

THE PHOTOSYNTHETIC RESTAURANT

GORMET SUNLIGHT FOR PLANTS

A RECIPE BOOK BY JONATHON KEATS

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THE CROCKER ART MUSEUM
SACRAMENTO, CA

FOREWORD

The origin of culture is culinary. Our social evolution from foraging to agriculture, our technological command of fire, and our development of tasty recipes shared around the table: All of these are essential ingredients in the development of human civilization, and together represent a fundamental distinction between us and other species.

Plants, for instance, take sunlight as it comes to them, absorbing rays from the entire spectrum, a subsistence diet more tedious even than the scavengings of Cro-Magnons. No organism need live that way in the present age.

Jonathon Keats has developed a gourmet cuisine for flora, mixing different wavelengths of light in appetizing combinations, so that photosynthesis is no longer merely nutritious, but also flavorful. His cuisine is now featured at the world's first photosynthetic restaurant, hosted by the Crocker Art Museum. This recipe book has been published to help people prepare gourmet sunlight in their own gardens.

While photosynthetic cuisine is new, Keats has a long history of catering to other species. For instance, he has choreographed ballet for

honeybees by selectively planting flowers around their hives, and he has produced travel documentaries for houseplants by projecting videos of foreign skies onto their foliage in a darkened theater. More generally, Keats is an experimental philosopher. His efforts to share aspects of human culture with other species encourage us to scrutinize our cultural values from an outside point of view.

Nevertheless, the gourmet recipes presented in these pages and served at the Crocker are not only ingredients in an elaborate thought experiment. Based on the latest science, and formulated with careful attention to culinary principles that would be familiar to anyone from Apicius to Julia Child, Jonathon Keats' photosynthetic cuisine has been developed first and foremost for the delectation of plants here in Sacramento and around the world.

Scott Shields, Ph.D.
Chief Curator
The Crocker Museum

GOURMET SUNLIGHT FOR PLANTS

The basis of a photosynthetic diet is sunlight. Plentiful and wholesome, the broad spectrum of energy from the sun provides sustenance to plants around the planet. Yet plants in their natural environment seldom have the opportunity to savor individual colors such as orange and purple, let alone to enjoy complex arrangements of these ingredients prepared as a gourmet meal. The purpose of this book is to provide recipes developed to suit the taste of flora, that can be served to outdoor plants by straining daylight through panes of stained glass.

Each of these three recipes emphasizes different culinary traits. The first is certainly the most traditional, artfully accentuating qualities of unfiltered daylight, which is naturally most intensely violet at dawn and dusk. A healthful meal with plenty of high-energy orange and yellow midday illumination, this recipe is recommended as an introduction to photosynthetic cuisine for plants unaccustomed to gourmet sunlight.

The second recipe is more piquant. Plants naturally sense deep red light reflected off the leaves of nearby flora as a signal of encroaching competition for resources such as water and light. This recipe includes that threat – just a hint – exciting the phytochromes as a sort of botanical zest.

This book concludes with a third recipe, more experimental than the first two, that is suggested only for flora that has developed an appreciation for photosynthetic cuisine, and that may enjoy bold juxtapositions of color starkly different from anything found in nature. In particular this recipe syncopates plants' circadian rhythm by teasing their cryptochromes with a course of evening violet in the middle of the afternoon.

Preparing these recipes for consumption by plants may present a challenge on tundra or in deep rainforest, but should be fairly straightforward in most residential gardens. Suspended over the foliage, panels of stained glass or plastic should be angled to each intercept the sun's rays in succession as the solar disc arcs across the sky. Alternately, for quicker meals or picnics in public spaces, filters can be successively held above plants by hand.

