

# MLA Podcast 009—Nurturing Plants During the Pandemic

45:17

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

plants, MLA, people, library, librarian, pandemic, home, caucuses, thought, patio, sharing, hear, Medical Library Association, Instagram, realized, grow, talk, office, fig

## SPEAKERS

Emily Hurst, Adela Justice, Kelsa Bartley

### **Emily Hurst** 00:07

Hello and welcome to Press, Play, Connect, the MLA podcast. I'm very excited to have our guests joining us today, Adela Justice and Kelsa Bartley, to talk about plants and self care. I'll be your host today. My name is Emily Hurst, and I currently serve as the interim director and associate dean of the health sciences libraries at VCU Libraries in Richmond, Virginia. Welcome Adela and Kelsa. Let us know a little bit more about where you are and some of your background at MLA.

### **Adela Justice** 00:38

My name is Adela Justice. And I'm a senior librarian at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center Hospital here in Houston, Texas. And I work at the patient education slash consumer health library called the Learning Center. I've been there since 2015.

### **Emily Hurst** 00:56

Great, how long? Have you been a member of MLA? Do you know?

### **Adela Justice** 00:59

Yeah, I first started in 2002.

### **Emily Hurst** 01:02

Right, we'll talk a little bit more today about your involvement with MLA. And Kelsa, welcome.

### **Kelsa Bartley** 01:08

Hi, Emily. My name is Kelsa Bartley. I am the education and outreach librarian at the Calder Medical Library, which is at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. I have been there, actually, this is actually my second stint there. But my second stint technically started in 2013. I started off as the office manager in the reference and education department. Got my library degree in 2018. So I'm technically a new librarian.

**Emily Hurst** 01:42

Great, how long have you been involved with MLA?

**Kelsa Bartley** 01:44

I've been involved in MLA since 2017. I got a scholarship from MLA, the student scholarship, and I've been a member ever since. So library school.

**Emily Hurst** 01:56

Yeah, wonderful. It's really great to have somebody that—I too, was a member when I was in graduate school, and then kept on throughout MLA, so really great opportunities abound within the Medical Library Association. All right, we have you are two experts on plants, as known in the MLA community, for sure. I have been following some of your tweets and some of your social media. But I know that COVID has taken quite a turn for many of us. It's been a very long year and a half. And I wanted to start off by asking how you're coping with COVID-19 at your library or at your work. And if there's anything that has changed in the past year or and if you have anything about plants that might have played into that. Just would like to hear how things are going. Kelsa, do you want to start off?

**Kelsa Bartley** 02:46

Sure, I can start. So last year, we pretty much, it was very quick, very quick shutdown. I'm actually still working from home. We are scheduled to go back in August, the first week in August. So I've been home this whole time. And in terms of plants, so when we initially shut down, I have plants in my office. I have my own plants in my office, and then we have like office plants. So I took my own plants home, thinking you know, I'll come back, we won't be back—or thinking that we'll be back in time—I won't need to take all of the plants home, right. So I just took the ones in my office. And then a few months later, I ended up going back to work and realize oh my god, the office plants are there. They're dying. And I ended up taking those home too. And that kind of started my indoor plants because a lot of my plants were outdoor before, before COVID. So yeah, I'm still, we're still kind of coping with do not work from home or type of work.

**Emily Hurst** 04:01

Yeah. And what do you think about the plants that you brought home from the office? Are you going to be taking them back once you return to the office in August? Or are they going to be permanent members of your plant household?

**Kelsa Bartley** 04:11

I plan to. I plan to because they've been doing really well actually, the plants that I, my own plants that I took home died pretty early in the pandemic. I guess they didn't like the adjustments, but the office plants did really well. I was so surprised. After I kind of nursed them back. They're still going really strong. So I plan on taking them back. Because I think I have to have plants in the office. And I got some new plants. I'll take those to my own office.

**Emily Hurst** 04:38

Yeah, well, it's great to hear that you were able to help them out during COVID and I also wish you the best with the return to work. I know many of us are transitioning back—I'm in the office today. I don't have any windows so I don't have any plants in here. Don't think they would like that very much. But yeah, it's great to hear that you were able to salvage that and good luck with the return to work I'm sure it will be quite a change for all of us.

