



YOUTH AGRICULTURAL MENTORSHIP

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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A facilitator's guide to building a
strengths-based youth employment-
in-agriculture program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	1
About the YAM Program.....	4
Regenerative Agriculture.....	4
YAM Program Pillars.....	6
Using this Handbook.....	7
Our Roles.....	8
Youth-centred Approaches for Meaningful Work.....	10
Stages of Group Development.....	15
Tools for Healthy Communication.....	17
Goal-Setting.....	18
Forming Shared Agreements.....	21
Recruitment and Applications.....	22
Market Stand.....	23
YAM Program Schedule.....	24
The Garden.....	29
Garden Planning.....	30
Planting Schedule.....	37
Equipment and Supplies.....	38
Program Activities.....	41
Appendix A: Real Talk Rules.....	81
Appendix B: Team Contract.....	82
Appendix C: Job Description.....	83
Appendix D: Job Application Questions.....	85
Appendix E: Interview Questions.....	86
Appendix F: Get To Know You Bingo Cards.....	87



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather for the YAM program is on the traditional territories of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiatae First Nations. We honour the long standing history and knowledge of the land which has existed since long before the arrival of settlers. We recognize the importance of upholding our responsibility to unlearn and challenge colonialism, support Indigenous self-determination and honour our responsibilities as members of Robinson-Huron Treaty territory.

OUR PARTNERS

We are incredibly grateful for the wealth of collaboration and support that has gone into developing the YAM Program. Many organizations, educational institutions and community gardeners have generously shared their knowledge and expertise in the planning, facilitation and evaluation of the YAM Program. These partners have been instrumental in the program's success through their commitment to fostering positive outcomes for youth in our program. Extra special thanks to all of the young people who have been involved over the years; their energy and dedication is what has shaped this program and allowed it to grow.

YMCA

We are grateful for the support of the YMCA Youth Job Connection Program for helping us to secure paid positions for youth aged 15-18. The YMCA Youth Job Connection Program equips youth between 15-18 years of age with summer, part-time and after-school job opportunities. The program includes pre-employment training to ensure job-readiness before the YAM Program begins, as well as site visits during the YAM Program to ensure they are adjusting well to the employment opportunity.

COLLEGE BOREAL

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Collège Boréal, particularly the agriculture program staff, for raising healthy seedlings in their industrial greenhouses for us to care for in our gardens and for providing informative tours for youth in the YAM program. We also extend our sincerest gratitude to them for being a knowledge resource throughout this project and for the experiences they shared with us and program participants along the way.



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We would like to thank the faculty and staff at Cambrian College who provided support or feedback in the development of the YAM Program and the YAM Program handbook. Cambrian College Research and Development (Cambrian R&D) provided support with consultation, youth program evaluation, urban agriculture knowledge mobilization, visual media support and more. We would also like to thank the Cambrian students involved in activities like soil testing and garden construction (i.e. building a 3-bin wooden composter), which were very much needed.

SUDBURY SHARED HARVEST

Sudbury Shared Harvest (SSH) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to connecting people, the food they eat and the land it comes from. SSH played a central role in the YAM program by providing essential staffing, administrative support, operational funding and in-kind resources, ensuring the program's success during the 2021 and 2022 growing seasons.



FLOUR MILL COMMUNITY FARM (FMCf)

FMCf is a summer youth employment-in-agriculture program for youth ages 15-18 that has been operating in the Ryan Heights Neighbourhood since 2017. It is the first urban farm in Northeastern Ontario with a focus on improving outcomes of marginalized youth through employment training, work experience and character building. We would like to extend our thanks to Flour Mill Community Farm for inspiring the program and for the ongoing support that has helped the YAM program and other community agriculture projects to flourish.



GRUB

GRuB (Garden-Raised Bounty) is a nonprofit organization based in Olympia, Washington, whose mission is “working at the intersection of food, education and health systems to grow healthy food, people, and communities”.

GRuB provided consultation services for facilitators of the YAM program. We are extremely grateful for the knowledge and resources that they shared, which have helped us immensely in developing effective team-building and communication strategies for YAM program participants.

GRuB’s model focuses on Farming Self, Farming Community and Farming the Land. This model serves as a fundamental influence for the three pillars of the YAM program: Connecting to the land, Connecting to one another and Connecting to self.



ABOUT THE YAM PROGRAM

The Youth Agricultural Mentorship (YAM) program is an eight-week summer employment-in-agriculture program that provides youth aged 15-18 with their first employment opportunity. Participants engage in hands-on environmental stewardship and practice regenerative agriculture techniques while building essential job readiness skills such as punctuality, interpersonal skills and customer service.

Facilitators use a strengths-based, youth-centred approach to help create a supportive and collaborative environment for participants to develop their strengths and skills. Upon completion of the program, graduates have the opportunity to take on mentorship positions as Youth Agricultural Mentors (returning YAMs), where they can share their knowledge and experience with a new crew of Youth Agricultural Mentees (YAMs) the following summer.



REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Within the past century, the farming landscape has shifted largely away from many small family farms to fewer large, industrialized farms. To increase their output, these larger, industrialized farms rely on harmful practices such as over-tilling, monoculture cropping, the use of pesticides and depletion of water and energy resources. This has led to devastating effects on the environment, leading to soil erosion, the release of carbon from underground carbon pools and a big impact on watersheds. All of this has inevitably created concerns for human health, environmental health and sustainability.



Regenerative agricultural practices, on the other hand, are practices that support healthy soil and contribute to resilient ecosystems rather than deplete them (Rhodes, 2017). Practices such as intercropping, planting native plants, composting and low-till gardening aim to enhance biodiversity and restore soil health, which leads to a healthier ecosystem overall. By utilizing regenerative practices in our gardens, we can take an active role in regenerating the land. Meanwhile, we can provide opportunities for youth in our program to learn to grow food in a way that works with nature rather than against her.

The youth who expressed interest in participating

in the YAM program were already aware of global environmental and sustainability issues and were motivated to make a change. Within their applications or initial interviews for the YAM Program, many of the youth expressed concerns around the health of the environment and recognized the need to tackle major issues such as pollution, species-extinction and global warming. The YAM program aims to foster a sense of empowerment and responsibility for the local environment as youth build skills in regenerative agriculture and work together to help improve soil health, restore biodiversity, support pollinator populations and enhance food security within their community.

DID YOU KNOW???

There are more living organisms in 1 tbsp of soil than there are people on earth!



YAM PROGRAM PILLARS

Connection to Land

- We will have an active role in caring for our natural environment by practicing regenerative agriculture techniques
- We will be able to access fresh, local, organic produce that we grew ourselves and prepare healthy meals with ingredients we harvested
- We will develop a better understanding of the history of the land as well as the plants, animals and fungi of our region

Connection to One Another

- We will participate in activities that foster a greater sense of interdependence and develop our interpersonal skills
- We will have opportunities to give back to our community by participating in community service
- We will be able to develop a greater sense of awareness of services and agencies in our community, by engaging with community partners

Connection to Self

- We will practice mindfulness in the garden to enhance our self-awareness
- We will have opportunities to share our own thoughts, feelings and stories in a supportive environment
- We will have opportunities to practice leadership
- We will develop greater financial independence and job-skills by participating in paid employment

USING THIS HANDBOOK

The eight-week summer YAM program is the outcome of years of development and a wealth of collaboration between community members and organizations invested in developing positive outcomes for youth through an employment-in-agriculture program. Within this handbook you will find an outline of the YAM program model, as well as all the information that a YAM program facilitator would require in order to plan, prepare and facilitate the program. This information is organized into sections related to various aspects of the program, including: Roles, Youth-centred Approaches for Meaningful Work, Group Development, Program Schedule, Garden Planning, Program Activities, Program Planning and more.

You will notice that participant feedback is woven throughout sections of this handbook. In summer of 2022, Cambrian R&D received approval from Cambrian's Research Ethics Committee (REC) to conduct qualitative interviews to assess the impact of the YAM program from the perspective of youth

participants. Questions were mainly open-ended; for example, youth were asked to reflect on their overall experience as participants in the program, or in certain program activities. This feedback is instrumental to us as we reflect on our lessons and experiences as facilitators of the YAM program. It is essential, therefore, that we highlight their perspectives on various aspects of the program and include their feedback throughout the handbook.

As facilitators, the YAM Program has been a very special project that we have held dear to our hearts at every phase of its development. We have learned with the youth along the way: about our own strengths and our own challenges, how to support each other, how to communicate and how to work as a team. Interestingly, we developed many of the same skills we were helping the youth to build. We hope that the YAM Program model and the reflections included in this handbook can provide a basis to inspire new projects, or be a resource for projects that have already sprouted.

OUR ROLES

Each facilitator role in the YAM Program has a specific focus. Full time, year-round staff includes two program coordinators. Part-time staff includes two seasonal program facilitators (July-August) and one seasonal garden assistant (May-June).

We quickly discovered that having a diverse skill set on the team was one of our greatest strengths. The skill differentiation between coordinators as well as seasonal staff allows our program to be a robust employment-in-agriculture program with a blended focus on gardening, job skills, and social skills/wellness.



PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Two program coordinators are responsible for ensuring daily operations of the program, including program facilitation, supervision and daily scheduling. One coordinator is the Garden Manager, who is responsible for planning and coordinating all aspects of garden care. This role includes crop planning, purchasing garden materials, coordinating maintenance and repairs, market stand preparation and harvest planning. It also includes planning and facilitating daily gardening tasks and workshops related to regenerative agriculture.

The second coordinator is the on-site Youth Worker who is responsible for the social and wellness aspects of the program. They focus on group development and provide one-on-one support to youth. This role primarily focuses on planning and facilitating workshops related to team-building, leadership, mindfulness, communication and employment skills, but also includes leading workshops related to regenerative agriculture.

PROGRAM FACILITATORS

Two seasonal summer staff are needed to assist with facilitation of the program during July/August. The role of one of these summer staff is to assist with social and wellness aspects of the program, while the second summer staff assists with regenerative agriculture programming.

GARDEN ASSISTANT

One seasonal part-time summer staff is needed during May/June to assist with spring and early summer garden preparation ahead of the program.



YOUTH AGRICULTURAL MENTORS

YAMs from the previous year's program are invited to return as Youth Agricultural Mentors (Returning YAMs) and receive an honoraria to assist with mentoring and encouraging this year's new YAM participants during gardening activities and workshops. Youth Agricultural Mentors model active participation in program activities and take on responsibilities such as demonstrating gardening skills to newer YAMs. Many returning YAMs are recognized as peers and their involvement in activities and discussions is extremely helpful in enhancing group participation. Their role is foundational to the program.

YOUTH-CENTRED APPROACHES FOR MEANINGFUL WORK

In addition to helping youth build important skills and knowledge centred around the three YAM Program Pillars, facilitators also aim to foster a collaborative and caring environment where participants feel empowered to be themselves. In the feedback they provided, the YAMs said this was one of their favourite aspects of the program and shared how comfortable they felt to be themselves, to pursue their interests or to try new things. From a facilitator's perspective, these are some of the biggest successes of the program. By applying a youth-centred and strength-based approach to the program, we are able to tailor our programming to the goals and strengths within the group and support youth to participate in the ways that are most meaningful to them. This section will discuss what these approaches are as well as how they were incorporated throughout the program.

A strengths-based approach, in a nutshell, is based on the belief that everyone has resources and

YOUTH FEEDBACK

"There were hot days and we were gardening and it was really nice to be able to stay in the shade and do art.. they always tell you to take how many breaks you want and remind you to drink water, because it's a really hands-on job".

strengths that can help them to thrive, succeed and overcome challenges (MacArthur et al., 2011). This approach shapes all aspects of the program; the activities we choose, how we interact with the youth, even how we work through conflict. As facilitators, using a strengths-based approach means we have an important role in helping youth to identify and build upon their unique strengths, as well as the strengths of the group. It also means that we work collaboratively with youth as much as possible to guide the direction of the program and work through challenges that arise.

Similar to a strengths-based approach, a youth-centred approach means that our work with youth is centred on their individual needs, strengths and interests. We incorporate a variety of opportunities for youth to provide their feedback and to identify goals for the program, so that we can hear what is important to them. We focus our program activities as much as possible on these youth-identified priorities rather than assume what their needs or interests are. This is because we know that young people are more empowered to succeed when they feel ownership and the work is meaningful to them (Firmin et al., 2022).

