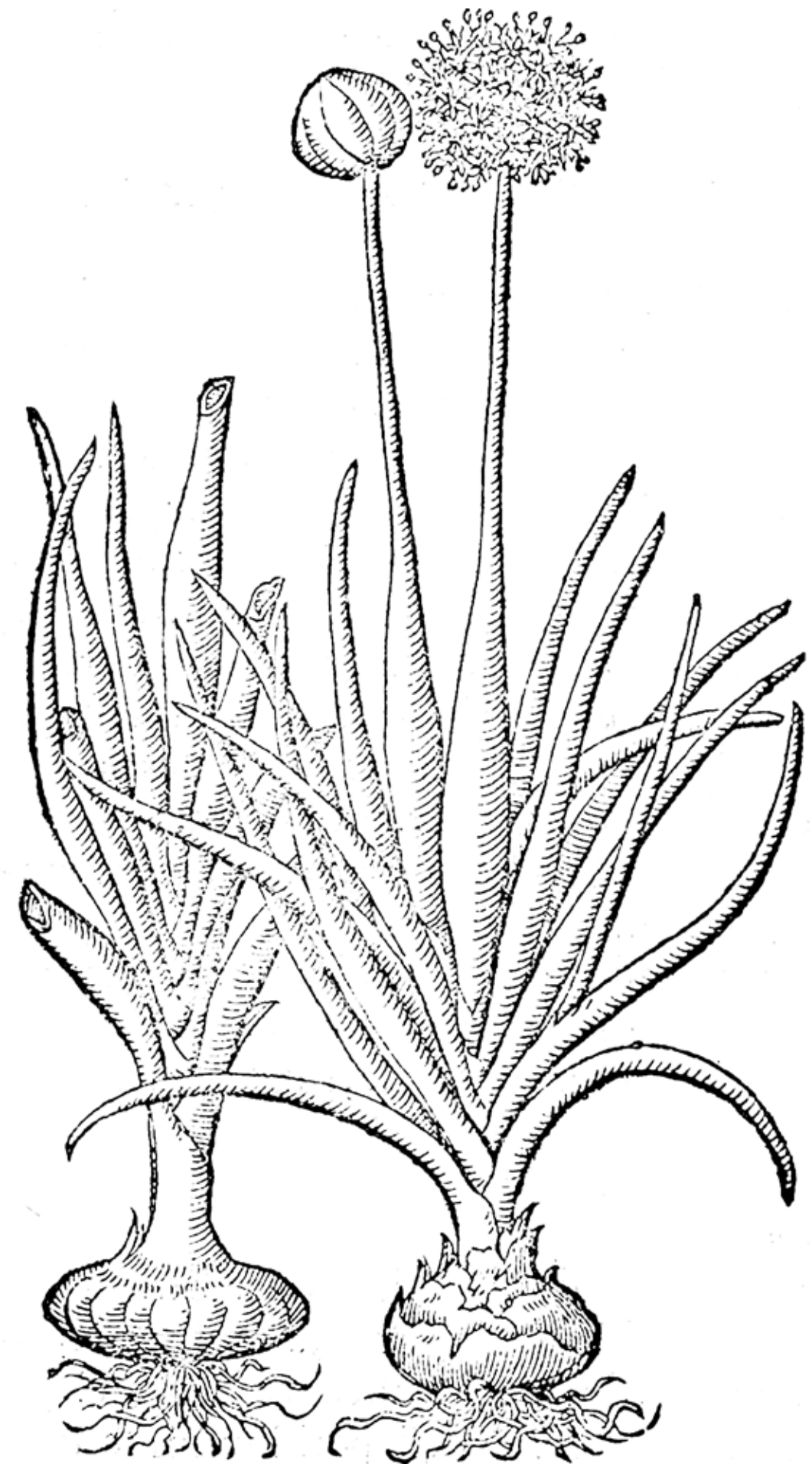
**Figure 5:** *Triticum turgidum* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 6:** *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch  
L'Obel, Matthias de, *Plantarum seu stirpium icons*. Antverpiae, 1581.