**Kelsa Bartley** 05:04

Thank you. I don't know how I'm going to manage with having more plants inside now and going to work, but we'll figure it out.

**Emily Hurst** 05:11

Yeah. Just mentally time for an adjustment. Adela, can you tell us a little bit about how things are going for you in Houston with COVID-19? And are you back in the office yet?

**Adela Justice** 05:23

Yeah, I'm actually surprised to hear that Kelsa is still at home because I thought I was one of the last people to still remain at home, we were at home for 16 months completely. And we only just reopened one of our locations on June 28. So very recently, and so we're back part time, we're only, since it's only one location, they want to keep people at home still, because being based in a hospital, they're just trying to be as safe as possible. We will be opening our other location, which is where I'm housed, we hope in August. We haven't been given that firm date. But we're planning for Monday, August the ninth I think it is. So then I will be back in my location where my office is located. But for right now, I'm just back at the other location part time. So yeah, it is an adjustment.

**Emily Hurst** 06:15

Yeah, and it's a great—Yes. And it's great to hear that you are taking it slow, and that your organization has been really aware of the concerns about people being in a hospital environment. So it's good to hear that you're actually kind of slowly ramping up into being there because of all the different protocols and the different variants that are happening with COVID right now. So really great to hear that your organization is looking out for hopefully your health and safety. Did you have any plants in your office space that you took home or anything kind of similar to Kelsa's story.

**Adela Justice** 06:47

So I am very, very new to plants, very new. And I'll talk about that more later. But as we went back on June 28, we did have some library plants and now that I'm new at it, and I will say I'm a new expert to plants because it's gone—my journey has gone very fast. But I did take the library plants home with me once we were back because I realized they hadn't been repotted like ever. And so I was happy to bring them home and repot them with new soil and new nutrients and just you know give them some new life. But then I had also, they also needed trimming and clipping so I propagated—they were pothos, this long, long, leggy pothos, and I propagated them. And currently at home right now I have about 14 of those propagations working from these pothos. So once they fill out and mature, I will take them back and we will have even more plants at work.

**Emily Hurst** 07:48

Wow, that is so impressive, Adela, thank you for sharing that. I think I have a story similar to both of yours. I've actually been coming up on a regular basis to our small library in the health system, which is slowly opened up like your experience, Adela. And my job was really just to go in and kind of check voicemail and water the plants and check on the fish tank that we have in there. So it was definitely hard for me because I am also new to plants. But I did not learn about the propagation. I didn't take care of all those things. We have a volunteer worker that I have started going up with so they could get in that was kind of their favorite thing about their volunteer work was trying to help our plants along but I'm very proud to say I think I kept several alive. Some of them maybe not didn't quite make it they were kind of further in the back and away from the light. I think they had struggled quite a bit but I know we're working on revitalizing what we can in our small health and wellness library.

But like you both I also got into plants, mostly indoor plants during the pandemic. I have had an upstairs garden before, roof tech, I'm sorry, a roof top like little farm before, very small. And I never was a fan of indoor plants. They did not like me, I did not know how to take care of them. But I think I learned quite a bit during this pandemic. I know if you've seen me on calls, you've seen my fiddle leaf fig in the back ground, which continues to surprise me. Not really sure how or why but I have been following along with other resources and looking online so I can try to keep some of my plants healthy. And it's so far paying off but I've really enjoyed kind of nurturing these plants during COVID. So Adela, do you want to tell us a little bit more about how you got your passion for plants and how you got started with plants in your life?

