

Cornu Copiae, The Cornucopia

The history of the Cornucopia might be different than you'd think.

The word cornucopia comes from the latin term *cornu copiae*. The translation of this means "horn of abundance" or "horn of plenty". The cornucopia is a horn-shaped wicker basket or pannier, which is often woven and has a strap that is used to wear the cornucopia in a similar way as a messenger bag. It is used to collect fruits and vegetables, grain, flowers and nuts during Harvest. Cornucopia's were originally made of goat horn, and were often used as a center piece on tables during a feast.

The source of the use of the horn shaped woven vessel may have begun with Zeus, the Greek King of the Gods from Roman and Greek Mythological stories. According to Mythology the cornucopia may be used to celebrate the horn Zeus broke off of Amalthea, a goat he was hidden in a cave with as a child. Zeus made a promise to Amalthea in sorrow for his mistake, as she nourished him. He told her that the horn would always provide her what she wanted. The horn henceforth contained mystical powers providing Zeus and Amalthea with a bountiful source of food.

Another story involves Heracles, a Greek hero who competed for the love of Deianira, a princess. He wrestled the Potamoi Achelous, the River God, who morphed himself into a bull during their match. Heracles broke off one of his horns and legend has it that the horn was transformed into the cornucopia. Another version of the story is that Achelous had the cornucopia and traded it to Heracles for the return of his own horn.

Gods and Goddesses associated with abundance and bounty have been depicted in Art and Literature throughout history. Similarly to religions and spirituality across the world, when sustenance for the body is provided, the various Gods who are idolized are thanked for that which supplies our bodies with nourishment. The cornucopia seems to have quite an impressive history dating back nearly 3,000 years. It has similar meaning regardless of the tradition and inspiration, or the people utilizing it.

The cornucopia has been associated with Gods like: Gaia one of the first Goddesses of the Cosmos who was believed to bring forth much of creation like the mountains, sky, and sea among many other things after emerging from chaos. The God of the Underworld and the giver of wealth, Hades. Persephone, The Queen of the

Underworld, wife of Hades, and daughter of Demeter as well as Goddess of fertility. Tyche, The Goddess of chance. She is both thought to have been the daughter of Zeus, and Greek poet Hesiod referred to her as the daughter of Titan Oceanus and Tethys. Tyche was often referred to as The Goddess of chance, fate, fortune, luck, and providence. She was also referred to as Eutykhia, or Eutychia, The Goddess of good fortune and prosperity. The Goddess of Peace and Spring, Irene was one of three sisters who were the gate keepers of Heaven. She was typically portrayed holding a Harvest. The Goddess of Grain and Agriculture, Demeter, sister to Zeus, King of the Gods, was one of the original Twelve Olympians. She is considered a “Mother Goddess” and her role is as “Mother Earth”, “The Giver of Gifts”, “The Bearer of Food” and the “Great Mother”.

The cornucopia is typically displayed overflowing with a bouquet of corn, fruit, leaves, wheat straws, and an assortment of vegetables spilling from the side of the woven basket used to collect the plentiful Harvest.

In The United States a relatively new tradition associates the cornucopia with Thanksgiving, however it has been used to represent farmers, ranchers and prosperity and is even on the state seal of North Carolina. It is on the coat of arms for the countries of Columbia, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela, as well as the State of Victoria in Australia.

Have you ever made a homemade cornucopia? Maybe give it a try with some of the things you have in your home during Harvest: fruit, nuts, vegetables, corn stalks, and some dried or faux flowers or leaves. Download and color this one! Get creative and have fun!

Sources & Other Information about the Cornucopia:

