

PRESS RELEASE

A special learning opportunity to study seed jewelry from a purely 'Spice Isle' perspective has been made available to 15 Grenadians ranging in age from 17 to 74 years, through a new training workshop facilitated by the Agency for Reconstruction and Development (ARD).

The ARD, in collaboration with The Treasure Chest Grenada, the Grenada National Council of the Disabled, the Programme for Adolescent Mothers and the Dorothy Hopkin Centre, is funding the 10-day Seed Jewelry Workshop from November 5 to 16.

Treasure Chest Grenada principal Ursula Williams, who teaches from her studios and workshop in Westerhall, is recognised for her jewelry and other craft creations, all of which are made from natural materials. A Master Herbalist, Ms. Williams shares her knowledge of the many wild seeds and domesticated seeds suitable for jewelry-making.

She is ably assisted by Ms. Debra Mason of Caribbean Naturals, who is teaching sessions on pricing, marketing, display and packaging. Young Gordon, Ms. Williams' son, is the Workshop Helper.

The class comprises five physically challenged persons, five young single mothers, and four craft persons drawn from the Parishes of St. Andrew and St. Patrick, as well as Ms. Marjorie Simon, Home Keeper and craft teacher at the Dorothy Hopkin Centre.

"We have residents at the Centre who are interested in learning about crafts. I am finding the Workshop very good, especially learning about the natural materials," Ms. Simon said.

Those materials include seeds from a wide variety of trees, shrubs and vines found throughout Grenada, such as the Red Sandalwood, Tamarind, Nickernut, Donkey Eye, Stinking Toe Tree, Christmas Palm, Wild Tamarind, West Indies Mahogany, Flamboyant, Sand Box Tree, Job's Tears and Bamboo.

Participants learn about harvesting, collecting, cleaning, polishing, preserving, stringing and fashioning local seeds into necklaces, bracelets and ear rings.

Information about cultural and religious traditions associated with these materials is also incorporated into the teaching sessions conducted in Ms. Williams' workshop, which is filled with craft creations and a multitude of natural materials, hand tools and other items used in jewelry making.

Ms. Williams is quick to point out that all the seeds used in the Workshop are non-toxic.

"Nothing is chemically treated. I have done my research and the seeds we are using here are acceptable by export and import restrictions for North America, Europe and the Caribbean. This is important because we want our students to create jewelry with export potential," she added.

Ms. Williams purchases seeds from local farmers, and says there is a growing market in natural seed production for young farmers.

"Not all the students can go out and collect seeds for themselves, so we connect them with the farmers," she added.

The workshop is designed to enable the students to approach seed jewelry making from a practical as well as creative perspective. During the first week, classes focussed on jewelry making, marketing, packaging and displays. During the second week, students learn about "the production line."

"They must apply what they have learned during the first week," Ms. Williams explained. This includes pricing the jewelry and determining production costs.

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