Within the first week, we create “Shared Agreements” (21) together that reflects the various things we need from one another as a group to feel safe and supported. Our “Shared Agreements” becomes a living document that guides our work together, and it can be brought to the group to be modified or added to at any time if one of the group members feels it needs to be, for any reason. The process of creating these agreements helps us to establish trust and safety, and referring to it during times of conflict can be a strengths-based approach

YOUTH FEEDBACK

“And the first day they were like, we're not going to like milk for everything you got, you know? It was more of a learning experience, which I thought was really cool”.



to resolving challenges within the group as it helps us get on the same page about what we are trying to accomplish.

We also involve youth in group goal-setting. We host an initial “Group Goal-Setting” workshop (20), as well as a mid-point goal check-in to reflect as a group on the progress we have made towards achieving our goals. As youth work together on shared goals, it helps build a sense of teamwork. Seeing the progress made as a team can build motivation for further achievements. For example, during the initial goal-setting workshop the youth set a goal to participate in more community service projects. During the mid-point goal check-in, they



felt that they wanted to do more in this area and brought up the idea to lead a community clean up in the neighbourhood. It was no problem for us to adjust our programming for that week to support the YAMs in pursuing their idea. We heard from some of the group members that this was one of the activities they enjoyed the most and that they really felt accomplished in helping their community.

We also encourage participants to set personal goals for the program during the “Individual Goal-Setting” workshop (19) so that they can focus on getting the most out of their experience. Personal goals can be work related or not, but should be meaningful to them. As facilitators, we are there to support them along the way in meeting their personal goals, and we offer optional one-on-one weekly check-ins for anyone who wants this. For instance, one youth set a personal goal of building an edible forest garden on her family property and wanted to have the the project planned by the end of the summer. Week by week she continued to plan her edible forest garden, and staff supported her by checking in and offering guidance and resources

along the way.

Facilitators also incorporate a range of activities to support healthy communication and build a sense of safety and trust within the group. For example, during Real Talk (17), youth are able to practice techniques for effective communication. Real Talk includes some ground rules for sharing and receiving feedback (Garden Raised Bounty, 2017) and can be used by the group to share feedback of all types (see Appendix A). For the purpose of our program, our Real Talk focused on sharing feedback about ourselves and the program in general. Our one-on-one check-ins are another opportunity for facilitators to check in with the youth about their experience in the program and offer support where needed. Activities such as Team-Building Activities (42) and simply working in the garden together provide opportunities for the group to get to know one another and develop a sense of group cohesiveness. All of these activities help to establish a supportive, collaborative environment.

We believe that authentic relationships are key

to creating an empowering environment that supports positive outcomes for youth. One way that we try to show youth we are there for them is by encouraging them to set and respect their personal limits and honour their well-being. As facilitators this means having the flexibility to allow rest breaks when they are needed, or allowing them to choose a different task at times when it is needed. We might also check in with a youth to make sure everything is okay if we get a sense that things are not going well for them that day. By showing the youth that we value and are there for them as individuals, youth feel more comfortable fully bringing themselves and their ideas to the table.

We also make sure to allow moments for youth to naturally explore their curiosities and take the lead on things they are interested in. This has led to some of the most memorable parts of the program. For instance, one of the youth who was skilled in art wanted to design and paint a mural onto the outdoor wooden composter. She went above and beyond, planning and executing the entire project including recruiting other YAMs for support. As

YOUTH FEEDBACK

“Just go in with yourself and be yourself, you know, just really be you and then just really try to learn. Don't be like, well, why do I have to do that? No, just do it and then you'll- you'll get far. They're very open. So it's nice”.

facilitators, all that was needed from our end was some support here and there and to adjust our programming slightly to allow time to work on the mural. The end result was a collective art piece that remains a beautiful feature of the garden space.



Part of our role as facilitators is also to offer opportunities for youth to reflect on each other's strengths. Adolescence is a time when many youth are very self-conscious and take the views of others seriously (Stangor et al., 2014). Encouraging opportunities for positive affirmations helps build positive self-esteem and a sense of trust and security within the group. For example, during the “Warm Fuzzies” activity (57), each participant is given a slip of paper to write a positive, anonymous comment to every other member of the group. At the end,

YOUTH FEEDBACK



“I really liked painting the compost, but that’s just me. It started just me, and then I got others to help me... I wanted to go nature themed, I wanted it to all kind of go together. One part is mushrooms. The other is an apple but the core is a tree which I thought was perfect for a compost. The third one is mother nature... we’re still brainstorming on the top”.

everyone has a collection of positive comments about themselves to take home. By incorporating activities that help youth to identify each other's strengths, we can help each youth to recognize their strengths and create a more supportive group environment.

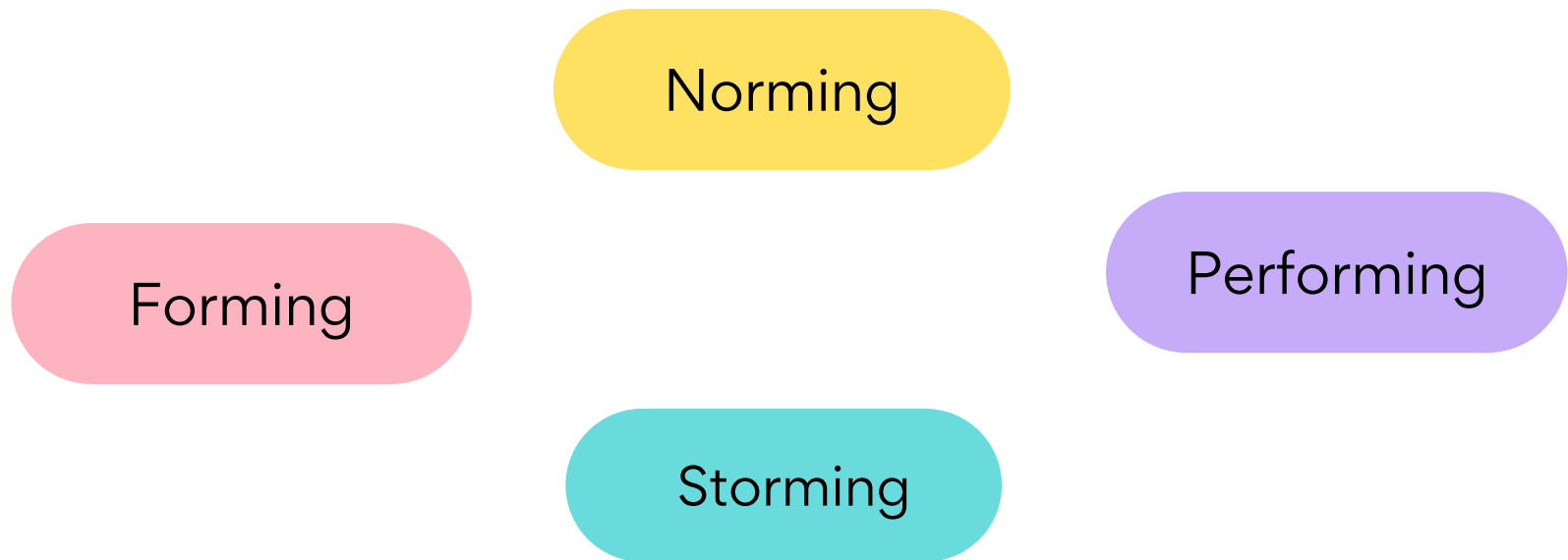
The activities in the program are designed to help participants to develop their strengths in a variety of areas including agriculture, leadership, teamwork and communication. Our role as facilitators is also to foster a supportive group environment by encouraging mutual support, self-expression and collaboration. Remaining youth-centred and strengths-based in our approach allows us to create meaningful relationships and an empowering environment where youth are encouraged to be themselves and grow into their best selves.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

“At one point we cleaned up the roads and this little old lady came up to us and she's like, thank you so much for doing this. That was really sweet”.

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Part of fostering a supportive environment is having an awareness of group dynamics and helping to guide them in a positive direction. Our YAM Program model has adapted Tuckman's Stages of Group Development (Tuckman, 1965) to guide our activity planning. Referring to the four main stages of group development (forming, storming, norming and performing) supports group development by helping us choose activities with the appropriate level of risk and by helping us to understand our role as facilitators in the group development process. These four stages do not represent a set of steps to move through in a linear fashion towards the performing stage, rather, they represent dynamics that can emerge at any point throughout a group's life cycle depending on a number of situational factors.



During the **forming phase** is when new group dynamics begin to emerge; our role is to help establish a secure foundation of trust and openness between participants. This is the time where we develop our shared agreements, set group goals and set out the expectations of the program. It is important to be mindful of pre-existing relationships within the group between facilitators or participants, which can impact the way that the program unfolds. Activities are normally low-risk, which means they do not require participants to “put themselves out there” in any considerable way, allowing participants to ease gently into getting to know one another.

During the **storming** phase, conflict can emerge. Our role is to guide the group into harmony and find ways to meaningfully engage youth by tapping into their strengths and interests. We have tools built into the program to help facilitators and participants to navigate conflict constructively, such as referring to our shared agreements, sharing our thoughts during Real Talk, or discussing the conflict during weekly check-ins.

During the **norming stage**, group dynamics begin to solidify and norms emerge, which refers to a set of unspoken guidelines for behaviour that develops within a group. For example, a norm might be tardiness, cliques or developing a routine/rhythm. We support group dynamics by paying attention to challenges between group members and responding to conflicts as needed, sometimes in creative ways. We also design and select activities based on the needs of the group. For example, when we noticed multiple instances of unwanted teasing between group members, we facilitated a fun activity that helped to build skills in constructive communication.

During the **performing stage**, there is a sense of trust and cohesiveness within the group that leads to the group taking initiative and working together effectively to get things done. Group members feel appreciated for their unique strengths and their role within the group. Our role is to offer our guidance, choose activities that build relationships within the group and support the development of leadership from within the group.

TOOLS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication skills are essential life skills that help us to understand and be understood by others. Having good interpersonal skills can help us to navigate conflict or misunderstandings which can lead to healthier relationships with others. Youth are exposed to various forms of communication, such as verbal communication and visual communication. The goal of these workshops is to help youth develop the tools to communicate effectively with others, which leads to healthier communication within the group. It also helps them become better equipped for challenges or opportunities at school, in the workplace or in their personal lives. Youth expressed that they found benefits in the communication workshops in terms of being able to apply what they learned to various areas of their life.

One way that we help the group to develop techniques for effective communication is by practicing Real Talk.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

“And Cassidy helps us too with the visual communication, which is really cool if you want to start your own business or just to educate others on stuff”.

REAL TALK

To practice Real Talk, introduce youth to the Real Talk Rules (See Appendix A) and discuss as a group what it feels like to give and receive feedback. Participants begin by spending a few minutes writing their feedback out on paper. When everyone is ready, take turns sharing one delta (challenges) and two alphas (positives). Real Talk can be centred around ourselves, one another, the facilitators to the youth, the youth to the facilitators, or it can focus on the program in general.



GOAL-SETTING

Setting individual and group goals for the program enables participants to provide input on the program's direction and make the most out of their experience. It also allows youth to focus on their individual and group strengths, with the support of facilitators through one-on-one and group check-ins, which are helpful in building upon these strengths.

Individual and group goals are established early on through the initial goal-setting workshops, which are inspired by those outlined in GRuB's Cultivating Youth Program Manual (Garden Raised Bounty, 2017). Facilitators use the SMART goals model to guide the goal-setting process. The outline of the workshops facilitated by YAM program staff is provided on the following pages.

INDIVIDUAL GOAL-SETTING



Begin by telling the group that today's workshop will help us set goals for the summer work ahead as well as explore some personal goals outside the program. The aim is to help everyone get the most out of their experience here and grow in the areas they want to improve.

Ask the group: "Why do you think setting goals is important? What kind of goals have you set for yourselves before?" (Encourage youth to share their thoughts, and jot them down on a flip chart.)

Discuss how the feeling of accomplishment when reaching a goal can energize us and push us to aim even higher. Explain that when we set goals, our brain releases dopamine- the chemical that makes us feel good. This motivates us to take action, and when we achieve the goal, that sense of reward is even stronger. A simple example is winning a game or getting a lot of likes on a social media post.

However, achieving goals that truly matter to you can bring lasting benefits. The positive feelings can stay with you longer and help you grow as a person. Plus, the more you experience success, the more you'll believe in your ability to set and reach new goals.

Discuss how it feels when a goal isn't achieved. Ask: "Has anyone ever set a goal they didn't quite meet? What did that feel like?"

After this discussion, introduce the SMART goals framework (Bovend'Eerd et al., 2009). Once everyone has an understanding of the model, ask the group to spend five minutes working individually to think about what they want to accomplish during the summer program. They can write their goals down on their "Team Contract" (See Appendix B).