**Figure 7:** *Brassica rapa* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

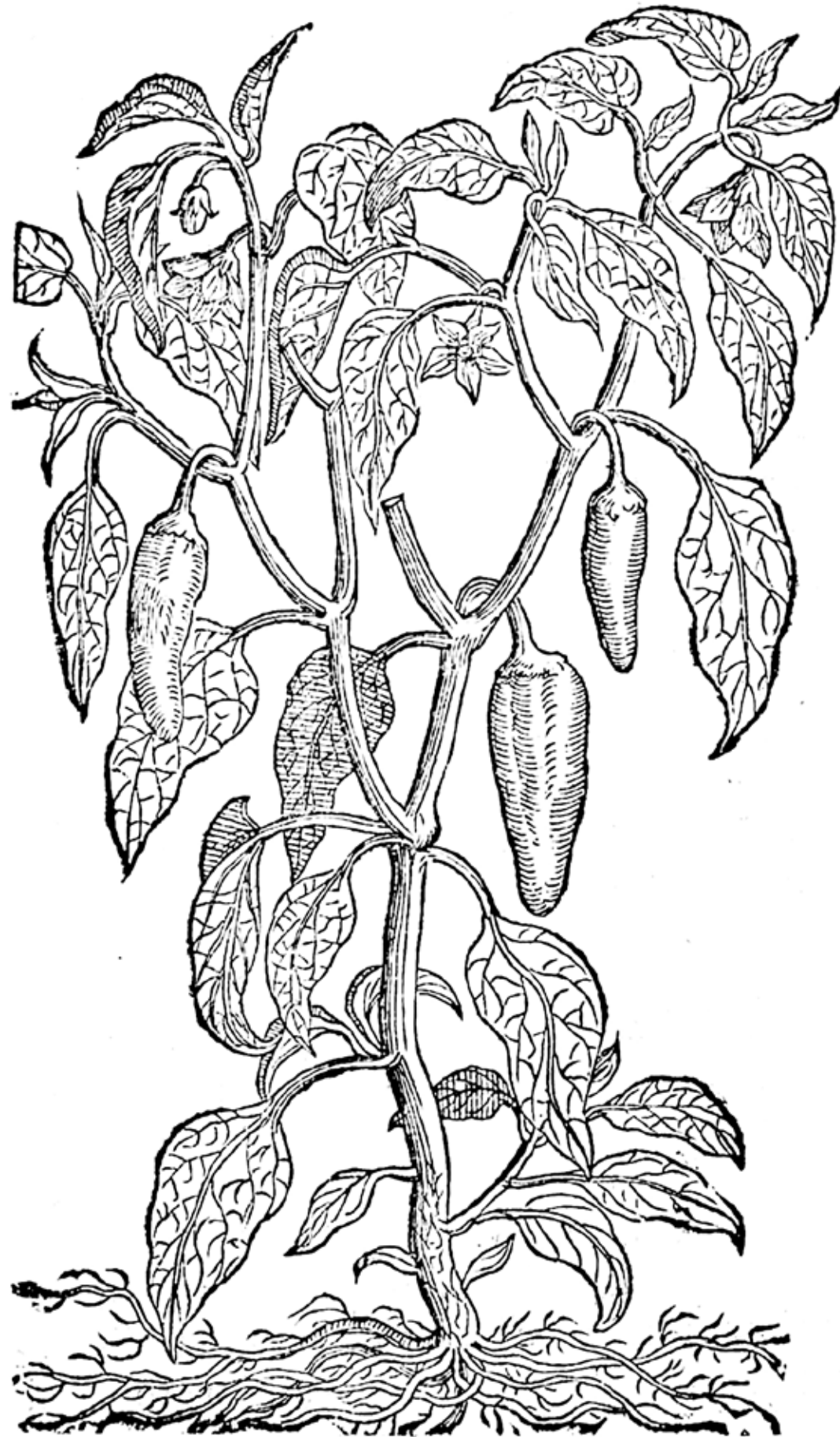
**Figure 8:** *Zea mays* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.

**Figure 9:** *Hibiscus ironsabdariffa* L.  
Dodoens, Rembert. *Stirpium historiae pemptades sex, sive libri XXX*. Antverpiae, Ex Officina C. Plantini, 1583.