**Adela Justice** 09:51

Yeah, so people have asked me about this many times, like what's with all the plants, Adela, like suddenly and there were several things that happened all kind of all at once. So obviously last year, I have a small child in my house. I have a eight year old son, he was seven last year. So very mindful of keeping both of us safe. And so we were stuck indoors a lot. And I do live in a townhouse. So I don't have a yard, or you know, have that real close connection with nature. I'm very in the inner part of Houston in a townhouse. So we were stuck indoors, which was fine. But my son decided last summer he wanted to get into a horror movies and watching horror movies, which was interesting. And so I said, Yeah, let's do that. That'll be a good pandemic activity. Let me show you the canon of the classic, you know, horror movies. And when I say classic, I mean, like, from my childhood from the 80s, not from like, you know, further back, but so we were watching horror movies like all the time, and just going through the list of the classics. And we stumbled upon Poltergeist. So I'm sure, I don't know if both of y'all have seen Poltergeist, but if you watch the movie, their house is filled with plants. And I was like, Huh, I like that look. I like that. And so last summer, I went and bought three small house plants, and brought them home, and just had these three little house plants. I mean, very tiny ones. So then, this past March, just, what four months ago, I looked up, and I noticed these three plants were still alive. And I thought, wow, that's interesting, Adela, because you've always had the brown thumb of death. But I've been into this thing lately, where I've embraced this concept that some of the things we've always believed to be true are not true, especially about ourselves. And I thought, well, you know, Adela, you can rewrite this story, you don't have to keep believing that you had the brown thumb of death your whole life, even though you killed a few plants as a young adult, you know. So I went and bought a few more. And then I bought a few more. And then, in the first month, I had bought like 60 plants suddenly. But at the same time, I tried to be a mindful plant owner. And I did just tons of research

because it was also fun. I began checking out books from the library about house plants, and reading articles and websites about house plants, and watching YouTubes and following people on Instagram and I joined all the Facebook houseplant groups I could find; I joined all of them and just began this huge depth into, deep dive into the world of houseplants. And I did have to move a few out to my patio, I realized that the lighting situation here is very tricky. So I did have to move a few out to the patio and they're thriving out there. So that's been a transition there as well. But that's what happened. And now today I have my plant app says I have 100 plants, 100 house plants. Yeah, this afternoon, I will be going to buy there's three more on my list. And I'll be heading out there when we're done here to go see if I can find them.

**Emily Hurst** 13:10

Wow, that is so impressive. So you did wind up getting the Poltergeist house that you were interested in potentially but no poltergeists themselves just plants.

**Adela Justice** 13:19

Well, well, not quite yet because people say Adela where are these 100 plants and so, I do buy the only \$5, \$10, \$20 plants which means they're small. So they're on shelves, you know, they're not quite huge yet. They—ask me in five years what my house looks like when they've matured and they've grown But yeah, I can't, I'm not into buying the \$150 you know, fiddle leaf fig that's full grown yet. I'm starting small and letting them grow.

**Emily Hurst** 13:46

Yeah, no, definitely. And I definitely didn't know what I was getting into with that fiddle leaf fig. It was on sale and by the checkout and I was like, Oh, I'm gonna be working from home, that looks nice. I didn't know it was going to be like the most complicated plant to keep alive.

**Adela Justice** 14:01

Yes, yes. I will not buy a fiddle leaf fig. I mean, kudos to you because I know which ones I need to avoid.

**Emily Hurst** 14:09

Yeah, they all come with their own special brand of need. And it's great to hear that you have kind of learned from your plants as well, like some need more light or want a different environment and so you're able to move them out to areas where they can thrive. That's really cool, Adela, thank you for sharing your passion for plants with us and where that started. And Kelsa you mentioned that you were more of an outdoor plant person, but during the pandemic you started getting into indoor plants. Can you tell us a little bit more about your passion and history with plants.

**Kelsa Bartley** 14:40

First of all, say Adela, a fiddle leaf fig is like a small child so if you know you don't want to get— But I actually got interested in plants, I've been interested in plants quite a while. I actually got into it from the library. So one of my former colleagues had these two bougainvillea plants on her patio. She lived by the by the sea and the bougainvillea didn't like the salt air. So she's like, you know, you're trying out plants now or you have a patio— because I live in a small apartment, so it's not even a townhouse, it's

a one bedroom apartment, but my balcony faces the east—so she's like, take these home and try and see if they will see if they will thrive. And they were like twigs when I got them. So I put them outside and I watered them. And all of a sudden, like two weeks later, I started seeing leaves and I'm like, Oh my god, I can grow a plant. And that's pretty much how it started.