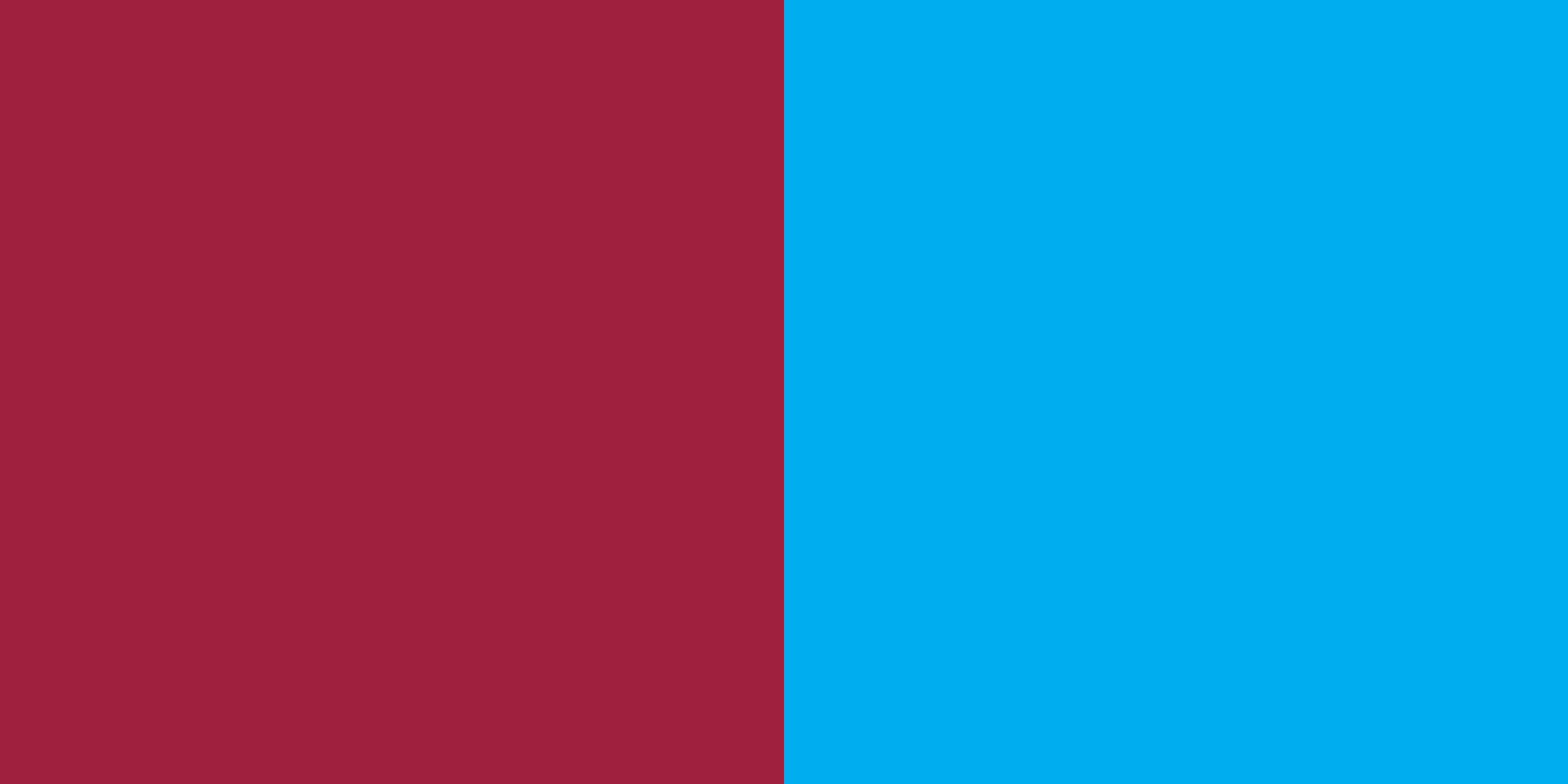
The reader of this book is encouraged to modify these recipes and to create new ones. Historically the development of gastronomy has been a collective endeavor, gradually refined for specific climates. To evolve into great cuisine, photosynthesis must become a hallmark of culture.