On the team contract, there is space for two work related goals and two personal goals. The group is welcome to come up with as many as they like for themselves as long as it is realistic. The priority will be on work related goals; they should try to think of at least one. They can either write it down themselves or talk to one of us, and we can write it down for them.

When everyone is done, ask if anyone would like to share any of their goals. This is completely optional. Write them on the flip chart under Individual Goals.

Finally, discuss how it can be helpful to have someone checking in regularly to support you with your goals and help you stay on track. Explain that facilitators are available for one-on-one weekly check-ins. Ask each group member if they would like that support and discuss any considerations or preferences they have for those conversations.



GROUP GOAL-SETTING

Let the group know that in this upcoming workshop, we'll be creating goals to focus on as a team this summer. Encourage everyone to reflect on what they want to gain from their experience as part of the program and the group. What are our collective aspirations? What kinds of experiences are we hoping to have? What skills do we want to develop together?

To help inspire the group, refer to the individual goals shared earlier on the flip chart from the "Individual Goal-Setting" workshop. Alternatively, if the group has created a "Group Symbol" (54), they can revisit it to reflect on its meaning.

As the group suggests potential goals, jot them down on the flip chart under "Group Goals." From this list, work together to identify a few key goals that will guide the group. These goals will be revisited halfway through the program to assess our progress and make any necessary adjustments.

FORMING SHARED AGREEMENTS

Begin this workshop by explaining that a powerful way to help us to meet our goals is for all of us to get on the same page by creating a set of shared agreements to guide our work together.

On each member's "Team Contract" (See Appendix B), there is a set of pre-existing expectations; these are integral to the program and cannot be modified. However there are several blank spaces on the list; these are to be filled with agreements that the group makes to one another.

Ask the group: "What do you need to feel safe?", or "What do you need from others to feel your best and do your best work?". Having a Returning YAM (someone who has already completed the program and has returned to support new YAMs) participate in this conversation can be a good way to help engage the group in the discussion.

Write the answers on a flip chart and check in

with the group to see which answers resonate with everyone. It is important that everyone is on the same page with the shared agreements. Once everyone has agreed, ask everyone to write the agreements in the blank spaces on their Team Contracts. Keep a copy of the agreements; these can be revisited at any point during the program.

Ask the group if they feel ready to commit to these standards for the next eight weeks. If so, ask them to sign the contract.



RECRUITMENT AND APPLICATIONS

Recruitment for the YAM program begins in Spring, through opportunities that foster engagement with the garden. Since the YAM program is located on the grounds of a high school, we are able to engage students from the school by providing students with volunteer hours in exchange for their help in the garden during lunch and after school. Engaging youth ahead of the program is beneficial as it allows them an opportunity to get to know the facilitators as well as the work itself and provides us with a sense of their interest and commitment. Youth are recruited for volunteer positions directly through their school guidance counsellor or through teacher garden champions who actively promote volunteer opportunities to students in their classes.

Applications are available six weeks before the start of the YAM program (See Appendix D) and students can access the applications through one of

the facilitators or through their school reception. Students have two weeks to submit applications and are notified about interviews one week after the application deadline. The application process is important as it demonstrates initiative and allows us to find youth who are good fit for the positions. However, the main purpose is to provide youth with a supportive opportunity to become familiar with the job search process.

Interviews take place two to three weeks ahead of the program start date. These interviews are also intended to create an opportunity for youth to develop essential job skills. Interviewees are asked questions about their strengths and abilities, similar to a formal job interview. However, we try to create a supportive and friendly environment where we encourage interviewees by highlighting their strengths and allowing moments for casual conversation, humour and fun.



MARKET STAND

An integral component of the YAM Program is the weekly on-site market stand run by YAM participants. The main goal of the market stand is to offer affordable produce to local community members and to allow the youth to build valuable skills. Preparing for the market stand is an important weekly ritual in our program and begins the morning of market day; first thing in the morning, the youth head into the garden and begin harvesting what is ready to be picked. Then, they bring their boxes, bowls and bins of freshly harvested produce into the kitchen to get it market-ready. This includes blanching, rinsing, and turning our harvest into useable products such as jams and teas. It also includes weighing, bagging, pricing and arranging produce for display.

Youth take turns running the market stand, where they serve customers, use a till and share information with community members about the garden and various crops. Participants are involved in decision making throughout the market set-up process including deciding what is ready to harvest, working together to determine a fair but affordable price, creating appealing displays and designing signs/promotional materials. The market stand allows youth the opportunity to showcase their hard work and share the fruits of the labour with the community. It also allows them the opportunity to work together, build necessary and transferable job skills, such as leadership and customer service and develop relationships within the community.

YAM PROGRAM SCHEDULE

HOURS OF WORK

The YAM program runs three days per week for five paid hours per day, for a total of 15 hours per week. The number of hours and days worked per week can be adjusted based on the specific circumstances surrounding the program, however, 15 hours per week is the minimum number of hours required for the YAM program to be effective. From our experience, three days per week allows youth to become adjusted to a part-time work schedule, and allows sufficient time for the range of educational activities offered through the program.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each day at the YAM program follows a similar rhythm. As soon as the day begins, the group gathers in a central area in the garden for a general overview of the day's activities. We talk about what garden tasks need to be done and go over the day's activities, such as any planned workshops, garden

visits or preparation that needs to be done for the market stand. This part of the day is important, as we find that youth are better prepared for the day's activities when they know what to expect ahead of time. Then, the group scatters between rows of crops, carefully tending to their garden tasks for that day. Some of the youth are tasked with watering, while others are tasked with managing the compost or other garden tasks. Participants might have their own special project based on their strengths and interests. These independent gardening tasks are assigned to each YAM with the intention of fostering a sense of responsibility and leadership.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

"I would always tend to the peas so I really know how to take care of them".



Once our bodies are warmed up, we usually do a team-building activity. These brief (10-30 minute) activities help foster interpersonal communication and leadership skills. They have been vital in helping us to develop a sense of group cohesiveness.

For the rest of the morning, we either have a workshop related to regenerative agriculture, or we continue with our gardening tasks; this decision usually depends on the needs of the garden.

When it is time for our 30-minute lunch break, youth choose how their time is spent; either off-site or on-site, however, we do have a designated lunch space indoors. Once we all have returned, we do our afternoon workshop or activities. The specific workshop activities vary based on the day of the week with each day having a consistent purpose. These workshops aim to build skills and may focus on mindfulness, arts-based mindfulness, cooking and food preparation, agriculture and other topics the youth are interested in learning. Many of the workshops are run by the facilitators, however we bring in a variety of guest facilitators with specialized

knowledge. Finally, our day ends with a group closing circle. Youth are invited to share their thoughts around a prompt provided by a facilitator. For example, we might ask youth to share what their favourite part of the day was, what colour they feel best represents their week in the program, or what they are most looking forward to next week. These closing activities allow participants to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts with the group, which helps bring the group together.



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Each day in the YAM Program is dedicated towards a different weekly activity. Having consistent days for each weekly program activity is helpful for both facilitators and youth.

On **Mondays**, we always host a regenerative agriculture or cooking/food preparation workshop in the morning after our daily garden tasks. On Monday afternoons, youth participate in a visual communication workshop hosted by a local artist OR arts-based mindfulness.

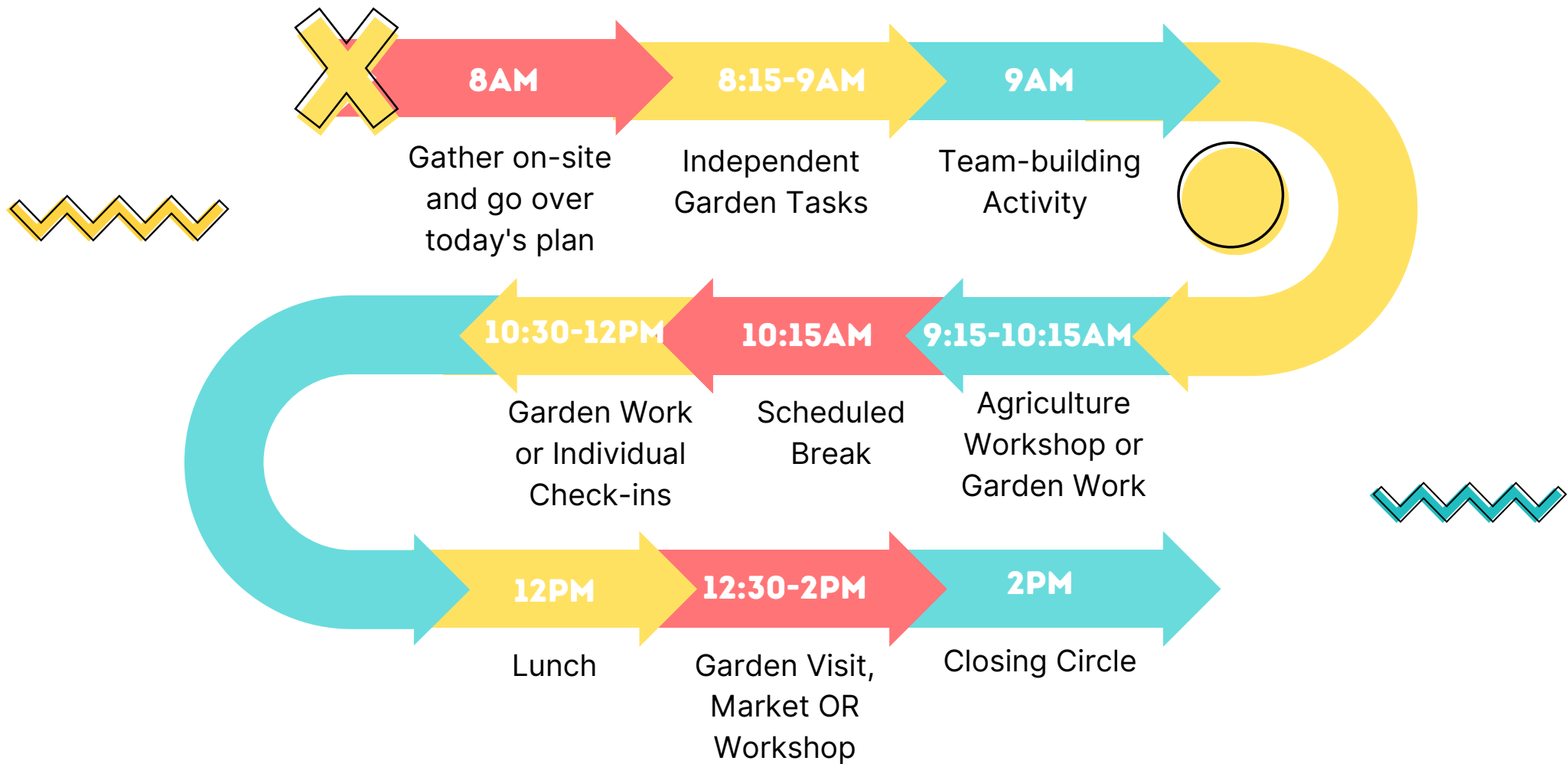
On **Wednesday** mornings, our team-building activity for that day consists of a mindfulness activity. Facilitators also provide one-on-one check-ins for youth that are interested in speaking with a facilitator about their goals or to provide feedback on the program. This is usually done while participants carry out their garden responsibilities. Wednesday afternoons, from the end of lunch until the end of the day, are reserved for visits to local gardens and farms.



On **Thursday** mornings, youth prepare for the market stand. This is a busy day with much to do. The big task in the morning is picking and preparing all the produce that is ready. If it is a day that the work is completed faster than expected, we fit in a Communication Activity/Real Talk activity. After we return from lunch the youth move onto setting up the physical stand and getting the produce displayed on the tables. The market runs until about 30-60 minutes before the end of the work day, to ensure time to clean up and put away the stand. If there is produce leftover, the youth are able to bring it home to enjoy with their families or it is donated locally.



EXAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE





EXAMPLE 4-WEEK PROGRAM SCHEDULE



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1 -Jam-making workshop -Paint to music	X	3 -Mindfulness -Check-ins -Local farm Visit	4 -Harvesting and food prep -Market stand	X
8 -Pest ID workshop -Photography workshop	X	10 -Mindfulness -Check-ins -Tour a local greenhouse	11 -Harvesting and food prep -Market stand -Real talk	X
15 -Native plant ID walk -Piece of the puzzle	X	17 -Mindfulness -Check-ins -Community clean-up	18 -Harvesting and food prep -Market stand	X
22 -Mushrooms/spore printing -Poster-making workshop	X	24 -Mindfulness -Check-ins -Community garden visit	25 -Harvesting and food prep -Market stand -Real talk	X

THE GARDEN

In the back of a school yard in rural Hanmer, Ontario, what was once a field has become a biodiverse sanctuary for bees, butterflies, students and community members. Straight ahead upon entering the area is an edible forest garden, while to the left is a vegetable market garden that has expanded over the years. A fence separates this space from the neighbouring community gardens, which are busy with activity from local community gardeners during the day. On either side of this fence are two beautiful cedar hand-built wooden composters that have been decorated with murals designed by YAM program participants.