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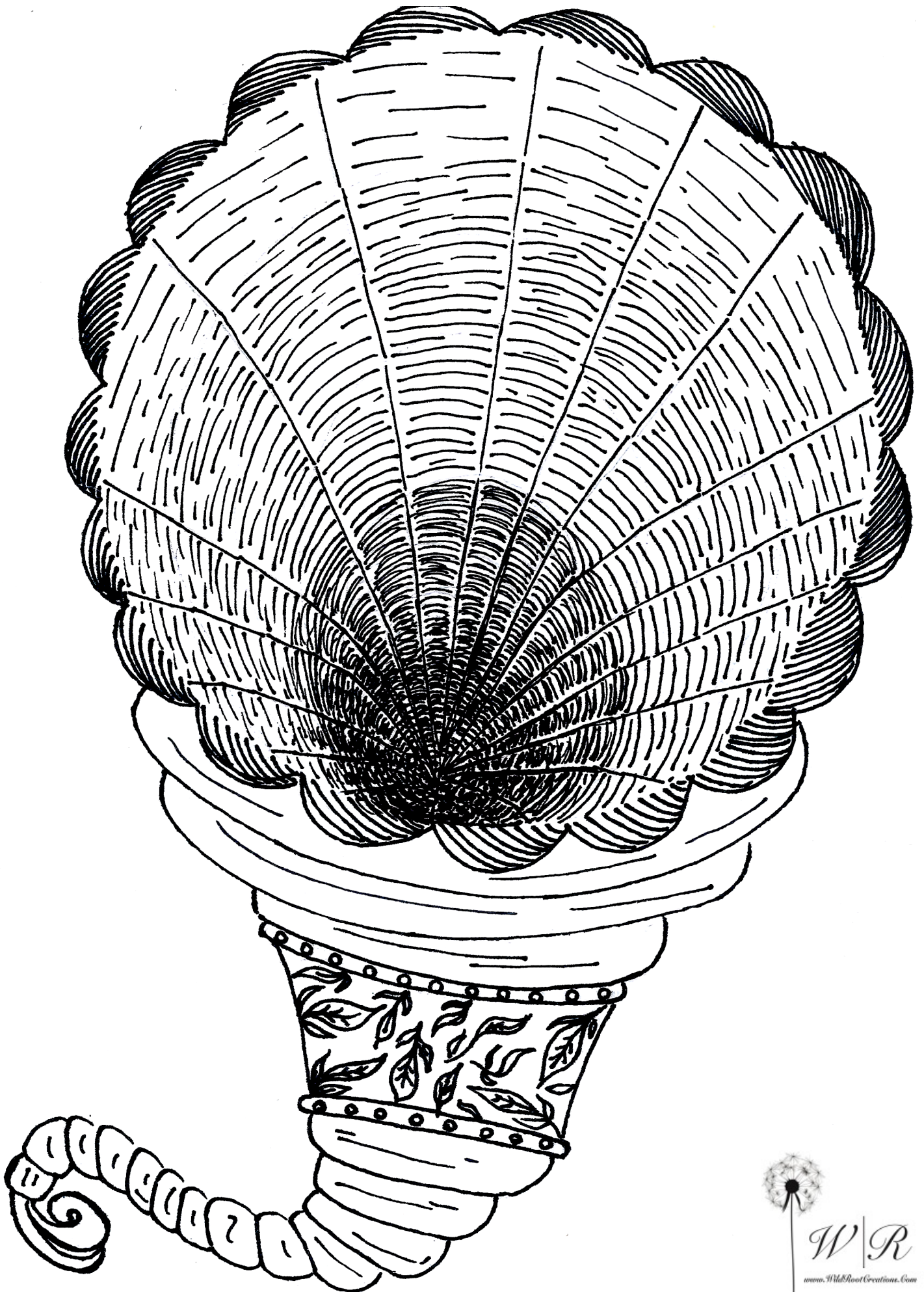
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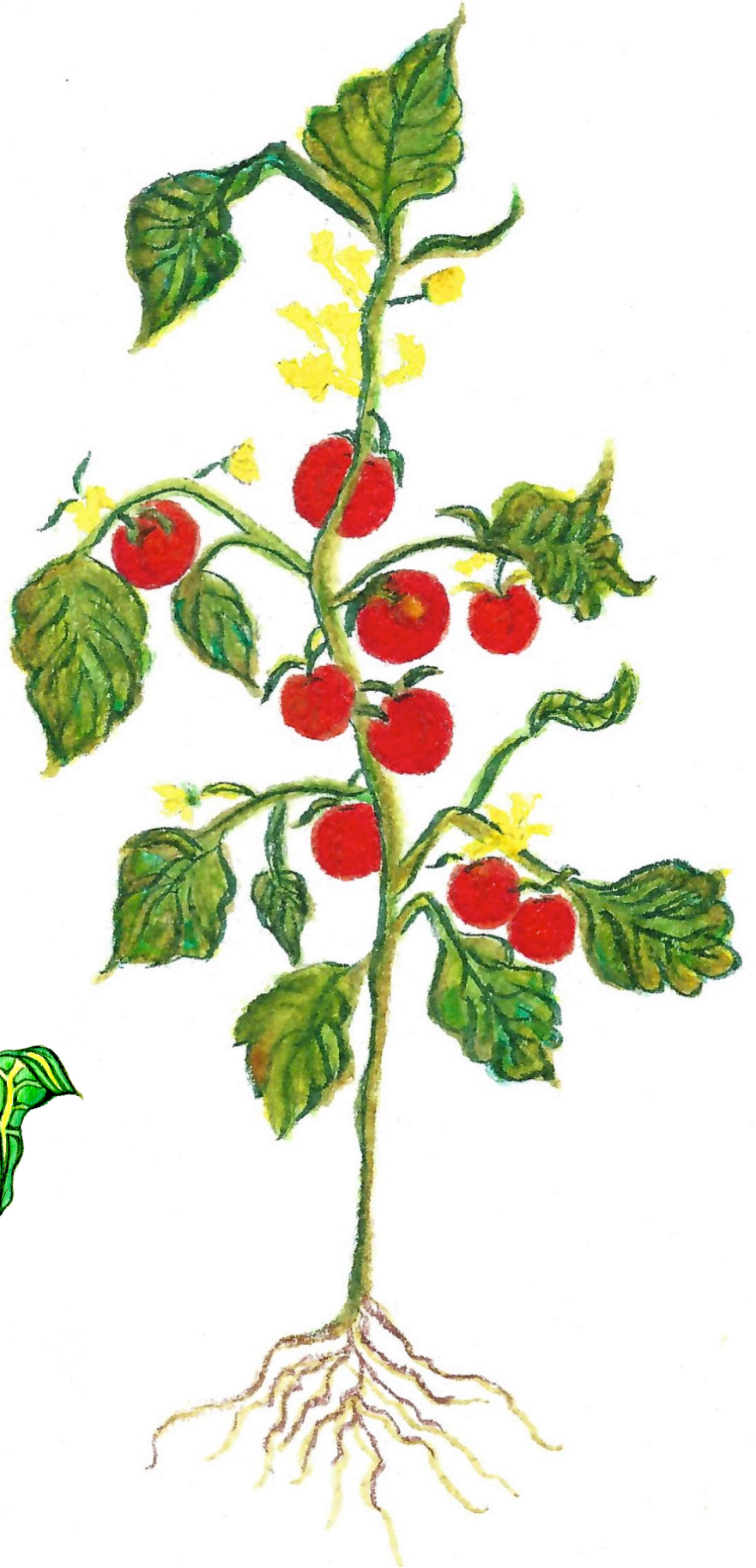