So I've been collecting and trying different things on my patio for quite a few years now. I started off with herbs. So I have a lot of different herbs outside. I had a lemon plant that I had for a while, a lemon tree actually, grew into a tree. But then I realized I tried to do it from like lemon seeds from my kitchen, it grew pretty big, but I never got lemons. So I gave it away to a friend who had a yard where it could, you know, have more space and grow. But she never got lemons either. So I don't know what happened to it.

Um, so yeah, so then last year, my husband actually does not like the plants inside. So that's why I kind of avoided houseplants before, I just made basically kept them outside. And so when I brought the plants home last year, that's when I was like, Oh, I could probably start sneaking in some plants. So that's how the indoor plant obsession kind of started once I revived the two plants from the office. So it really kind of kick started, that really kick started my indoor plants. And actually one of the first indoor plants I got was a fiddle leaf. A friend of mine, we were kind of hunting for like the low cost ones. And she saw them on sale at Walmart. And she's like, let me get you one. I'm like, okay, so she got me one. And I quickly realized that it was very, like I said, like a small child, like I really had to figure out what environment it liked, how much to water it. I first started over watering it, it didn't want it, was like two plants in a pot. One of them ended up dying. And I managed to save the other one by taking it outside. It really—fiddle leaf figs really like a lot of light. And I realized that it wasn't getting enough light, where I had it in the living room. But since then it has like doubled in size, in height. So for me, plants have been really learning about their environment, I think I've learned a lot about people from my clients, because you know, you can have all of these plants in the same environment. And sometimes you just need to have little tweaks to like, just move one plant from one side of the patio to the other. And it will, add that's the difference between dying and living. You know, and so I always think about that analogy with people that work, like sometimes people, you may have all these people in the environment, and they just need nurturing. Everybody needs nurturing in different ways, even though they're in the same environment.

**Emily Hurst 18:33**

So I love that sentiment, Kelsa. That is so true. I mean, every plant is different, every person is different. And you know, combining that with Adela's comment about you don't have to be the person known for killing the plants, you can change, you write your own history, you can learn new skills. And so it has these implications for how you look at the world and how you look at yourself—all from taking care of a plant, which is kind of amazing.

So I also know that you are both very active on social media and the realm of plants. I've engaged with Adela a few times on Twitter, and Kelsa, I know you also recently mentioned that you have a presence on Instagram dedicated to plants. So that's been really a fun outlet for me to explore and also has helped me learn a lot about plants as well. Are there any things that you've learned or picked up through social media that has contributed to your knowledge of plants?

**Kelsa Bartley 19:30**

I would say definitely so. Adela mentioned joining all the plant groups. Yes, I joined a couple on Facebook, because I'm also active on Facebook as well. So to actually join an indoor plant group and an outdoor plant group, and that really has helped me a lot in terms like—they post everything on there like how to handle bugs, you know what to, how to, what kind of soil to use, different products, like identifying different things wrong with the plants. It's been extremely helpful. And I actually did not get into plant social media a lot until the pandemic, so to speak, I was just kind of talking to other plant friends on Facebook and Instagram just asking them questions about things. But I think, I definitely think plants on social media specifically exploded during the pandemic, as like Adela mentioned people wanted things to do during the pandemic. So yeah, I definitely learned a lot.

So I actually was inspired to start my plant Instagram, when I started following people on Instagram, on my own Instagram, and I was like, wait a minute, I could, I could do this. So there's one in particular that really inspired me that is called [@plantkween](#) with a K. So it's plant K, W, E, E, N, plantkween. Really interesting. He's a really interesting character himself. And I actually stumbled across him talking to other librarians in MLA about that, I'll talk a little bit about that later on, like more of our conversations, and realize that he had a class teaching people about basic house plant maintenance and stuff. So I was like, oh, wow, he can teach people how to take care of plants. So I went to his plant Instagram, like, wait, I can do a plant Instagram. So that was really my inspiration for combining plants. And I also like photography as well, that was, actually I was a photographer in the past life. So I'm like, this is perfect. Instagram is perfect for sharing, you know, plant stories. That's what I photograph most of the times anyway, now. So it was just really, really good for that. Oh, and my plant Instagram is [@kbgs\\_plantkrew](#). So K-B-Q-S plants krew, and krew with a K, because I got inspired by the kween.