An extensive amount of collaboration, hard work and dedication goes into planning and preparing the garden each year ahead of the YAM program. Over the years, this has led to an immense improvement in the health of the soil and plant biodiversity. There are many considerations that go

into designing our gardens, such as climate zone, food production, learning opportunities, youth-friendliness, sustainability and soil fertility. The following section will provide an overview of the types of considerations we make when designing our garden. We will touch on other important aspects of planning and preparation such as creating a planting schedule and identifying required agricultural equipment and supplies. There is no one-size-fits-all solution and the following is intended to provide an overview of some of the considerations we made. Your program's garden will look very different depending on a variety of factors such as garden location, garden size, usage of the space and goals of the program.





GARDEN PLANNING



Climate Zone

Our garden is located in zone 4b; knowing this is an important part of choosing suitable crops, as climate zone relates directly to the length of the growing season. Our season in the City of Greater Sudbury, located in Ontario, Canada, is roughly 158 days long. We discovered that the season in Hanmer, Ontario, a rural area in the northern part of Greater Sudbury, is even shorter due to other factors that impact the climate surrounding our garden area. It is important to know what factors might be impacting the particular climate where the garden is located, including wind, sun direction, precipitation patterns and more. For us, this means choosing crops that are particularly frost tolerant and grow in a short season. We also aim for productive varieties to get the most out of our growing season. Lists of suitable crops are easily found in resource books and online, however, the best way to determine what grows well in your area is to consult with local community gardeners.



History of the Land

When choosing suitable land for a garden it is very important to understand the history of the land, including what it was used for previously, who currently has a relationship with the land, and how the space is being used. The more information that you have regarding the land you are growing on, the more you can make choices that will improve the overall health of your garden and surrounding environment.

The City of Greater Sudbury is on the traditional territories of the Atikameksheng Anishinabek and Wahnapiatae First Nations, which is covered by the Robinson-Huron Treaty. Work with the land cannot be done without acknowledging the deep-seated history of Indigenous peoples as the original caretakers of this land. For thousands of years humans lived sustainably on this land by working with the land to the benefit of both them and the ecosystem. Only in the last few hundred years, with the arrival of European settlers, has the harmony between humans and nature been

disrupted and sustainability and environmental health been a major concern. We continue to educate ourselves and participants on this history and how to work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to unlearn and challenge colonialism.

The history of the land can leave a mark in many ways which can impact the fertility and structure of the soil and effect the overall viability of the garden. These can include chemicals that have leached into the soil through pollution from nearby industrial production, or residential use such as lead pipes or paint. Physical changes to the land can often be unseen on the surface, but can include asphalt, rocks, bits of leftover foundation, bedrock or other physical obstructions that will impact your growing area and may need to be managed. There can also be the possibility of other hazards, such as nails, garbage or construction waste. To obtain information regarding the history of the land, you may be able to consult locals in your area who know the history.

The land may also be home to many plants or creatures that can tell you a lot about the growing area or may impact the growing area. While the presence of any specific plant will not tell you everything you need to know to assess your soil, it can provide some helpful information to consider. For example, seeing mosses or cattails can usually be a good indicator of very wet growing conditions. Or, the presence of blueberries might be an indicator of acidic soil PH. The root systems, PH profile, nutrient preferences and preferred soil conditions of the types of plants found in your desired growing area will give you an idea of what you are working with under the surface. It is also important to consider how existing plants will impact your growing area, such as invasive species and other heavy spreaders, trees with large roots, or plants that fix/remove certain nutrients from the soil. Additionally, considering who uses the space is important when planning your garden. For us, the land being in a field on the grounds of a high school means that youth have use of the space. The



students frequently use the baseball diamond, located on the other side of the field from the garden, as well as the neighbouring soccer field. The involvement of students has been a big part of our garden planning. Students are included as much as possible, to ensure that the space remains in their hands and that youth are exposed to food and opportunities to grow food wherever possible. Their participation has been central to our volunteer and recruitment strategies. It has also helped youth to develop a sense of ownership over the gardens, which can help reduce instances of vandalism.

Food Production and Distribution

The overall garden plan for a youth employment-in-agriculture program will vary depending on what the food will be used for and by whom as well as in what quantities. For instance, our gardens are primarily for education and to expose youth to a variety of regenerative growing practices. While achieving high yields is something we strive for, it is not the main purpose of our garden. This is certainly reflected in the overall design of the garden.

For example, our garden includes experimental growing areas that provide opportunities for teachable moments. One year, we planted the same crops in three separate beds which each incorporated a different soil amendment. This allowed us to compare the effectiveness of compost, composted manure and aged composted manure on producing the greatest yield as well as learn about the importance of soil health on plant growth. We also tried out techniques that were new to us, such as Hugelkultur gardening. Building our garden for teachable moments also allows us to experiment with various interesting/new crop varieties, such as midnight tomatoes and purple cauliflower.

However, we also need to balance the educational goals of our program with the fact that we need enough produce to run our weekly market stands and meet the other program deliverables. To achieve this balance we also take care to maximize our growing space and try our best to remain diligent about our growing and planting practices to ensure that there is plenty to harvest all summer.

Youth-friendliness

When making a planting schedule and designing our garden space, major consideration goes into choosing crops that are youth-friendly. It would be ideal to involve youth as much as possible in the garden planning stages; however, since we have not yet been set up to receive feedback prior to the program, we try our very best to base our decisions on what varieties youth have loved in the past, and what we think will be hits.

Youth (and most people, for that matter) are intrigued by unique or interesting crops that are not commonly seen at the supermarket. Many people are used to seeing the same cultivars of fruit and vegetables, and while a typical beefsteak or cherry tomato can be a fan-favourite in any garden, it can be exciting and eye-opening to see the rainbow of tomatoes or carrots that exist, or the range of local native berries right from the edible forest garden. We also ensure that we plant an assortment of crops



that can be started from seed and then harvested within the eight-week period of the summer when youth are on-site. Having the opportunity to be part of the entire process from seed to harvest can be very meaningful and rewarding. These youth-friendly crops can increase engagement in the garden and offer more opportunities for youth participants to learn about and fall in love with agriculture.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

“I’ve never seen a black tomato in my life, and all of a sudden they’re popping up. And a purple bean... like what’s a purple bean? I didn’t even know you needed two pear trees together”.

“There are some purple beans-they were good. There’s like an outside coating that’s purple, but we bought them from the stand one day and my brother cooked them, and they turned green! They still taste the same. They were good”.

Sustainability

One of the goals of the program is to help the YAMs learn how to incorporate sustainable farming practices that work to regenerate, rather than deplete, the land that produces our food. While we incorporate some of these practices into our annual garden, some of the core principles of regenerative agriculture can be best seen in our edible forest garden. This is because an edible forest garden is intended to mimic a natural forest ecosystem: one of nature's most sustainable ecosystems. In this section we will share some of the practices that we use in our garden to enhance the health of the soil, conserve water, improve biodiversity and increase the long term sustainability of the growing area.

The sustainability of a garden starts with the life in the soil. When it comes to the health of the soil we look to regenerative practices as much as possible to support the soil food web. The soil food web is the ecosystem under the soil that is responsible for maintaining healthy soil structure, aeration, helping plants get nutrients and much

more. When this is robust and healthy as it is in a forest, the entire system is supported. Many conventional farming practices, such as the use of pesticides, tilling, monoculture cropping and others, can be very detrimental to the soil food web and can have tremendous impacts on the growth of plants and health of the environment. Some of the ways we support the soil food web is by using techniques that reduce our tilling and keep moisture and important nutrients in the soil, such as: composting, planting perennials, mulching, cover cropping and incorporating nitrogen-fixing plants.

Mulching has many benefits in regenerative agriculture. It adds nutrients into the garden soil, helps to prevent soil erosion by keeping the soil covered, helps the area hold onto moisture by preventing evaporation and discourages competition from weeds. We incorporate a thick layer of woodchip mulch during the first year or two after creating an edible forest garden.


Over time we continue to build the organic matter by allowing plant debris to compost along the garden floor, in much the same way as fallen leaves and other organic matter composts along the forest floor, adding nutrients back into the system.

In our edible forest garden we also practice cover cropping, which is the process of growing a non-production crop for the purpose of covering the soil as well as making more nutrients available. The main cover crop that we use in our edible forest garden is clover as it has the ability to fix nitrogen; this means that it does not take nitrogen out of the soil when it grows. As the plant dies, nitrogen is released back into the soil for other plants to use. However, it is important to remember that the clover must remain in the garden to restore soil nutrients that are removed, either by composting the dead plants or leaving them to decompose in the garden.

Like one would see in a forest, we choose a variety of plants that are suited to this climate and

grow well together, to create a healthy productive ecosystem. Most of the plants that make up the ecosystem in our edible forest garden are perennial and many are native to this area. Planting native perennials is an important regenerative agriculture practice that helps to support native pollinator populations, as they are the natural food source and habitat for many native pollinator species. Planting perennials has the added function of minimizing soil disturbance, as the ground is not tilled yearly for a new crop. Also, since native perennials grow here naturally, they are better adapted to the surrounding environment and may require less watering, fewer soil amendments and be more resistant to pests and disease, making them a more sustainable choice.





Within the section of our garden dedicated to annual crops, it can be difficult to incorporate some of these practices; however, we aim to increase the sustainability of our growing practices wherever possible. One of the practices we use in our annual garden is the use of pollinator strips, which support pollinators, reduce surface water runoff, increase biodiversity and help prevent pests by acting as trap crops. The pollinator strips in our garden take the form of small patches of annual flowers, like calendula and camomile, along the short edges of the in-ground garden beds, however, there are many ways to use pollinator strips. We also ensure that we maintain a diversity of crops within the garden, as many plants have different needs and can be beneficial to each other. One great example of companion planting is the three sisters planting: a traditional Indigenous farming practice of planting corn, beans and squash together. Having diversity in the garden supports a variety of pollinators and other species to thrive, while also ensuring that there is a balance of nutrients within the soil. It also means more varied, healthier produce for us and community members to enjoy!

Any approach to sustainable or regenerative agriculture would be incomplete without composting. Adding compost ensures that the nutrients depleted through growing crops are returned to the soil. The nutrients and organic matter in the compost feed the soil food web, which attracts beneficial organisms and makes nutrients bioavailable for plants. It also improves the physical structure of the soil. This helps soil hold onto moisture like a sponge, improves aeration in the soil, decreases water and wind erosion and helps improve root penetration. Composting is also integral to making sure that the nutrients from our garden stay in our garden by turning garden waste into useable compost. Having composting on-site reduces our need to truck in compost from elsewhere, which conserves resources and reduces our impact on the environment.

Our hope is to demonstrate to youth that by applying some of these regenerative agriculture techniques, we can, over time, help to restore the health of the soil and overall ecosystem while we grow our food.

PLANTING SCHEDULE



Having a well thought out planting schedule helps us to make the most out of the growing season. Knowing ahead of time when we are going to seed, transplant or harvest each crop ensures a more consistent harvest and helps guide our summer programming. In this section you will find an overview of our planting schedule, however yours should be based on your unique growing area, climate, program needs and more. When making a planting schedule it is helpful to consult local growers as they will likely know the best times to start seeds, transplant or harvest.

The two main considerations to make when creating any planting schedule are: first/last frost date and days to harvest. Last frost date is very important, as frost sensitive plants cannot be safely planted outside before that date. Based on previous years, around June 10th is the last frost date for our growing area. Each crop varies in the length of time they need before they are ready to transplant. Cucumbers, for example, are ready to transplant three to four weeks after sowing indoors. Any longer and you may have very leggy, root-bound cucumbers. Meanwhile, eggplant can take ten to twelve weeks to grow before it is ready to transplant (other plants, like corn, do not like to be transplanted at all- these are much better direct seeded!). To calculate when to sow our seeds indoors, we subtract this length of time from our frost-free date of June 10th. First frost dates tell us when we need to be wary of frost late in the season. For us, this is usually around September 6th. Days to harvest (or days to maturity) is also important for us to consider when creating a planting schedule, as it tells us when we can start to expect a harvest. This is usually written on the seed packet.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES



Having the proper equipment for the tasks in your garden can make a world of difference. Leaving some of the heavy lifting to trusted garden tools like an irrigation system, properly set-up row-cover or a pair of well-sharpened shears generally means energy can be conserved and spent elsewhere. It can also mean increased yields when equipment is used to support better farming practices. The exact supplies that are needed will differ for each garden or program. However, here are some supplies and equipment that we rely on to keep our garden growing each year.