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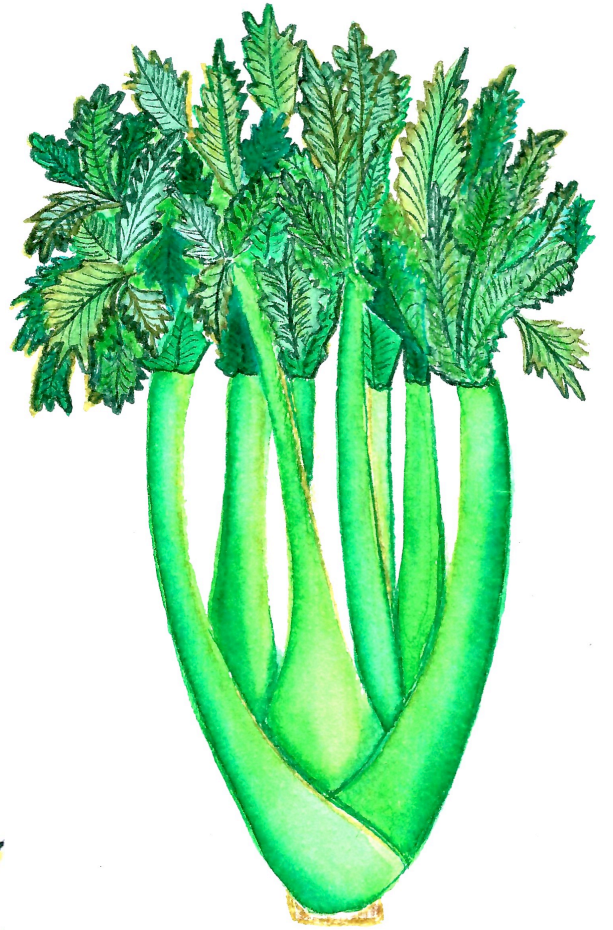
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Enjoy creating your Cornucopia!