**Emily Hurst 22:21**

That's great, Kelsa, what a great way to think about combining all your passions and thinking about how you can engage with others or teach people or show people that are looking for information about plants and kind of just connect with others that have these similar interests and help each other out when it comes to plants. Really cool that you found someone that had so many similar interests. And what a great way to use your photography background. Instagram's great for that. Yeah. But yeah, thank you for sharing that. And thanks for your ideas around looking for social media and some of these accounts that our listeners can look for in the future.

And Adela, you mentioned a lot on Facebook. Are there any other ways that you use social media to engage more with the plant community or increase your plant knowledge?

**Adela Justice 23:08**

Yeah so, and Kelsa when you just mentioned him, I brought him up and I'm following him. He looks fabulous. So thank you for that. Yes. So I'm active on all the social medias. And I do discuss a lot of my plant stuff on Twitter. And one guy that I love, particularly on Twitter is called [@planty\\_hoes](#), and one of his tweets that just I love. He tweeted one day, you know, maybe the plants are addicted to me. Did you ever think of it that way? Yeah, maybe my plants were addicted to me. But yes, so I and I did have a personal Instagram. But then when I saw Kelsa's, Instagram, I thought Oh, you know what I should

start my own plant plants-ta-gram. So I did start with a couple of weeks ago and it has exploded. And I just named it [@chicaplantz](#) with a Z at the end. Chica like my Twitter, [@chicalibrarian](#), and then just plants with a Z at the end. So I am very active on that. Now. I've also recently gotten into Tik Tok because I spent hours and hours on YouTube, I mean, I just watched tons and tons of plant propagation videos because I find them not just informative but kind of relaxing. So I was spending hours on YouTube watching plant propagations and then I went to Tik Tok which has been a little bit more efficient because you know, they're really quick. So yeah, I'm just spending time on Tik Tok these days. And just having lots of fun learning and enjoying spending time there.

**Emily Hurst** 24:48

Okay, great. Thank you so much for sharing your newly found connections as well and great to hear you've also started an Instagram account but also— important those videos for sure, really informative, I've used several of them as well, even for my outdoor gardens, trying to figure out how to do something or take care of something when bugs attack, those YouTube videos can be very informative. So it's definitely everywhere. And you've kind of alluded to this that, you know, just watching people interact with plants can be therapeutic. I know there's a lot of research out there. Are there any suggested studies or anything that you've come across that really has to do with the importance of plants as it relates to self care, anything that you've read, or that's struck a chord that might be of interest to our listeners who are maybe thinking? Well, it may be self care, but it also sounds like a lot of work. I know plant therapy is definitely an option out there for some people.

**Adela Justice** 25:51

Yeah, I can speak to that. So, I remember when I first got into plants, and I saw someone say that she and her husband spend an hour, an hour or two a week on their plants, and I thought, that's, I don't have that kind of time, there's no way. But then, I realized that the one to two hours a day that I'm spending on my plants now just goes by fast, because it's just so much fun. People have said that, many people have said that, it's a meditative act for them to deal with their plants. And I have also found that to be true. Because I sing to my plants, I know they say you're supposed to talk to your plants or sing to them. So I put on some of my favorite songs, and I sing to them while I'm watering them and pruning them and tending to them and that kind of thing. And I know that the plants like that, I assume they like it because your co2 is getting on them. But there's other reasons that plants seem to like that. And I do sing lots of romantic songs to my plants, because I feel like I am truly in love with them. On Instagram, I use the hashtag #plantisbae often. So if you search that, you'll see some of my posts come up. But, you know, I think people have also accepted that when you're down or in the dumps or whatever, if you take care of other people that helps you. And so I found that with the plants when you take care of other living things that also helps you when you're down. And I've also seen this comment in the plant community: soil is good for the soul. People getting in the dirt seems to help. I like repotting and digging in the dirt. And then there's this the psychological theory of biophilia, which posits that humans are genetically and instinctively connected to the natural world and plants. I think they tell us we need to get out into nature. And just being in nature helps us and so that's part of it as well.