Tiller

While we embrace low-till practices as much as possible, sometimes it is not the most practical option. Starting a new garden in the ground from scratch normally requires the use of a tiller, particularly if the garden is being built on grass and other well rooted plants. While there are some types of regenerative practices to build a new garden bed on grass, these tend to take longer to develop and it is harder to achieve the same yields within the first few years. Most tillers can be sourced or rented from local hardware supply stores.

Floating row cover

Floating row cover is excellent for extending the garden season, protecting plants from frost and discouraging pests. We support our floating row cover by bending PVC pipe over our in-ground garden beds and attaching it to stakes in the ground on either side of the bed to keep the fabric from touching the plants.

Broadfork

A broadfork is an investment worth making for a program involved with planting shrubs or fruit trees regularly. A broadfork is great because it allows us to aerate the soil around the planting area and creates channels that make it easier for roots to spread- while minimizing disturbance to the soil.

Irrigation System

If there was one winning time-saver from this list it would definitely be our irrigation system. Without it, we would quite literally spend hours watering each time the garden needed it. Our particular system is a ground drip irrigation system. However there are many to choose from, including overhead irrigation and reservoirs. It is important to choose an irrigation system that best suits your area, your needs and your budget (they are not cheap).

Seeders

Having a seeder can make seeding a breeze, allowing us to travel up and down rows of crops using one hand to spread seeds throughout the row within minutes. While seeding by hand can be quite

enjoyable, the ability to plant in a fraction of the time can allow us to make the most of our time in the garden and increase our food production.

Garden Tools

There are some garden tools that we absolutely could not live without. Some are the usual staples you will see in any garden shed: watering cans, rakes, shovels, pitchforks and hoes. A wheelbarrow, similarly, is a must-have. Hand tools are especially important for weeding, so having enough trowels and hand rakes as well as gloves in various sizes is essential. We find that having well-sharpened hedge shears and pruning shears makes a big impact on tasks like managing the compost. Also, buckets are handy and very versatile.

Soil Amendments

It is important to have a variety of organic soil amendments on hand to support optimal crop growth. There are a few trusted amendments that we incorporate into the program. These are: Myke, composted manure, woodchips, Triple Mix, kelp meal, bone meal and occasionally others.

Myke

What it is: Mycorrhizal fungi (a beneficial soil fungus)

Source: Commercial production of beneficial fungi

Benefits: Supports plant roots, improves nutrient and water uptake, enhances plant growth, feeds soil food web

Composted Manure

What is it: Decomposed animal manure

Application: Used at planting and added to soil

Source: Livestock farms

Benefits: Improves soil texture, adds nutrients and organic matter, can be locally sourced, feeds soil food web

Woodchips

What it is: Shredded wood or bark

Source: Tree trimming or forestry industry

Application: Applied as mulch

Benefits: Improves water retention and soil structure, suppresses weeds, prevents soil erosion, can be locally sourced, feeds soil food web

Triple Mix

What it is: Equal parts compost, topsoil and peat moss (or various other organic materials)

Source: Soil and organic material suppliers

Application: Mixed into the soil before planting. Suitable on its own for growing most crops.

Benefits: Improves soil structure and texture, adds nutrients and organic matter, feeds soil food web

Kelp Meal

What it is: Dried, ground seaweed

Source: Seaweed harvesting from coastal areas

Application: Used at planting and added to soil

Benefits: Rich in nutrients and trace minerals, improves soil structure, feeds soil food web

Bone Meal

What it is: Ground bone from livestock

Source: Byproduct from livestock farms

Application: Used at planting and added to soil

Benefits: Rich in phosphorus, promotes flowering and root growth, feeds soil food web

YAM PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Team-Building.....	42
.....Building Bridges.....	43
.....Holes in the Ice.....	44
.....Sneak-a-Peak.....	45
.....Maze Race.....	46
.....Five By Five.....	47
.....Four Up.....	47
.....Name That Tune.....	48
.....Team Count.....	48
.....Would you rather.....	49
.....Get to know you Bingo.....	50
Arts-Based Activities.....	51
.....Building Birdhouses.....	52
.....Emotions Map.....	54
.....Group Symbol.....	54
.....Moving Art.....	55
.....Piece of the Puzzle.....	56
.....Warm Fuzzies.....	57
.....Inside my Heart.....	58
.....Plein Air Drawing.....	58
Drama Games.....	59
.....2 Truths 1 Lie.....	59
.....Draw-it.....	60
.....Charades.....	60
.....Invisiball.....	61

.....Object Stories.....	62
.....One Word Story.....	62
.....Paper Bag Skits.....	63
.....Telephone Charades.....	63
.....What Are You Doing?.....	64
.....Wink Murder.....	64
Agriculture Workshops.....	65
.....Edible Forest Gardening.....	66
.....Composting 101.....	68
.....Native Plant ID Workshop.....	70
.....Garden Plant ID Workshop.....	70
.....Seed Matching Game.....	71
.....Veggie Matching Game.....	71
.....Mushroom Spore Prints.....	72
.....Seed Bombs.....	73
.....DIY Sun Tea Lemonade.....	73
.....DIY Herbal Tea Bags.....	74
Mindfulness.....	75
.....Breathing Sticks.....	76
.....Breath of Joy.....	77
.....Quick Change.....	77
.....Relaxation Meditation.....	78
.....One Minute Listen.....	79
.....Progressive Muscle Relaxation.....	79
.....Take 5.....	80



TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Team-building activities help to foster a spirit of collaboration and shared understanding. In addition to structured team-building activities, we encourage youth to take the lead and pursue activities that inspire them as much as possible throughout the program. In doing so, we can invite organic moments of connection and cooperation between team members. Teamwork and cooperation are essential to gardening as well as accomplishing our group goals.

Team-building activities are incorporated into our daily morning icebreaker throughout the program. Activities are selected according to the four stages of group development and how the group seems that day in terms of energy, mood, etc. These activities are facilitated just prior to our morning break, after participants have had a chance to warm up their minds and bodies during our morning garden tasks. Time of day is important; in our experience, youth are not as readily engaged first thing in the morning before they have had time to settle in. Team-building activities offer an opportunity to get to know one another, practice public speaking, get energized or get focused, all while having fun.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Objective: Using the materials provided, two teams must separately build one half of a bridge. The goal is for both halves to fit together. They must do this without seeing the other team while they build their half of the bridge, relying only on verbal communication.

Number of participants: 4-10 people or enough to create two teams

Time: 30-60 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Materials to construct a bridge, such as straws, popsicle sticks, cardboard, paper, staples, paperclips, building blocks, etc.

1. Begin by dividing the group into two teams. Teams should be in two separate stations and should not be able to see each other. However, they can communicate verbally either by telephone or by talking through a door, sheet, or other barrier.

2. Give each team 10 minutes to come up with their design.

3. Each team will separately build one half of a bridge using the materials provided. They are able to communicate with the other team as often as needed to share ideas about their design.

4. After 30 minutes or so, ask the groups to come together to try to fit their halves together. If needed, provide 15-30 additional minutes for teams to go back to their stations and modify their half of the bridge.

5. Bring both teams together one final time to fit their halves together.

Optional: Debrief as a group about the experience. Discuss some of the challenges of not being able to see each other and what strategies worked well.



HOLES IN THE ICE

Objective: As a team, use your voices to direct your blinded teammate across the ice without letting them fall into any of the holes in the ice.

Number of participants: 4-20 people divided into two teams

Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Hula hoops or other obstacles that can be placed on the ground in the playing area

1. Introduce the playing area as a large skating rink with the hula hoops as large holes. Explain that their task is to guide their teammate across the ice without letting them fall into any of the holes.

2. Have each group choose one person to blindfold.

3. Explain that if one of their teammates step on one of the obstacles i.e. “fall into the ice,” we will all yell splash and the blindfolded player will have to start at the beginning.

The game is played until each person that wants to has had a turn to be blindfolded.

Debrief:

You can do a mini debrief after each person (what worked? What didn't? What could we do differently next time? What was it like to be blind folded and receiving direction? What was it like to try to give direction? Did the group work together?)

SNEAK-A-PEEK

Objective: In this building-focused game, teams have to create a copy of a pre-built structure based on a "sneak peak". Teams will have to use teamwork, communication and problem solving to succeed.

Number of participants: 4-20 people divided into two teams

Time: 30 minutes



Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Building blocks such as legos that can be used to make a simple structure. You will need enough blocks for the original structure x3 and a device to keep time

1. Use Lego pieces or something similar to create a structure - something that is complex yet possible to replicate. Make sure that you have enough remaining pieces to make two copies of the structure. Also, make sure that no one can see the structure (ideally, place it in a separate room).

2. Divide the players into two teams.

3. One player from each team can look at the structure for 10 seconds. After this, the player has to return to his/her team and instruct them on how to build the structure for 25 seconds.

4. Each team takes one minute to build the structure as per the instructions. After a minute, another player can take a "sneak peak" at the structure for 10 seconds and relay the instructions for 25 seconds.

5. This process continues until everyone in the team has had a chance to look at the structure.

6. The team that builds the structure first, wins.



MAZE RACE

Objective: Each team must guide each of their teammates (who are wearing blindfolds) one at a time toward the end of the maze before the other team

Number of participants: 8-20 people or enough to create two teams

Time: 10-15 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: 10-15 empty water bottles (or other markers), blindfold

1. Before the game starts, facilitators set up a maze by using stakes, empty water bottles, pilons, etc. to delineate a winding pathway that is wide enough for someone to pass through.

2. Ask for one volunteer from each team to put on the blindfold and be guided through the maze by other group members.

3. The facilitator will set a timer. When they are ready, group members must help their blindfolded teammate to reach the end of the maze without using common words or phrases (such as “turn around” or “go left”) to direct them. They also cannot touch their teammate. It is helpful for group members to discuss their strategy before the game starts. When they reach the end of the maze successfully, the facilitator records the time taken to complete the maze.

4. It is time for the next team to lead their blindfolded teammate through the maze.

The team that completes the maze in the shortest amount of time is the winner!



FIVE BY FIVE

Objective: The objective is to guess whose card belongs to whom based only on the five things that are written on it.

Number of participants: Five or more

Time: 20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Cue cards and writing utensils

1. Ask each participant to write down five things they like on a note card. Ask them to each write down five things they do not like on a separate note card.

2. Collect the cards and in no particular order, read each card and invite the participants to guess who the card came from.

The game continues until all cards have been read.

FOUR UP

Objective: The object of the game is to always have four people standing at once. ex: if there are five people standing, one must sit down.

Number of participants: Five or more

Time: 5-10 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

Everyone begins in a standing position in a circle facing each other. At the count of three the game begins and participants must make it so that only four people are standing at a time, without communicating verbally. Each time there are four people standing one person must sit down so that the game may continue.

The game continues for as long as the group desires.



NAME THAT TUNE

Objective: The objective is to be the first to guess which song is being hummed/played for the group

Number of participants: Any

Time: 10-15 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Device to play music (optional)

1. The facilitator or a volunteer from the group hums a 5-10 second segment of a song for the group. They can also play a snippet if they prefer on a phone or speaker.
2. The group tries to guess which song it is.
3. Whoever guesses the correct song gets to hum a song snippet for the group to guess.

The game continues until everyone who wants to has had a turn to hum a tune.

TEAM COUNT

Objective: The object of the game is to count as high as possible as a group. The catch is that the group needs to count one at a time without coordinating!

Number of participants: Five or more

Time: 5-10 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

Have the team sit in a circle facing away from each other. They may close their eyes if they wish. Tell them they are going to work together to count to 20. Only one person may speak at a time. If two say a number at the same time, the whole group has to start again with one.

The game continues for as long as the group desires.

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Objective: To initiate conversations across the group and for participants to discover things they have in common that might not be obvious otherwise.

Number of participants: 4-20 people divided into two teams



Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: The list of Would You Rather questions, a writing utensil and paper to keep count

1. Call the group together and explain your chosen rules. Designate one side of the room "Option A" and the other side "Option B."
2. Ask each question and ask participants to move to one side of the room or the other, depending on which option they "would rather."

3. Have each side explain their reasoning behind their decision.

4. After each group has had their say, move everyone back to the middle for their next question.

Repeat steps two to four.

Sample question ideas:

Would you rather be 10 feet tall or 10 inches tall?

Would you rather live in outer space or at the bottom of the ocean?