RECIPES

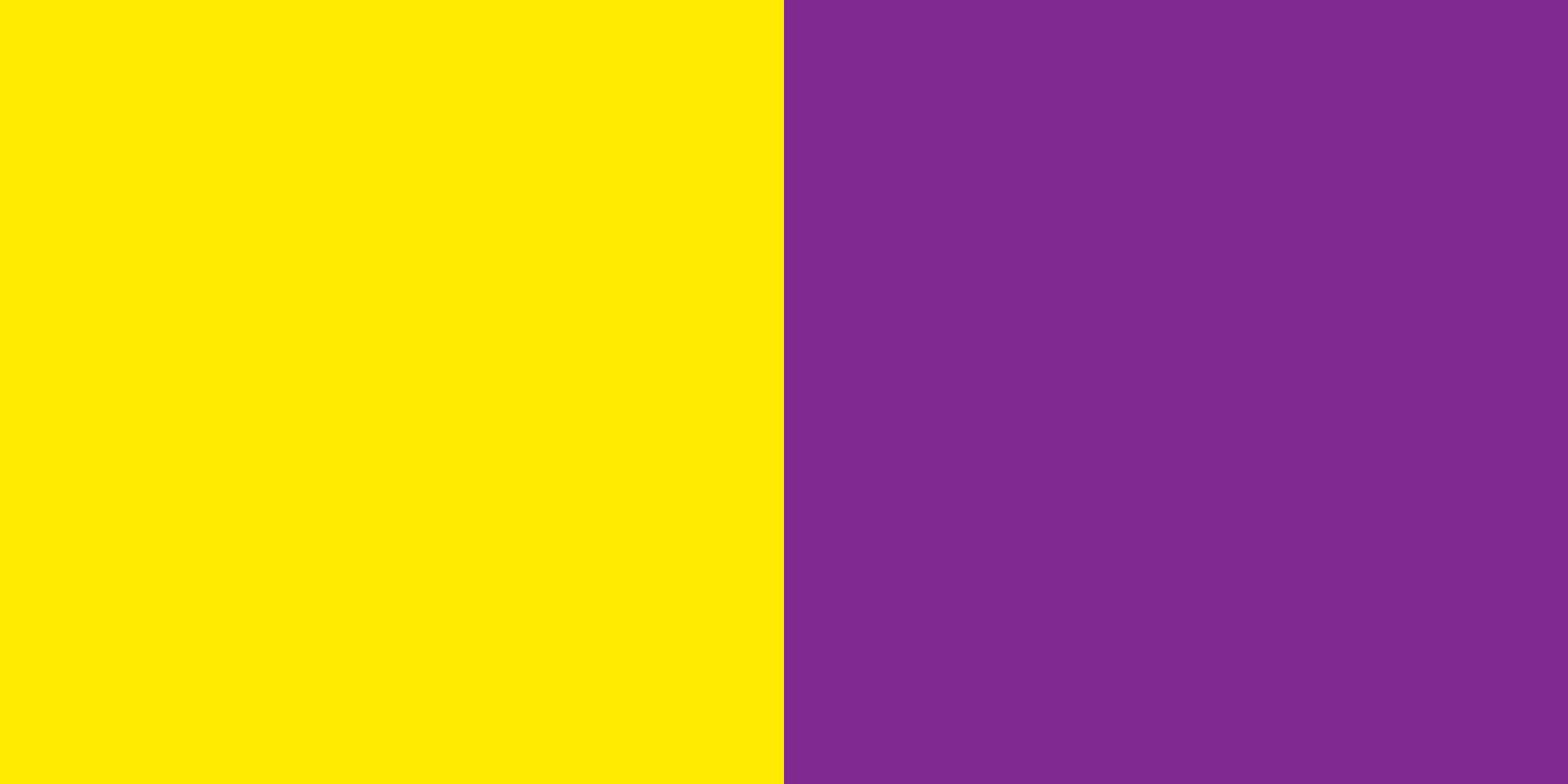
I



II



III





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