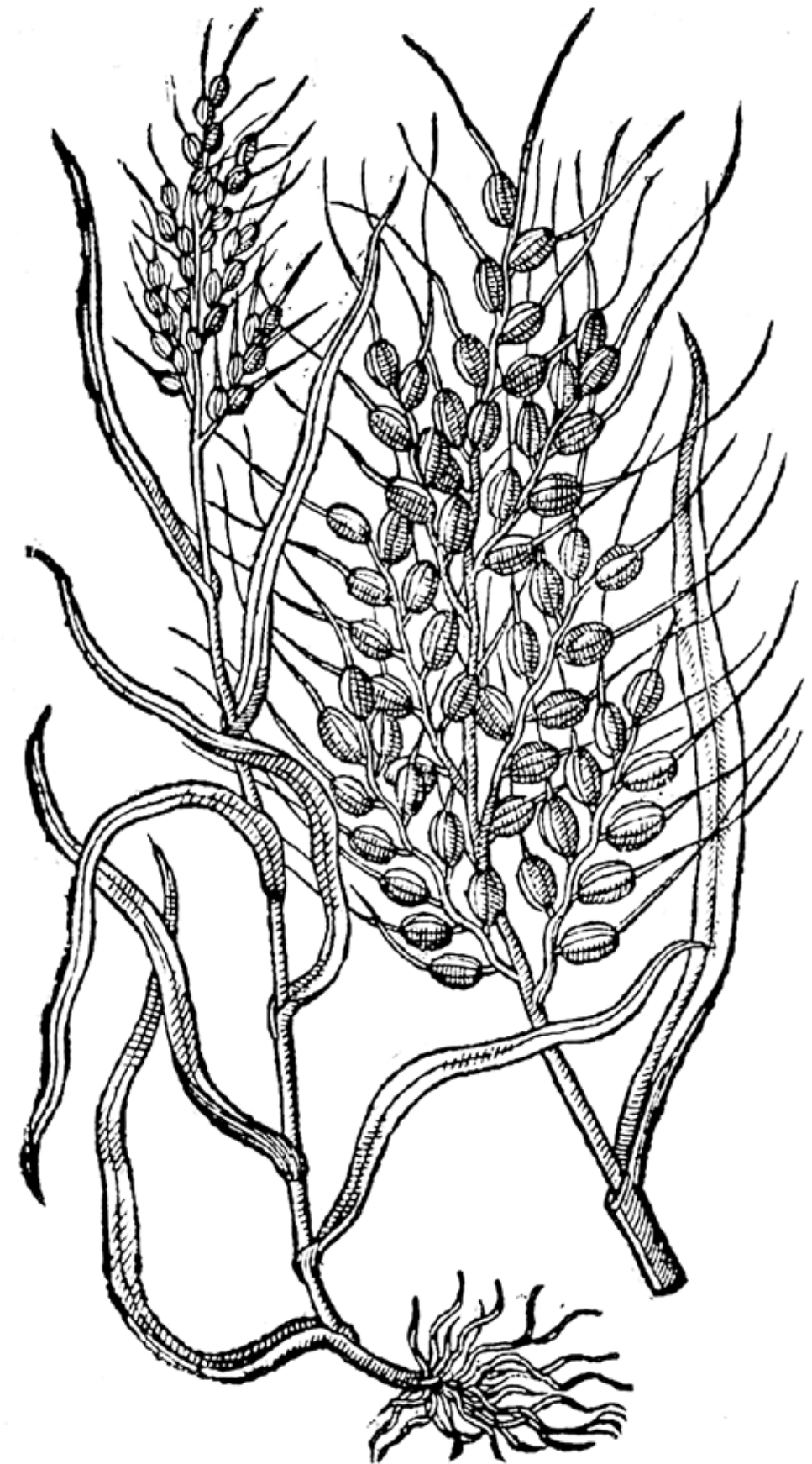
Onions are a vegetable added to make mouth watering dishes including collard greens, chitterlings, okra sauce and it's a key ingredient used to marinate meat to give a unique taste.

Figure 2



Fish peppers are not only known for bringing the heat and seasoned flavor to seafood dishes, its medicinal properties eases joint pain. Different species of peppers, including this variety, were included in the 2023 NYBG's *African American Garden: The Caribbean Experience*, growing in the "Seasonings" bed.