Would you rather live in the desert or in the Arctic?

Would you rather travel 100 years back in history or 100 years into the future?

Would you rather live in a world without problems or have a magical power?

Would you rather never take another test or never have homework?

GET TO KNOW YOU BINGO

Objective: To be the first to fill a full line on the Bingo card.. while getting to know your peers!

Number of participants: 5-10 people

Time: 20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Get To Know You Bingo cards (Appendix F) and markers/dabbers

1. The facilitator distributes one card per player.
2. When the facilitator says Go, everyone will begin to mingle to find group members that match the descriptions written in the Bingo squares. Each time a description is met they dab/mark out this square on the sheet.
3. The game goes until the first participant fills an entire line on the Bingo sheet (similar to Bingo). The game can continue until someone reaches two lines, or a full square (if possible).





ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES

Collaborative art and arts-based mindfulness activities allow us to express ourselves in new ways within a supportive group environment while building mindfulness skills such as non-judgement, acceptance and being present.

Arts-based mindfulness is incorporated into our weekly schedule on Thursdays, while collaborative art takes place as part of our workshop programming. Depending on the project or activity, art and arts-based mindfulness can be easily woven into the day when the group needs shelter from the rain or sun. Activities such as “Moving Art” (55) provide participants with a way of practicing mindfulness skills such as non-judgement and awareness of the present moment, while providing a safe avenue for youth to express themselves. Collaborative art activities such as “Building Birdhouses” (52) and painting a wooden composter enable us to beautify the space while allowing youth to build skills in carpentry, design, art and teamwork.

BUILDING BIRDHOUSES

Objective: To create functional birdhouses for the garden! This fun art project helps build skills in construction. Try making other creature habitats too, like a toad abode or bird bath!

Number of participants: 4-5

Time: 30-60 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Wooden board (3 and 1/4 inch thick by 5.5 inches wide and at least 4 feet long, hammer, nails (1.5 inch framing nails), marker/pen, tape measure, 4 x 1.5 inch long screws, hand saw, drill with a hole saw (1.5 inches in diameter and small bit) and small bit

1. Starting from one side of the board along the bottom, mark your cuts on the wooden board. Starting on one side of the board, mark at 5.5 inches, 9 inches from that mark, 8 inches from that

mark, 6 inches from that mark, 8 inches from that mark and 6 inches from that mark.

3. On the other side of the board (across from where you just made your marks) starting from the bottom, make a mark 5.5 inches from the base of the board, a mark 9 inches from that mark, 8 inches from that mark, 6 inches from that mark, 6 inches from that mark and 8 inches from that mark.

4. Use these marks to make guidelines for your cuts, then use something with a straight edge to draw lines which connect the dots on either side of the board. Make cuts along these edges using your hand saw.

5. Label the various sections. Starting from the bottom, mark the first section as the bottom, the section section as the back, the third section as the top, the fourth section as the front and the fifth and sixth sections as the sides.

6. Trim down the front board to make it 4 inches wide.

7. Make a hole in the front 1.5 inches in diameter.

8. Starting with the board labelled the bottom, start by placing two nails into one of the sides, in the corners. Nail into place on one of the side pieces, using the non-diagonal part.

9. Do the same on the other side.

10. Now slide in the front piece and nail into place along its edges.

11. Line up and nail the back section into place.

12. Screw in the top. Using screws makes it easier to remove the top for cleaning.

13. Put a nail below the hole in the front for birds to stand on.



EMOTIONS MAP

Objective: To create a visual representation of the different emotions we feel and help us develop greater emotional awareness

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Colouring pencils/markers/paint and paper

1. Everyone is given a piece of paper to write down the feelings they feel within a day or week.
2. On another piece of paper, participants can divide the paper to represent how much they feel each feeling compared to the other feelings. Each feeling should be labelled or represented by a different colour or symbol (for example, various sized/different colour blobs, a bar graph or a page divided into coloured segments for each emotion). Group members can take turns sharing their piece with the group. Seeing the emotions others experience can help normalize and give words to our own.

GROUP SYMBOL

Objective: To create a collective symbol that represents us as a group. This activity can help to build a sense of group identity.

Number of participants: 3-15 people

Time: 30-60 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: bristol board, markers, pencils, tape

1. Choose ideas and images to include in the group symbol. Think about symbols that represent the group and what we do together, or the individual members.
2. Draft a design to be coloured onto the bristol board. Each group member should contribute at least one idea (i.e a symbol, colour or concept).
3. Transfer the design onto the bristol board and add colour and decorations. Display somewhere visible to the group on a regular basis.

MOVING ART

Objective: Moving art helps us to focus on our feelings in the moment without judgement as we try to paint on a moving page

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Paint, paintbrushes, paper, string, clothespins



1. Hang a string between two posts, trees, walls, etc. Attach one piece of paper for every group member to the line with clothespins (double up the pages so that people can paint opposite to each other; the experience of someone painting on the other side of the page can be interesting).

2. Play some music. Set a timer for three minutes and ask participants to paint something on the paper, trying not to hold it still. Encourage them to observe their feelings and try to stay focused in the moment, rather than the final product. Shaky painting can bring up all kinds of feelings, including frustration!



PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Objective: Strengths puzzle allows us to reflect on our unique qualities and how we are stronger together as a group.

Number of participants: Any

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Blank puzzle pieces, colouring pencils/markers



1. Ahead of time, cut a puzzle out of thick paper with a piece for each member of the group.
2. Have participants decorate their piece to represent them (facilitators can guide a discussion about what strengths are i.e. can be an interest, hobby or unique quality).
3. At the end, everyone is invited to share their piece with the group if they wish.
4. The puzzle can be assembled and displayed somewhere for the group to see on a regular basis. This is also an opportunity to discuss how our unique strengths and contributions can come together to create a stronger whole.





WARM FUZZIES

Objective: To help each other identify our own strengths by hearing from the group what they appreciate about us.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Markers, pens/colouring pencils, paper, paper bag, decorations (stickers, glitter, etc)

At the end of the program, each participant and facilitator can decorate their own paper bag in a way that they like. Everyone will receive a slip piece of paper for every other person in the group. Each group member will write a message to each person indicating what they appreciate about them and place it in their bag. Everyone will all take their bags home as a reminder of the good others see in us.



INSIDE MY HEART

Objective: To create a visual representation of the various things in our lives that are close to our heart.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Paper with heart outline, markers/colouring pencils

1. Everyone is given a piece of paper with an outline of a heart on it.
2. The group is asked to divide the heart into sections to represent different things that are meaningful and important to them (things that “fill their heart”). Some examples might be pets, friends or hobbies.
3. At the end, the group is invited to shared what fills their heart. This is a good opportunity to discuss how the things we love are also our strengths.

PLEIN AIR DRAWING

Objective: Plein air drawing means drawing in the open air. Relax, tune into your senses and let your landscape inspire you.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Paint, paintbrushes, paper, clipboard

1. Provide each participant with a piece of paper, drawing tools and a clipboard or sturdy surface.
2. Have participants find a comfortable spot with a good view of the landscape.
3. Encourage them to focus on the scene and engage all five senses.
4. Remind them that the goal is not perfection or accuracy, but simply to be present during the drawing process.

2 TRUTHS 1 LIE

Objective: Get to know your peers by trying to guess which of their three statements is the lie!

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors



1. Everyone in the group comes up with statements about themselves that they will share with the group (i.e. I have two cats). Two of the statements are truthful and one is a lie.

2. Each person takes a turn sharing their statements with the group while the rest of the group tries to guess which statement is a lie.

The game continues until everyone has had a chance to share.



CHARADES

Objective: Players act out words or phrases for their teammates to guess

Number of participants: 4 or more

Time: 15-30 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: A list of words or phrases to act out (can be written on paper or on cards)

1. Divide participants into two teams.
2. One player from the first team selects a word or phrase and acts it out using only body language.
3. The other team members guess what the word or phrase is based on their performance.
4. Once the word or phrase is correctly guessed, the next player from the other team takes their turn.

Once all words or phrases have been acted out, the team with the most correct guesses wins.

DRAW-IT

Objective: Draw-it allows you to connect with your peers. By limiting some of your senses you can learn to pay attention to your other ones!

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Markers, colouring pencils, paper

1. Split the group into teams of three. Person #1 will view a design on paper that others cannot see. They must pantomime the design to Person #2, who will then give verbal instructions to Person #3 on how to draw it. Person #3 must remain silent and draw based on the instructions given.
2. Afterward, compare the final drawing with the original design. You can have teams compete simultaneously, using the same design to see who gets closest, or have each team attempt their own design one at a time.

INVISIBALL

Objective: A fun silly game to let loose and play pretend!

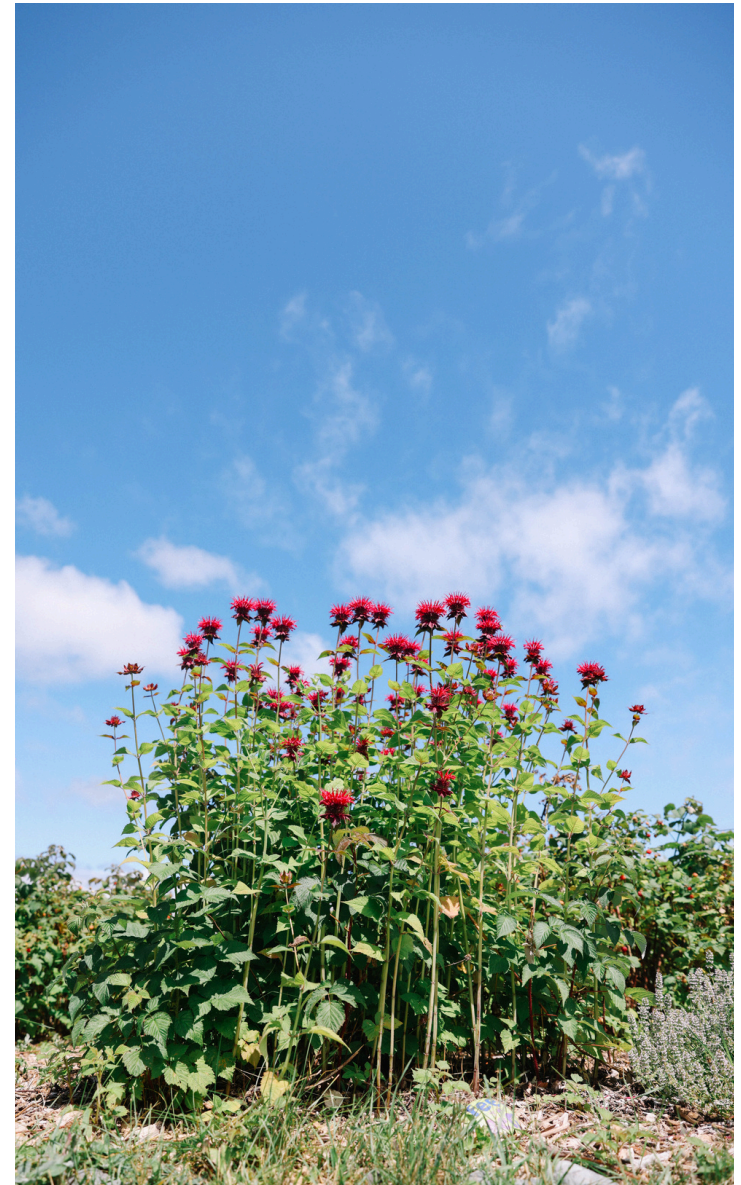
Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

Group members pretend to toss an imaginary “ball” to the person next to them. That person must then act out catching the ball. Participants are encouraged to get creative, throwing and catching any objects that they can imagine, such as a fish, a goat, etc.



OBJECT STORY

Objective: To create a story from our imagination, using objects pulled from a bag as inspiration.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Bag with various objects inside

1. Gather a variety of objects and place them in a bag or bin. Include both common and some more unique items for variety.
2. Pass the bag around the group, allowing each person to pick an object. The first person begins a story incorporating their item. After 20 seconds, the next person adds to the story with their object. Continue until everyone has contributed to the story!

ONE-WORD STORY

Objective: Create a story together using only one word at a time.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

1. The first person says a word, such as “The”.
2. The second person repeats the first word and adds a new one of their choice, continuing this pattern.
3. Eventually, you’ll create a fun, run-on sentence! For example, “The cat danced on the roof while juggling pineapples and singing loudly to the rain.”

The game continues as long as the group desires.