And there is the American Horticultural Therapy Association. They were founded in 1973. Their website is [ahta.org](https://ahta.org). They have annual conferences, blogs, and they have lots of research, evidence based research on their website to prove these connections. And then there is the famous UK Netherlands

study that showed plants at the office increased productivity by 15%. Other studies have shown they boost creativity, reduce stress, I mean that science is there. In CINAHL, that's been all, sorry, in PsychInfo, horticultural therapy is a subject heading that you can search on. So there's lots and lots of research and I can speak to it, and it's out there.

**Emily Hurst 28:30**

Yeah, thank you, Adela. Great resources for our listeners to consider and to check out and I knew a medical librarian would be a great resource to ask about how plants do play into our mental health and our plant therapy opportunities. Kelsa, did you have anything that you wanted to add about some of the resources or just experiences you get from working with your plants?

**Kelsa Bartley 28:56**

Yeah, I, Adela, like hit the nail on the head with the research out there. Like I hadn't even when I first started, I hadn't even thought about the research. I was just thinking about how it made me feel. So originally, I'm from the island of Trinidad, you know, surrounded by plants all the time. You know, it's part of just being in the natural world has always been inspiring to me personally, like when I started photography, I wanted to be a nature photographer for National Geographic. So I, and then growing up my mom also had an affinity to plant. She had like a whole backyard patio with plants as well. So I knew the connection was there with me, I just had never explored it before getting those two plants from my librarian friend. And you know, just thinking of the concept of like forest bathing or you know how it feels to walk in the grass barefoot, you know, so I just kind of went with how it made me feel and Adela talked about that hour or two passing by quickly, like, just watering all the plants to me takes an hour. Because I have to take my water can back and forth from the kitchen to them all the time. So just the energy I get from, though I don't sing to my plants like to talk to them, and I've had my husband Look at me, like, what are you doing, I'm like, Well, I don't have any kids. These are my babies, I tell them, these are my babies, and I will talk to them and nurture them as much as I can. So just that nurturing aspect for me is, is a therapy, you know, just being able to grow things. And being able to nurture them, to me is the therapy for me, I definitely get a lot out of it. And, you know, just being able, like I went to Costco last weekend, bought two plants just like oh my god, the euphoria of just buying them and bring them home and finding the right environment for them and figuring out their watering schedule or whatever. To me, that's the exciting therapeutic part, maybe the shopping, too.

**Emily Hurst 31:16**

Yeah, thank you Kelsa, for sharing that there's so much about working with plants that I think you have also highlighted that individuals that are our listeners who may have not tried plants or thought that they were too complicated, there are so many things about working with plants that you can learn to love, learn new things about yourself. And it does come with a peace of mind, whether it be propagating or just figuring out their watering schedule. Like you said, it's very exciting to kind of say, Oh, I achieved something and that nurturing experience, you're helping something grow and thrive. And there's nothing better than having something so big, you have to put it in another pot because you were responsible for that plant over time. So yeah, and thank you so much for sharing your research, Adela, I think that's really great stuff that our listeners can look more into. And now I know, you are both very active in the Medical Library Association. Have you brought plants into your MLA communities or your MLA discussions?

**Kelsa Bartley 32:18**

I can, I can share a lot more on that. So last year, during the pandemic AAMLA started just like a chat group, we call it chat and chew. So it's like lunchtime on Friday. And we started talking just about coping during the pandemic, what were your libraries doing, and then it kind of turned into self care. And there, it turned out, there are a lot of plant people in that group as well. And so one of the Fridays we did plant tours. So each person— Well, I took them on a tour of my patio with my iPod. It was really great. And people asked questions about what kind of plants to, speak with, people could start with, so it kind of turned into a lesson like teaching people about, you know, what plants we thought would be good for them to start with as a beginner plant person, you know, for the brown firms out there. Um, so it turned out to be really good. And we ended up having like, several discussions offline, like with different people about different plants. So like Shannon, Shannon Jones is part of the group. And she was like, y'all inspired me to get plants. So she now has plants at home, too, because we helped her find the right plants, because she's like, I'm not gonna get plants. I kill them. We're like, No, no, no, try this. Try that don't get a fiddle leaf fig yet, you know, those kinds of things. So it turned out really well. So we've had some converts in the group as well, just talking about that one, just having that one session on plants. So it was a really great way to connect us as a group and share what we knew about plants. So that it turned out really well.