Figure 3



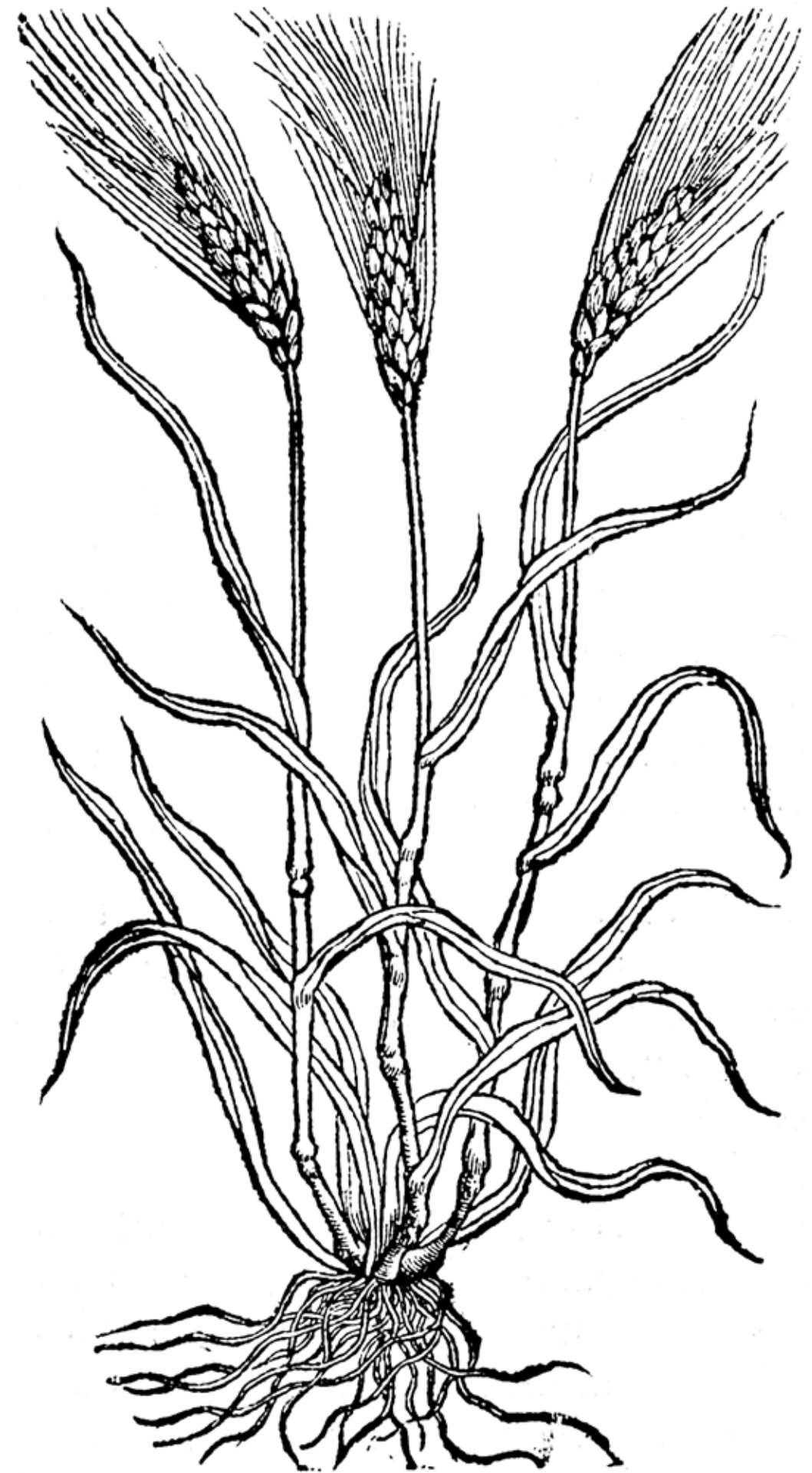
Rice is a grain eaten with beans, chicken, jambalaya, gumbo, fish, shrimp and greens and more vegetables. Based on the spices and herbs used, the color and taste of rice can change to create popular dishes such as jollof rice and black rice. It was one of the stars of NYBG's African American Garden, as it has a deep connection to the African diaspora. It was introduced into the Americas by European colonizers as a cash crop and fueled enslavement. Africans were familiar with rice cultivation too, having domesticated a different species of rice, named *Oryza glaberrima* or "red rice," at least three thousand years prior.