PAPERBAG SKITS

Objective: To work in teams to present a skit using all of the props provided.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Paper bag full of assorted objects

1. First split your group into teams consisting of 3-6 members and give each team a paper bag filled with assorted objects. These can be almost anything (i.e. a wooden spoon, a screw, a bar of soap, a computer disk, etc.).
2. Give each group a topic to base their skit on. The props can be used in any way the group wishes.
3. The game ends when all the skits have been planned and rehearsed and performed for the rest of the group.

PHONE CHARADES

Objective: Each participant takes a turn imitating an action based on an original suggestion. Like the game of telephone, the action evolves in funny ways.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

1. Select 5-6 participants and ask them to leave the room. The audience chooses an action to act out (e.g. "washing an elephant", "going skydiving", etc.).
2. Once the clue has been decided, bring in all the participants and instruct them to face the right side. The facilitator reveals the clue to the first person, who taps the second person on the shoulder and acts out the topic using charades rules (no talking allowed, no noises). The second person then taps the third person and acts out his or her understanding of what was acted out. The game continues until the action reaches the last person.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Objective: Participants ask each other the question “What are you doing?” and then mime the silly answers they get in response!

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

1. Two players begin. The first player starts doing an action. For example, she starts brushing her teeth. The next player asks, “What are you doing?”. The first player replies with an action other than brushing teeth. For example the player brushing her teeth might say, “I’m jump roping of course.” The second player must now do that action while the first player leaves the area. As the second player is “jump roping” the next player comes up and asks, “What are you doing?” The player responds with a different action of his or her choice, “I’m acting like a monkey of course.” The new player must now act like a monkey and so on, until all players have gone.

WINK MURDER

Objective: Find out who the murderer is without getting murdered!

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Choose a number of playing cards to match the number of people in your group. Be certain your deck contains an ace. Each person then draws a card. They must not show it to anyone else. The player who chooses the ace is the murderer and he kills his victims by winking at them! The game begins quietly with players sitting looking at each other. The killer kills players by winking at them, and can die in any manner they choose. The object is to identify the murderer while trying not to be killed in the process. An incorrect guess results in instant death!



AGRICULTURE WORKSHOPS

Regenerative agriculture education and skill-building activities are part of our daily schedule to help youth learn how to grow their own food, learn about the land, and practice ways of caring for it. Participants apply their knowledge each day through their work tending to our market garden and edible forest gardens, which is essential for ensuring we have healthy, nutritious crops that we can share with the community and enjoy ourselves. It also helps youth to develop an appreciation and respect for the land and a taste for healthy local foods.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

"I'd love to plant kohlrabi just to plant it for my grandma and just give it to her. She does have her own garden but I just think it would be nice if I did it, you know?"

YOUTH FEEDBACK

"We tried a lot of different stuff! It's kind of cool seeing the plants, like which ones. I didn't know what a currant was. I didn't know how kale grew. Brussel sprouts.. they grow on the stem! And we have watermelons, yellow watermelons, I think they're ready today. I'm excited!"

We begin each day with our daily gardening tasks and learning more about harvesting and tending to each plant. Specific workshops are also held to help youth build skills in wildcrafting, making teas, making jams, identifying plants, composting, integrated pest management, edible forest gardening, organic vegetable gardening and more.

EDIBLE FOREST GARDENS 101

Objective: To establish an overview of edible forest gardens and a foundation for the basic practices used in edible forest gardening

Number of participants: 2-15

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

1. Start by introducing edible forest gardens. Ask: what is an edible forest garden! Does anyone know?
2. Explain that an edible forest garden is a type of regenerative agriculture- this means it helps the land to heal itself rather than harm the environment.



3. Explain how an edible forest garden is a more sustainable type of garden. It is meant to mimic a forest ecosystem. In a forest, nothing is ever wasted. water, nutrients and organic matter are recycled back through the system.

4. Discuss how planting an edible forest garden utilizes the earth's natural elements and processes (sun, rain, wind, organic matter) instead of working against them. Here are some examples:

- Adding woodchips to retain moisture
- Planting mutually beneficial plants together
- Taking into account things like slope, wind, light, soil conditions, etc. when garden planning
- Adding compost and, over time, letting leaves or other plant debris fall to the ground. This allows a natural source of nutrients to be returned to the earth, the way it would in a forest

5. Explain that there are seven layers of a forest which an edible forest garden is modeled after. These layers are: canopy, low tree, shrub, herbaceous, ground cover, root layer, and vertical layer. An edible forest garden will have trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, groundcover (understory) and root layer crops- which are all edible.

6. Discuss the difference between monoculture and polyculture and the biodiversity of an edible forest garden. This biodiversity mimics that of a forest ecosystem. For example, mutually beneficial plants grow together, shade loving plants grow beneath thick canopies, while berries and sun loving plants take to open areas, where they are suited

7. Discuss the difference between a perennial and an annual. Perennials come up every year and we plant mostly perennials in edible forest gardens so that we do not disturb the soil as much. We also select plants that are hardy to our climate zone, i.e. plants that can stand our cold winter. Most of them are native to our region

8. Discuss our role in caring for the edible forest garden. While the edible forest garden is meant to be a more self-sustaining form of agriculture, a little pruning and compost can really do wonders! We can help enhance nature's processes by weeding, adding compost and woodchips, pruning, watering young plants, planting a diversity of native perennials and more regular maintenance

9. Optional: The group can tour an existing edible forest garden, plant a new edible forest garden or build a small native pollinator garden

Steps to planting an edible forest garden:

- 1) Map out where plants should go. Dig large holes for trees, shrubs and asparagus. Place plants, soil and amendments in the holes
- 2) Lay cardboard down in the shape of the garden, making sure to remove any plastic or staples from the cardboard
- 3) Add about 5 inches of soil on top of the cardboard, covering it completely
- 4) Plant ground cover plants like strawberries, thyme and herbaceous plants like bee balm into the soil, cutting an X in the cardboard below them
- 5) Cover the soil with woodchips, carefully going around the plants
- 6) Water the plants in the first growing season, pull out outcompeting “weeds” and care for the plants as needed



COMPOSTING 101

Objective: To establish an overview of composting as a practice used in agriculture

Number of participants: 2-15

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

1. Start by introducing composting. Composting is a process that is called “managed aerobic decomposition”. Aerobic means involving oxygen.
2. Explain that there are 4 things a compost pile needs: Heat, Oxygen, Nutrients and Water.
3. To discuss **nutrients**, there are two main inputs that need to be included. These are called Browns and Greens.

Green materials are those high in nitrogen, like fresh grass clippings, plant matter, coffee grounds/tea bags, food scraps, etc.

Brown materials are high in carbon, like paper, cardboard, dried grass clippings and plant matter woodchips and straw.

The ratio that works well is a 2:1 ratio of greens to browns in terms of volume.

You will know if you need to adjust the ratio in your compost pile. If you notice a strong rotten egg smell, or if your pile is really wet, it could mean that you need to adjust, by adding more dry brown materials. If your pile is really dry, and decomposing slowly, you can speed up decomposition by adding more green materials or by adding water.

4. Discuss how the organisms in the compost pile, like you and I, require **water** to live. So it is important to keep your compost pile moist. What is ideal is to have the moisture content of a wrung out sponge in your compost pile. This means that if you take a handful of compost and squeeze it, and water oozes out, it is too moist and could become anaerobic (without oxygen). In addition, a dry pile will lower the compost temperature. If just a couple of drops of water squeeze out, it is ideal.

5. Discuss the importance of **oxygen**. Explain how It is important to aerate your compost pile, meaning add oxygen, which is essential for aerobic microbes. We do this by turning, or mixing, the pile. If a compost pile is not aerated, you can get anaerobic microbes, which produce a rotten egg smell. Adding oxygen can also help your pile to heat up during decomposition by exposing new surface area to microbes. Or, it can help your pile to cool if it is very hot. A pile should be turned every 3-5 days for most of the cycle

6. Discuss the importance of **heat**. Microbial activity produces a lot of heat. A hot compost pile is a sign of a biologically active, healthy compost pile. In some cases though, it can become too hot, which can cause beneficial microorganisms to die off. This is another reason why it is important to turn your compost pile. Your balance of nutrients, moisture, and oxygen will all affect the heat. Compost thermometers can help manage the temperature

7. Discuss composting units. An ideal size for a compost heap is 3ft x 3ft smaller is fine; any larger and you run the risk of it being too difficult to turn. Closed composters retain heat better than open compost piles

8. Discuss what to put and not put in the compost
- **Yes-** food waste, grass clippings, weeds, eggshells, sawdust, hay, feathers, leaves
 - **No-** Bones, fat, yard waste treated with herbicides, diseased plants, pet waste, meat, sawdust from treated wood or weed seedheads

9. Optional: The group can start a new compost bin together, or take the temperature of an existing compost bin



GARDEN PLANT IDENTIFICATION NATIVE PLANT IDENTIFICATION

Objective: To establish an understanding of the different features that distinguish the various plants in the garden

Number of participants: 2-15

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Outdoors

Materials: Paper and writing utensils, clipboards, materials for plant pressing

Objective: To establish an understanding of the various native plants that make up our natural landscape

Number of participants: 2-15

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Outdoors

Materials: Paper and writing utensils, clipboards

1. Everyone scatters throughout the garden and chooses a plant that draws their attention, whether they know its name already or not.

2. They spend a few minutes with that plant, getting to know its various features and what distinguishes it from other plants. They may take notes or make a sketch.

3. The group can join back together and discuss their plant and what makes it unique. Take a sample to preserve inside by pressing and labeling it. This activity can be done with native plants as well.

1. Ahead of time, facilitators walk through a nearby wooded area and create a list of plants with a basic description and a photo.

2. Youth are invited to work in pairs or small teams to walk through the wooded area with the list of plants and attempt to correctly identify the plants in the photos from the landscape. Youth have access to field guides to help them correctly identify them.

3. At the end of the allotted time all groups come back together to discuss their matches. Facilitators help youth to correctly ID each plant.

SEED MATCHING GAME

Objective: To put our knowledge of veggie seeds into practice through a fun seed matching competition!

Number of participants: 4-20 divided into two teams

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: 12 unlabelled clear plastic bags with a handful of seeds inside (6 types x 2), 12 cards with the corresponding plant names written on them

1. Divide the group into two teams and give them each six cards and six bags of corresponding seeds.
2. Give groups one minute to match the bags of seeds to the correct cards.
3. At the end of one minute, determine which group matched the most seeds correctly. That group is the winner. Go over the correct matches and discuss which matches were expected or unexpected.

VEGGIE MATCHING GAME

Objective: To test our knowledge of the various crops grown in the market garden at various stages of growth through this fun team competition!

Number of participants: 4-20

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Picture cards of mature plants (two sets), corresponding picture cards of seedlings (two sets)

1. Divide the group into two teams and give them each six mature veggie photo cards and six seedling cards; one for each corresponding mature plant.
2. Give groups one minute to match the seedlings to the correct corresponding mature plants
3. At the end of one minute, determine which group matched the most plants correctly.

MUSHROOM SPORE PRINTS

Objective: To learn about mushroom reproduction and make spore prints

Number of participants: Any

Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Freshly harvested mushroom, bowls, tin foil, flat surface

1. Start by discussing function of spores and reproduction of mushrooms (mushrooms are the fruiting body of fungus, mycelium is the main body of the fungus that is rarely seen which produces mushrooms to spread its spores and reproduce).
2. Acquire mushrooms, ideally as fresh as possible. Large mushrooms are preferred.
3. Cut off the stipe.
4. Place cap, gill-side down on either tin foil, white paper or black paper.

5. Cover the mushroom with a bowl or something similar.

6. It can be helpful to put a drop or 2 of water on the mushroom cap before covering, especially if dry.

7. Leave for a day.

8. Uncover.

There you go, you have a spore print! If you'd like to preserve them, you can cover them in tape or get them properly laminated.



SEED BOMBS

Objective: These seed bombs can be tossed into any area where there is open soil to help the area flourish!

Number of participants: 4-20

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Red clay powder or air dry clay, compost, seeds

1. Begin by combining 1 part compost with 1 part clay (red clay powder or crayola air dry clay works).
2. Add water, if necessary, to reach a consistency where it will create a ball that will firm up in your hand without falling apart.
3. To add seeds, spread some across a flat surface and roll a ball of the compost and clay mixture across the seeds. Then roll the ball in your hand, encasing the seeds.
4. Let them dry and they are ready to go!

SUN TEA

Objective: To make delicious, homemade sun tea using only the energy of the sun!

Number of participants: Any

Time: 5 minutes to prep. Steep for 24 hours.

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Mason jars, water, fresh picked sorrel (or other delicious herbs)

1. Pick a bunch of sorrel, mint, or other delicious herb.
2. Place into jars with water for a day- leave in direct sunlight.
3. Strain leaves, add sweetener such as honey or sugar.
4. Enjoy!