**Emily Hurst 34:15**

Yeah, that's really great. I'm really glad to hear. I know, you mentioned Shannon Jones. I definitely have meetings with her where you—she's talked about her plants or we've seen them. And of course Beverly Murphy as well has been such a supporter of people with plants. I think she even asked me once, I didn't realize you could see it in the background of one of my calls and she asked me all about some plant. I was like— she used the scientific name and I was like that's the plant that I water every Wednesday, I don't know.

**Kelsa Bartley 34:44**

Yeah, she has a huge money tree that she always talks about. I actually ended up inviting her to some of my Facebook plant groups and she's active there as well. So it really turned out to be a really great not just conversation starter but you know, just community builder.

**Emily Hurst 35:00**

Yeah, that's a really great experience. And I'm so glad that there are individuals within the organization and medical libraries that are helping each other and growing their knowledge and growing their experience with plant ownership and just plant care throughout COVID and probably into the future as well. Adela, is there anything that you want to add about any of the groups that you're working with, and have they embraced plant life as well, within MLA?

**Adela Justice 35:28**

I want to give a super props to the Public Services Caucus, because during MLA '21, they had a social event called "Pets, Plants, and Projects." And that was so much fun, because we got to share either your pet, your plant, or your project, and I shared some plants and other people shared plants. And I thought that was a great idea for a social event. I hope they do that again. And maybe we'll see some

other caucuses do similar things. And like Kelsa mentioned, I definitely want to give a shout out to the super plant person, the goddess of green, the hero of horticulture, Beverly Murphy, because she has a beautiful Google Photos album of her home. And I have peeped that thing up and down, left and right, and just looked at where she has placed the plants and what kinds of plants and because I have to be very cognizant of that here, you know, with very strategic plant placement because of the light and that kind of thing. And so I've just spent time looking at Beverly's home and the amazing collection. And yes, it has been very fun to connect with people on Twitter and share plant stories. And it's nice to hear that other people are connecting to Kelsa. I would love to see your patio; please put that video on your Instagram. ASAP.

**Kelsa Bartley** 36:49

That's a great idea. Thanks.

**Emily Hurst** 36:52

Please do.

**Adela Justice** 36:53

I'm waiting for it. Okay.

**Emily Hurst** 36:57

Great. Yeah. And I thank you both for your insights and just sharing those ways that even within our larger Medical Library Association, there are so many people with these interests and seeing how they relate to each other. And you're right, I think we all aspire to be Beverley Murphy and have her green thumb, I can only hope one day to have as many plants and have them growing as successfully and beautifully as she does. Thank you for sharing your stories from MLA.

I want to take a minute to transition and talk a little bit more about MLA, but specifically how it's provided an outlet for you over the course of your career. Do you have any examples or resources about how MLA has supported you throughout your career? Adela, you want to start?

**Adela Justice** 37:44

Yeah, so you know, I first joined MLA back in 2002. But it's interesting because I didn't actually really start to pay attention to MLA or get involved until 2018, which is when I got the call to be Cancer Section at the time, chair-elect. And so in 2018, I became the chair-elect and then went to chair and I really started paying more attention to MLA and now I'm on the board as the Community Council chair. But you know, MLA has just been so rewarding to me, I had, you know, attended conferences, of course, the annual meetings, even though I wasn't super involved, but I would go to the annual meetings. And each MLA annual meeting, I noticed just inspired me to be a stronger and smarter medical librarian. We've done so many great things with education, I really enjoy and appreciate, for example, the self-paced courses on Medlib-Ed, because there's just so many different types to choose from. There's like a different self-paced course for anything you might be interested. And I will say that as a community council chair, which is, I'm going into my second year now, my second or third year, I really enjoy watching the caucuses blossom and grow kind of like plants; they come up with ideas and they germinate and they go off with them. And it's been really fun to watch all 43 caucuses just really

grow there. And you know, MLA is just wonderful for me. My favorite part about MLA is probably the networking, just meeting people and seeing what other medical librarians are doing and learning from them, learning from their other libraries, successes, and challenges. Just being a people, you know, watcher, and as an extrovert librarian, I do enjoy just befriending other librarians and you know, learning more about them too.