Figure 4



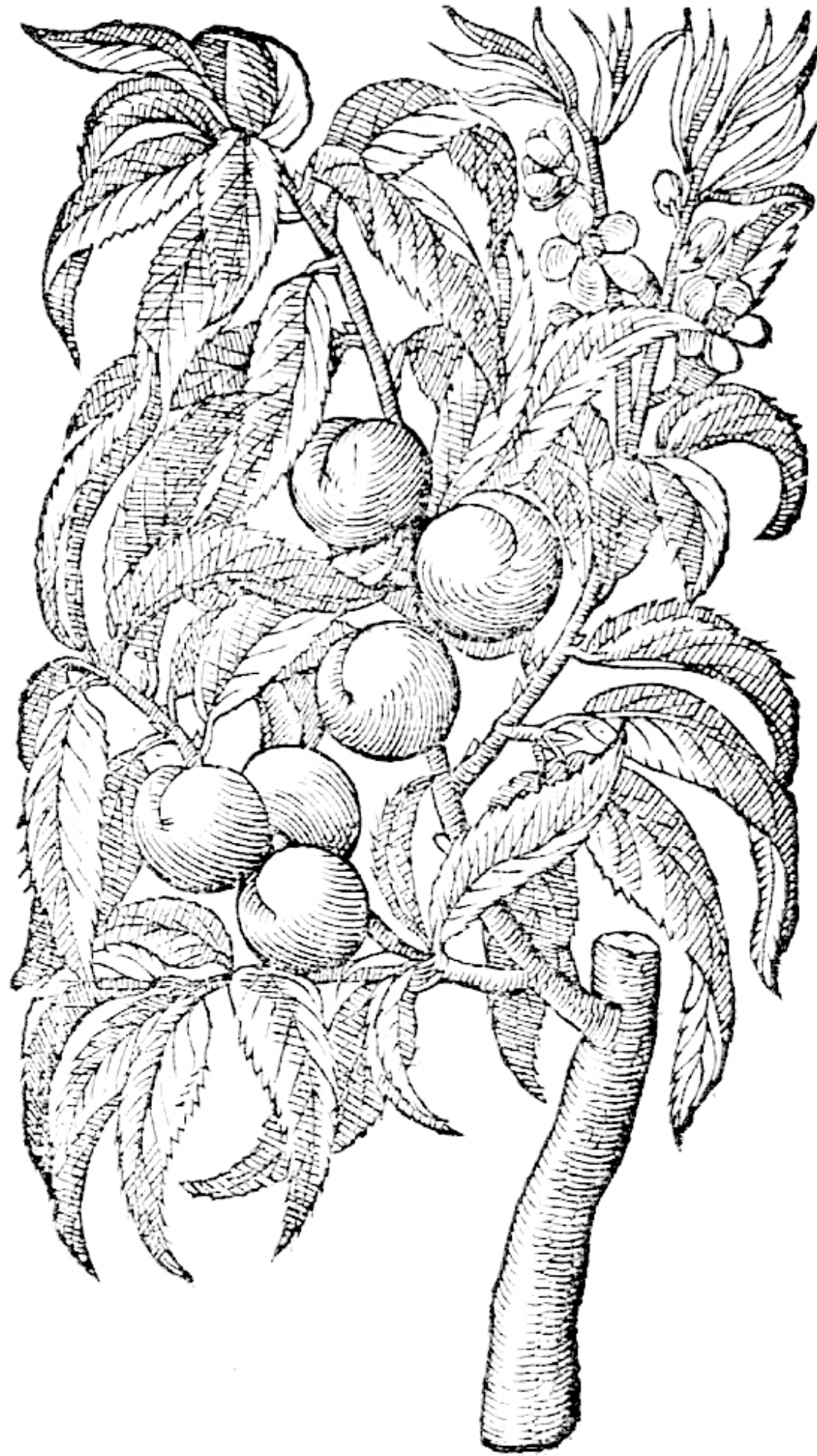
Boiled, steamed, or fried, Plantains are etched in African and Carribean dishes. Whether sweet, plain, with or without salt, plantains are eaten with an assortment of meats, cheese, rice and salad. Eaten around the world, this crop is high in starch and known to provide energy. Plantains were among the plants in the "Roots" bed of the African American Garden in 2023.