DIY HERBAL TEA BAGS

Objective: To create fun, DIY tea bags. These can be filled with lovely aromatic herbs harvested from the garden.

Number of participants: Any

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: Herbs for tea, coffee filters, stapler, string and bristol board

1. Start by harvesting and drying herbs for tea, such as mint, bee balm, lemon balm, raspberry and more.
2. Prepare your DIY tea bags by cutting squares out of regular coffee filters.
3. Fill the centre of the square with herbs and then fold the edges into the centre.
4. Secure by stapling where folds meet. If desired, attach a string with bristol board label stapled to the end of it, for a truly authentic tea bag!





MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is the practice of purposefully paying attention in the present moment (Black, 2011). Mindfulness was incorporated into our weekly schedule to foster improved self-awareness as well as a deeper connection with the world around us. Mindfulness can help us cope with stress and respond to stressful situations with more control, which can help us adapt to life's challenges both within and outside of the workplace.

Activities are designed to help youth build mindfulness skills in a variety of ways. Activities were introduced to help youth connect with the concept of mindfulness and how it applies to everyday life. For example, the "Breathing Sticks" activity (76) can be used as a starting point to discuss how we can take a moment to breathe when we are overwhelmed by our thoughts and how this

can help bring the mind to a state of calmness. We also incorporate mindfulness skills into icebreaker activities which enables youth to learn about and practice these skills in a fun way.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

"They do mindfulness activities which I think is really good too....Like when I'm doing different jobs or other people are getting into different jobs, they're going to have a chance to know how to express their emotions and kind of learn how to deal with them. So that's cool".

BREATHING STICKS

Objective: Breathing sticks are a simple, tactile way to practice mindfulness skills and breathing.

Number of participants: Any



Time: 10-15 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: One pipe cleaner per person, 5-6 beads per person

1. Create a knot or loop at one end of the pipe cleaner to hold the beads in place.
2. Everyone can choose 5-6 beads and string them along the pipe cleaner in any arrangement they like.
3. Create another knot or loop at the other end of the pipe cleaner. Leave space before the knot so your beads can move along the pipe cleaner.
4. To use the breathing sticks, inhale as you move a bead along the pipe cleaner. Exhale as you move the next bead. Try to synchronize the motion with your breath and pay attention to your senses. Repeat until all the beads have moved to the other side, and then start over.



BREATH OF JOY

Objective: Breath of Joy reduces stress and helps us to practice mindful awareness by paying attention to the breath

Number of participants: Any

Time: <1 minute

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None



1. Stand with feet hip width apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Inhale through your nose to one third of your lung capacity while bringing your arms up in front of you at shoulder level, palms facing up.
3. Continue inhaling to two thirds of your lung capacity while swinging your arms open to the sides in a T-formation (still at shoulder level).
4. On the third part of the inhalation (now full lung capacity), swing your arms straight up overhead reaching your fingertips towards the ceiling.
5. On the exhalation, swing your arms towards the ground and out behind you bending your knees deeply into a squat position. Let out a "Ha" sound.

QUICK CHANGE

Objective: Practicing mindful awareness by paying attention to changes.

Number of participants: 3 or more

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

One group member is selected to quick change. The rest of the group can take a few moments to memorize the way the person is dressed. They will then leave the room with a facilitator, outside the view of other participants. While outside the room they can change three things about their appearance, such as removing glasses or a hat, rolling up/down sleeves or removing jewelry. When they return, the rest of the group can try to guess the three changes that were made. The group continues until each group member who wishes to quick change has a turn.



RELAXATION MEDITATION

Objective: To increase sense of peace and relaxation and practice mindfulness skills. The facilitator will guide participants through this meditation.

Number of participants: Any

Time: 10-20 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Relax into a comfortable position laying down. Once you have settled into a still place, take a deep breath in, imagining that your breath is filling your whole body. On your exhale, release your breath slowly and deeply, allowing your body to sink into the ground beneath you. On your next inhale, imagine yourself again filling with breath, becoming lighter. On your exhale, sink more deeply into the ground, releasing the tension in your head, your face and your ears. Continue to breathe in relaxation, and breathe out to sink further into the earth. Now, you can bring your attention to your shoulders and feel your shoulders start to relax.

Now relax your rib cage. Then let your belly relax. Then you will bring your attention to your hips and feel your hips relax deeper into the earth. You can always bring your focus back to your breath if your mind starts to wander. Inhale deeply, inviting all the positive things that you want for yourself. This time as you breathe out, you're feeling your legs and feet relax into the ground beneath you. It is time to allow yourself to completely surrender. Your only job here is to relax. And to focus on breathing in and breathing out. With each inhale, invite more calmness, more peace, more positivity, and with each exhale, your body surrenders more and more into the ground below you.

Take a moment here just to notice how you feel in this moment. Regardless of what you notice try not to pass judgement. You only need to observe.

Continue to breathe in and out. When you are ready, slowly start to wiggle your toes. Open your eyes. Take in the space around you. You are invited to bring this sense of relaxation with you into the rest of your day today.

ONE MINUTE LISTEN

Objective: Paying attention, on purpose, mindfully, helps develop an awareness of the present moment and helps us engage our five senses

Number of participants: Any

Time: 2-10 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Each participant will be asked to find a quiet spot where they will find a comfortable position and spend one minute in silence. Explain that they should spend this time focusing on what they can hear around them and they can also take note of things they see, feel or smell. After a minute has passed, participants will return to the group and be invited to share about their experience. Facilitators can start a discussion by asking the group if they noticed anything during the minute that they had never noticed before, or asking how it felt staying still and listening for a minute and how they felt once the minute was over.

-

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Objective: Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing and relaxing the muscles to reduce stress and promote a feeling of calmness

Number of participants: Any

Time: 5-10 minutes

Location: Indoors or outdoors

1. Find a comfortable position- usually seated
2. Clench your toes. Hold, then let go.
3. Next, tense your calf muscles, then let go.
4. Squeeze your thigh muscles. Hold, then let go.
5. Clench your hands. Pause, then let go.
6. Tense your arms. Hold, then let go.
7. Squeeze your buttocks. Pause, then let go.
8. Contract your abdominal muscles. Pause, then let go.
9. Inhale and tighten your chest. Hold, then exhale and let go.
10. Raise your shoulders to your ears. Pause, then let go.
11. Purse your lips together. Hold, then release.
12. Open your mouth wide. Hold, then let go.
13. Close your eyes tightly. Pause, then release.
14. Lift your eyebrows. Hold, then release.



TAKE 5

Objective: Take 5 helps to develop mindfulness skills to reduce stress and promote a feeling of calmness

Number of participants: Any

Time: 5-10

Location: Indoors or outdoors

Materials: None

1. Hold your hand out in front of you palm facing up.
2. With the index finger of your other hand, begin tracing each finger of your other hand, starting with your thumb. Trace up your thumb, pause, then trace down your thumb.
3. Now trace up your second finger, pause and slide down. Continue tracing your fingers up, pause and down. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fifth finger (pinky).
4. Repeat, adding breath. Inhale as you trace up and repeat as you trace down. Repeat for each finger, starting with the thumb. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fingers and you have taken five slow breaths.
5. Take a moment to notice how you feel.

APPENDIX A: REAL TALK RULES

When Giving Real Talk

- Be kind - this is truly about giving gifts – go for “doing” and “being” alphas, and only “doing” deltas
- Call it as you see it - use “I statements” to speak from your experience, and be honest, it's not worth it otherwise
- Balance the Scales - don't overload someone with too many alphas or deltas, keep them balanced (2 alphas, 1 deltas – life is already lopsided with too many deltas)
- Speak the details - the more specific you are the better your listener will understand. "You're great." is not very helpful.
- Pick & Choose – Pick the most meaningful feedback. Don't give people a laundry list of alphas & deltas. Less is more.
- Watch the listener - notice the listener (eye contact, body language; whatever works for you to indicate you're “watching”) so you know if they're receiving the feedback. Sometimes you might notice they're all full up and possibly can't hear anymore; in this rare instance, it might mean you pause.

When Receiving Real Talk

- Look up - make eye contact and/or give indicators of whatever works for you to let them know you're listening
- Open up – face the speaker and open up your body posture and your heart to feedback (or any other indicators that “open you up”)
- Listen up - just listen, don't respond. We all have that little voice in our head. Give the little voice a rest while you're receiving Real Talk. You can ask clarifying questions later after Real Talk is over, 1:1.
- Store it up - this is a special opportunity so try to remember all you can
- You Decide - of all the great feedback you receive, take the pieces that resonate with you and then decide what to do with it. Sometimes you won't know what it means to you immediately, so it might be a wait and see situation.

APPENDIX B: TEAM CONTRACT

My Individual Goals

At work:

1. _____
2. _____

Outside of work:

1. _____
2. _____

Program Expectations:

In order for us to reach our potential as a community, we expect the following from each other:

To bring your 100% each day (your 100% might be different on different days- that's ok)

Keep an open-minded attitude

Open and transparent communication

To arrive to work on time & notify us ahead of time in case of absence

To be respectful to each other, the animals and the land

Shared Agreements:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

This activity is adapted from Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB) Cultivating Youth Program Manual (2014).

APPENDIX C: JOB DESCRIPTION

Thank you for your interest in the YAM (Youth Agricultural Mentorship) program! The YAM program will help you build the skills you need to grow, harvest and prepare organic food in your community. You will also be building other skills to help you in your future, like job skills and interpersonal skills. Your work will involve learning about and doing composting, organic gardening, cooking, wild plant identification, mushroom foraging, worm composting, running a market stand and more! We will also do icebreakers, team-building games, art, mindfulness activities and community work.

We are looking for 10 Community Agriculture Workers to join us this summer at École Secondaire Hanmer. Applicants must be:

- 15 to 18 years old at time of registration;
- A resident of Ontario;
- Eligible to work in Canada;
- High school students intending to stay in, or return to high school or access postsecondary education after the job placement
- Have not previously participated in a Youth Job Connect Summer program

The YAM program runs for 8 weeks- July 4 to August 25. Hours are 15 hours per week. Work days are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8am to 1pm. We will have access to the school for shelter, washrooms and kitchen.

Job responsibilities:

- Garden maintenance activities including weeding, watering, harvesting pruning, composting and more
- Preparing for and running a regular vegetable market, including serving customers, weighing and packaging produce and operating a till
- Participating in art, construction and beautification projects for the garden and otherwise
- Food preparation and preservation, including cooking and canning, using ingredients harvested from the garden

Skills and qualifications:

- Able to work outdoors in various weather conditions
- Willingness to learn on the job
- Open-minded and willing to try new things

Assets include:

- Enjoys working outdoors
- Hardworking and motivated
- Eager to learn how to grow food organically
- Wants to have a positive impact on the environment and the community

APPENDIX D: JOB APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Name:

Birth date (day, month, year):

Email address:

Phone number:

Emergency contact:

Any allergies:

Any challenges (physical or otherwise) that might affect your ability to work (we ask this so we can help support you):

Do you have access to an electronic device such as a cellphone, ipad or laptop while outside of the house? (This is not necessary to be considered for the position, it just helps us to plan)

Why are you interested in the Community Agriculture Worker position?

Why is it important to learn how to grow food for our community and take care of our environment?

What are your strengths that you could contribute to the group or to the work?

If you could change one thing about the world, what would you change?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What interested you in this position?

Do you have any experience in gardening? If so tell us about it

What are some of your strengths?

Tell us about a time when you had to work through a challenge as part of a team

What is your favourite part about school?

What is your least favourite part about school?

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

If you were a fruit or vegetable what would you be?

APPENDIX F: GET TO KNOW YOU BINGO CARDS

My favourite colour is pink	I have two siblings	I play a musical instrument
I have a dog	I speak more than one language	i have been to the ocean
I have never been in an airplane	I have had a dream where I was falling	I sleep with a light on

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The youth agriculture mentorship (YAM) program handbook was created to be a guide for facilitators running youth agricultural programs and draws on the experiences of the YAM program facilitators. The YAM program uses strengths based, youth-centred approaches to help youth foster an increased connection to themselves, to the land, and to one another. Participants engage in hands-on environmental stewardship and practice regenerative agriculture techniques to care for the land and produce food in a more sustainable way. They also build essential job readiness skills such as punctuality, interpersonal skills and customer service. The YAM program handbook provides an overview of the program and includes everything that is needed to facilitate a strengths based, youth-centred, youth employment-in-agriculture program, such as planning and preparation, roles, program schedule, equipment and supplies, as well as detailed outlines of our program activities. This handbook is an excellent resource for youth program facilitators as well as teachers and others working with youth in agriculture.

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