**Emily Hurst 39:32**

Yeah, thank you, Adela. I What a wonderful way to summarize that and to think about the connection between plants and the caucus growth, I mean, spot on, good job thinking about that. We have definitely come a long way in the last few years with the changes and the caucuses are just growing and blossoming like you said. So great plant analogy. I really do like it. What examples do you have that relate to how you've benefited from MLA over the course of your career?

**Kelsa Bartley 40:01**

MLA has been extremely beneficial to me as a librarian. I mean, like I mentioned earlier, I started in 2017, when I got the MLA scholarship, and part of that scholarship included attending the annual conference that year, which was in Seattle. And I remember, Beverly was the president-elect them. And she reached out to me directly before the conference saying, you know, we want this to be welcoming to you. And when I got there, she basically took me under her wing. And, you know, showed me around, telling me a lot about all the different it was SIGs and sections at that time. And it pretty much took off from there.

So I mean, I definitely owe a lot of what I've done so far in my career to MLA. I was able to be involved in the rising stars program last year, which was extremely beneficial. I mean, a lot of the cohort and I got really close to each other because of the pandemic and because we were doing this project together. Our project had to do with the communities transition. So I learned a lot about the communities, I learned a lot about MLA, just digging into finding out more about the communities transition, like we got to talk to a lot of past presidents, a lot of people on the board, it was really eye opening. And I really enjoyed being a part of that. Last year, I was also the chair of AAMLA, the African American caucus. And that was definitely an interesting time because of, you know, everything that happened last year as well. I've learned so much and connected with so many people because of MLA, not just in the African American caucus. But like all of you, like meeting all of you, meeting you Adela, and meeting you, Emily, last year. I don't think— I'm an extroverted librarian as well. So I really enjoy, like meeting people and finding out about what they're doing. Like I think librarians or medical librarians in particular are so interesting. And one of the reasons why I decided to further my career as a librarian was realizing how many different aspects of librarianship there are, like, all the things that you can do, I didn't. At first, I didn't think that I fit, or there was something that my skills would fit in libraries. And when that clicked, it was like a no brainer for me and I keep getting opportunities through MLA, to meet people or to participate in activities that I never thought I would be able to. Like this year, I've been doing a lot of writing, collaborating with a lot of people on stuff. All the MLA projects that I've been involved in, it's been really great. I definitely owe a lot of my career to MLA. And to use a plant analogy. MLA has just definitely awarded me with different opportunities and have helped me blossomed a lot me, personally as a librarian. So I'm very grateful for that.

**Emily Hurst** 43:23

Wonderful, I just, again, another great plant analogy. MLA is the water that you need to survive and thrive as a medical librarian. And really great to hear that and I really do appreciate you speaking a little bit about the different caucuses and your involvement there and all the different ways that MLA— the many different avenues that MLA has for involvement, so that individuals who are listening to this can kind of think about where they want to be involved and hopefully reach out to you or to Adela or to me or any of us. Hopefully, we are a community that is there for one another, and that we can make those connections and help people get to know each other more and be successful in their careers as health sciences or medical librarians.

Thank you, Adela and Kelsa. It's been wonderful to talk with you today about your involvement with plants and with MLA. I think you have really provided us some great food for thought and I hope that those of our listeners can go out and think about plants and their own life in maybe a new and different way. And also don't forget to be in touch with others that MLA who might have similar interest through those social media channels, or just reaching out if you have questions. We have two great experts that are probably very happy to help you out getting started with plants today. So with that, I want to say I am Emily Hurst and I am MLA.

**Adela Justice** 44:53

I am Adela Justice and I am MLA.

**Kelsa Bartley** 44:57

And I am Kelsa Bartley and I am MLA.