Figures 5



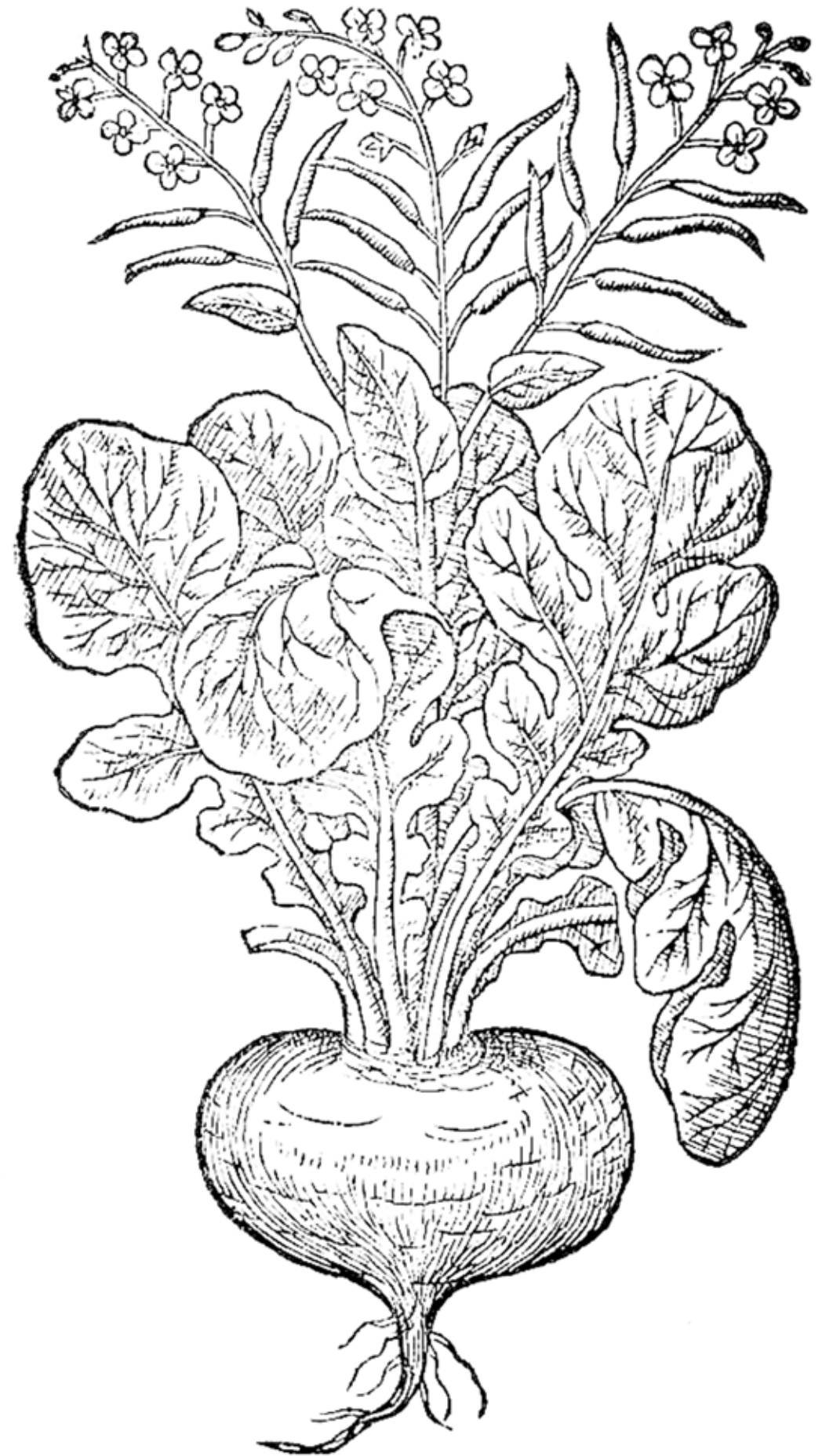
This type of wheat is durum wheat- found in pasta. Baked Macaroni and Cheese also known as "baked mac and cheese" is a pinnacle dish served during various holidays especially Thanksgiving Day.

Figure 6



This Peach fruit mixed with flour, baking powder, salt, buttermilk, cinnamon, and sugar will create a delectable peach cobbler. Extra sweet and juicy, this peach dessert is a Southern classical favorite passed down generation to generation.

Figures 7



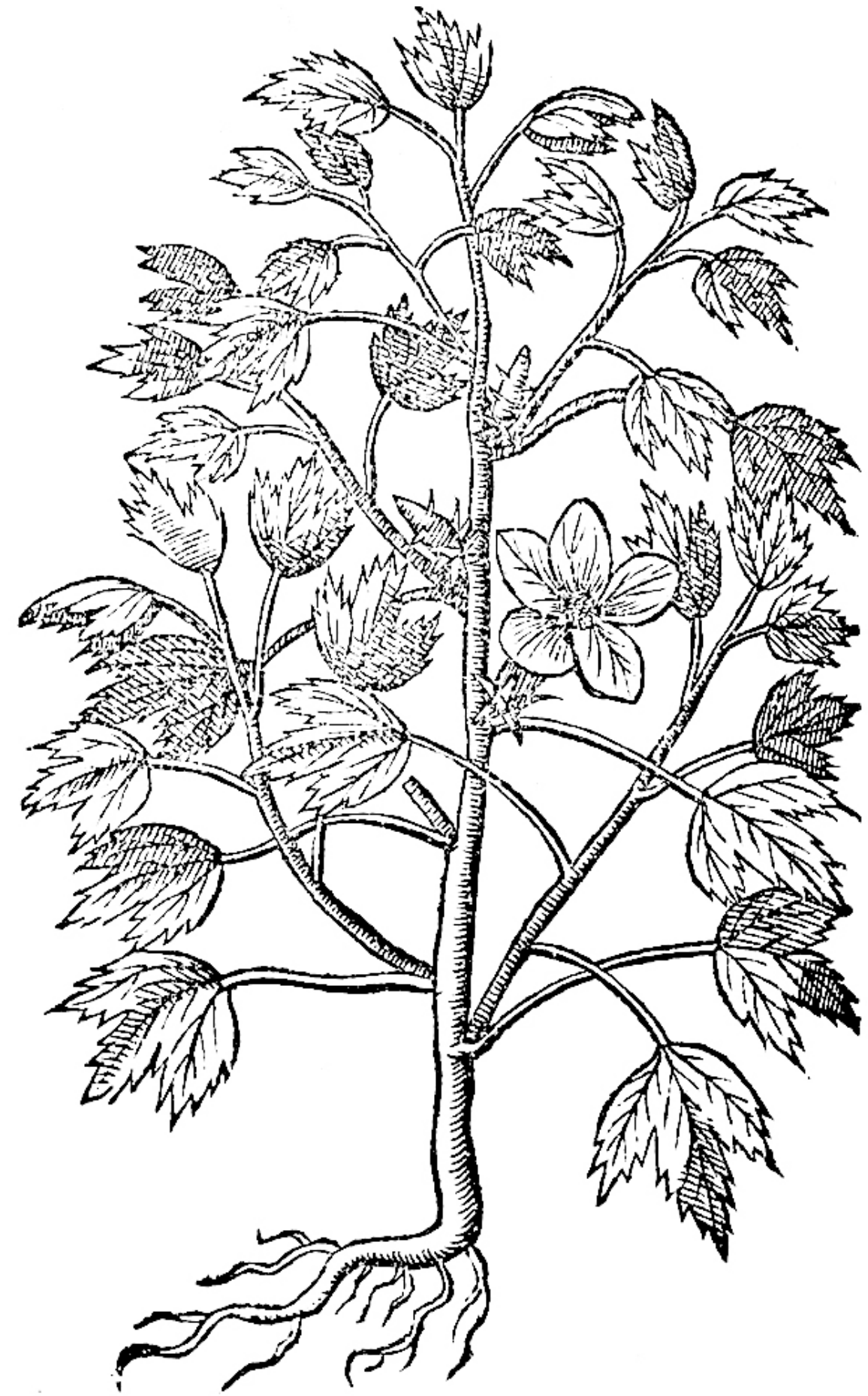
A tender, leafy green root vegetable, turnips are often cooked with smoked turkey, ham hocks or bacon and served alongside cornbread. This plant was grown in the "Greens" bed of NYBG's 2022 *African American Garden: Remembrance and Resilience*, focusing on the black botanical legacies of the American South.

Figure 8



Corn has greatly influenced Black food traditions creating dishes including cornbread, corn fritters, grits, biscuits and cornmeal coated deep fried catfish. Overall, this celebratory crop produces comfort food for the soul.

Figures 9



The iconic red drink- also known as sorrel, is often served chilled with a sweet, tart flavor. This Juneteenth beverage is made from the roselle hibiscus plant and is a symbolism of independence, the emancipation of slavery. It was served in the drinks stand next to NYBG's African American Garden, in 2023, and remains a symbol of belonging to Black communities across different countries in the Americas.

### **About the LuEsther T. Mertz Library**

The LuEsther T. Mertz Library is a thriving center for research in the study of botany, horticulture, and the integral role plants play in the sustainable development of humankind. It collects, preserves, and shares more than ten centuries of written and visual documents that are essential to understanding our relationship with the plant kingdom. The Mertz Library's outstanding collections and programs are important educational resources for the scientific, scholarly, and artistic communities worldwide and the public at large.

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# **NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN**