

# Share with a neighbor

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- A special memory around communal eating.
- Who did you share the experience with?
- What was served?
- Why does this memory stand out for you?



# Grow together, Eat together:

Cultivating community through food



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# Our Mission

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*To protect the nature of  
Massachusetts for people  
and for wildlife.*

A vision shared in 1896 by our founders.





# Our Impact

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**We are Massachusetts' largest nature conservation nonprofit and a nationally recognized environmental education leader. We are proud to:**

- Share our mission and passion with our 160,000+ members and supporters
- Welcome more than a half million visitors a year to our wildlife sanctuaries
- Provide environmental education to more than a quarter-million children, teens, and adults, annually
- Permanently protect more than 42,000 acres of land across the Commonwealth
- Advocate for sound environmental policy on Beacon Hill and beyond
- Conduct ongoing conservation research to preserve our natural heritage

# Our Community

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110

SANCTUARIES  
across the state

42,000

ACRES PROTECTED  
largest private landowner  
in the Commonwealth

160,000

MEMBERS  
from Cape Cod to the  
Berkshires, and beyond

600,000

VISITORS  
connect to nature at our  
properties each year

6,400

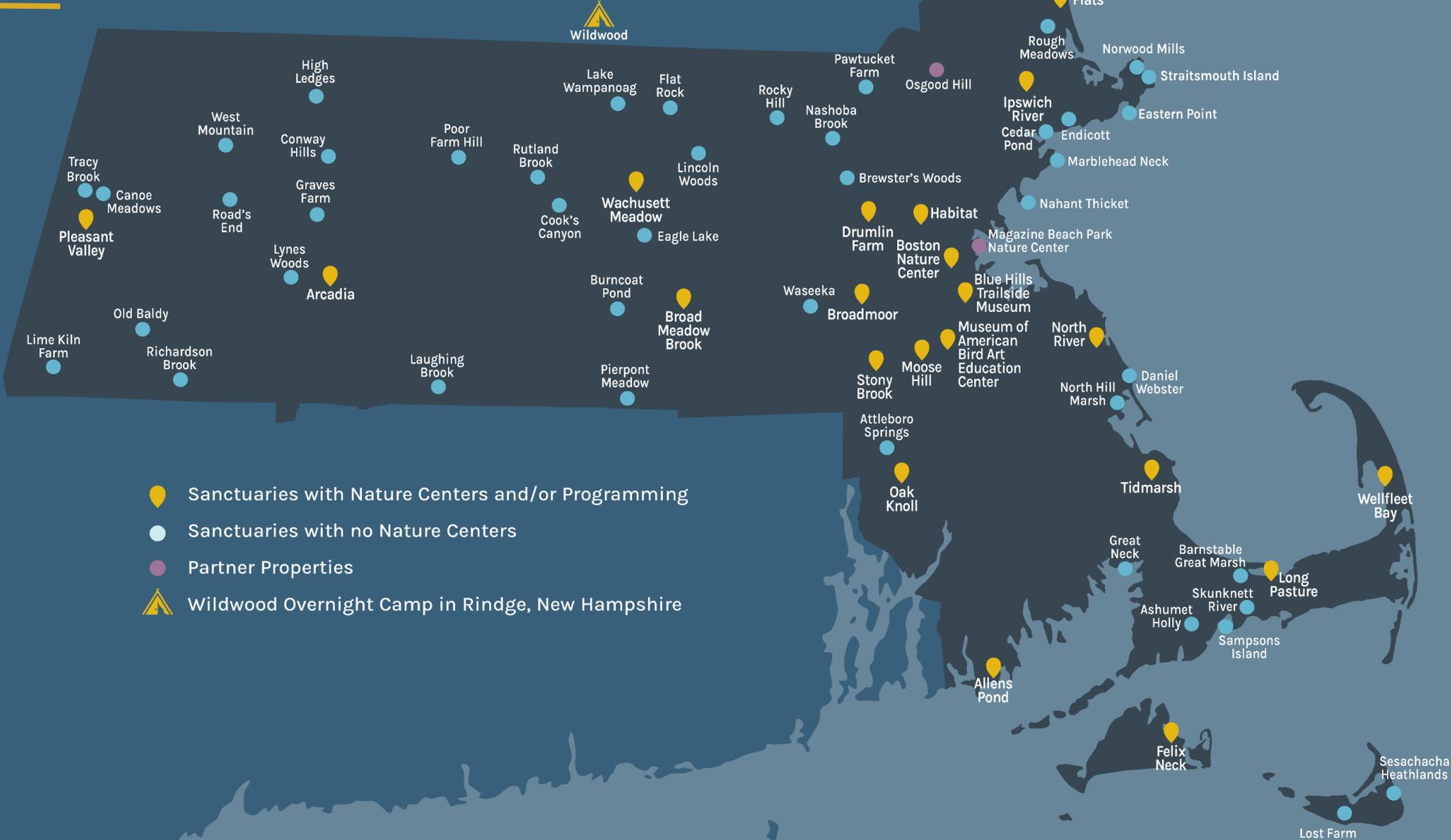
VOLUNTEERS  
help us to achieve our  
mission annually

19

ALL PERSONS TRAILS  
across our sites

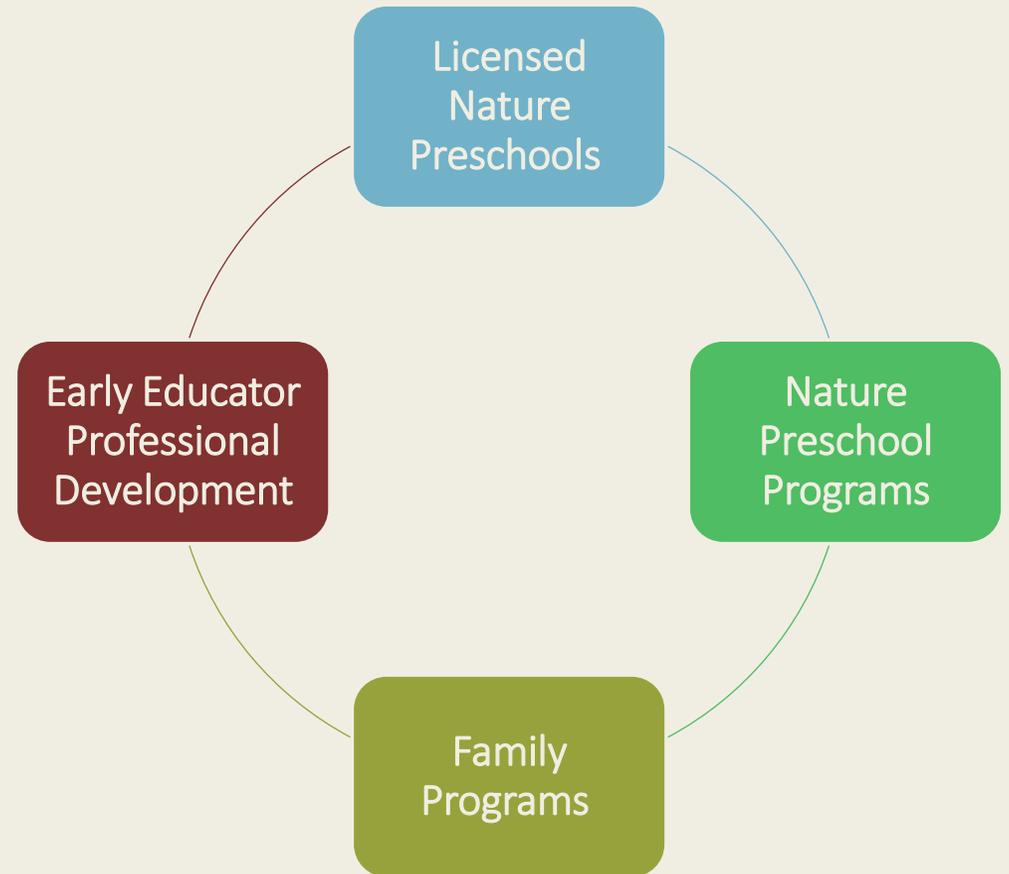


# Our Wildlife Sanctuaries



# Early Childhood at Mass Audubon

- Access the benefits of nature (cognitive, affective, physical, socio-emotional)
- Build a strong connection to nature
- Learn about nature and natural systems
- Learn how nature sustains them
- Build the skills to protect nature for themselves, other species, and nature itself



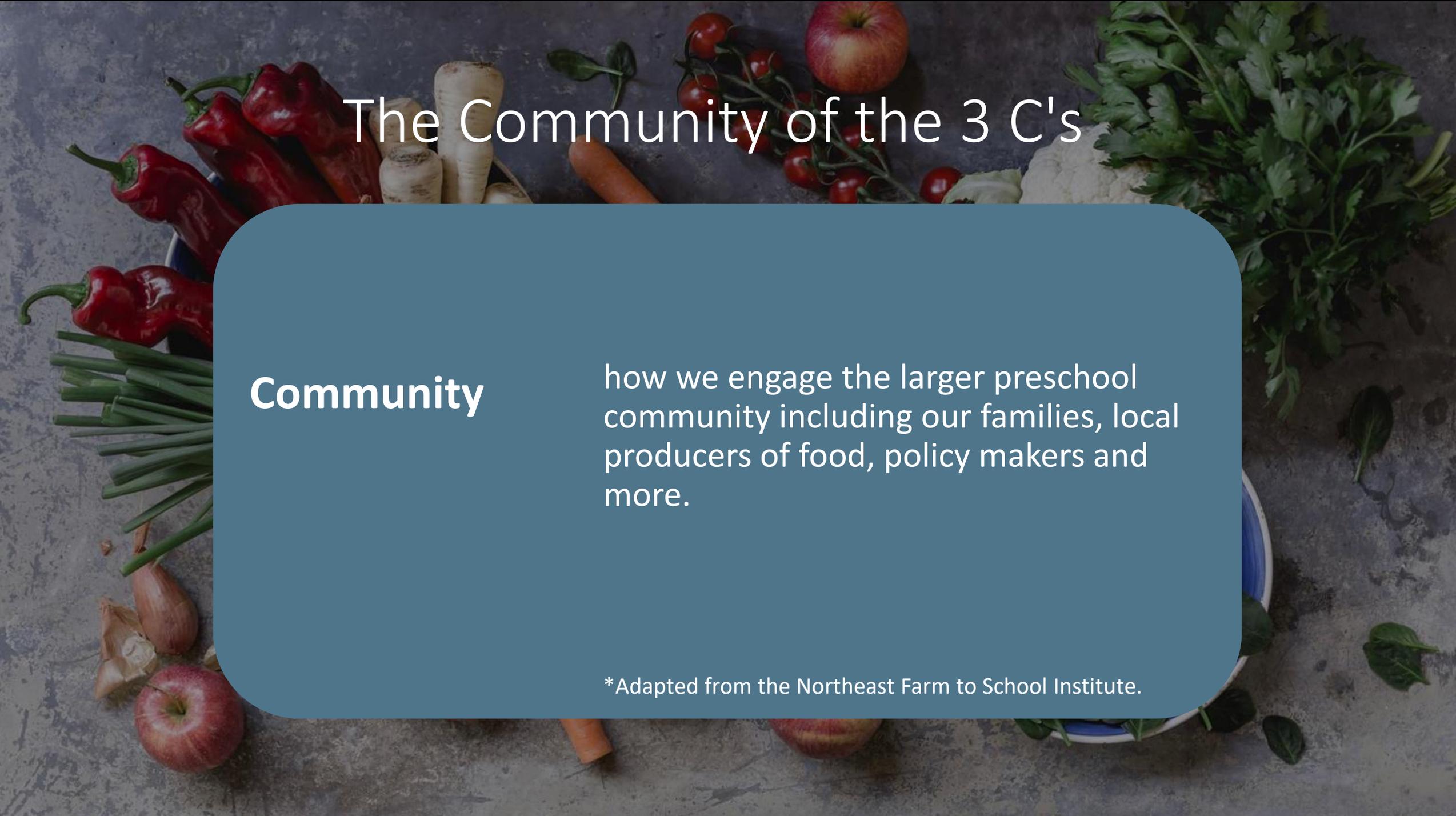
# Why Farm to Early Childhood?\*

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- enhance the quality of early childhood education programs
- meet multiple learning and programmatic standards
- engage families and communities in early childhood programs
- support comprehensive child development,
- promote healthy eating and wellness behaviors
- advance racial and social equality
- help develop the next generation of responsible food consumers contributing to sustainable, equitable and just local food systems.



\*taken from Shelburne Farms/Vermont FEED



# The Community of the 3 C's

## **Community**

how we engage the larger preschool community including our families, local producers of food, policy makers and more.

\*Adapted from the Northeast Farm to School Institute.



## In groups of 3...

Describe a farm to school activity that you have done before or one that you would like to try.

Now, take  
your activity  
and discuss:

How can you include culturally  
responsiveness in this activity?

How can you engage your families in this  
activity?

Who from your local community might  
you reach out to or include in this  
activity?



# Invite community input from the beginning!

- What do your students/school want to grow?
- Involve input from families or local growers
- What foods are important to our families/community?
- What crops grow well in your area?
- What might be the most successful for growing with young children?
- What foods do we need for our various recipes?
- Ideally start these conversations **AT LEAST 1-2 months** before your earliest planting date.
- Remember, you need time to order seeds/lings, as well as possibly starting them indoors.



# Planting a Garden

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- Local farmers can help you understand your area's planting calendar
- Families, local 4-H's, eagle scouts/girls scouts, and agricultural students may all be interested in helping to start and maintain gardens!
- Reach out to local farmers to see if they have seedlings they can share or extra seeds.
- Reach out to families who might be growing and would be willing to share some seedlings or their experience as gardeners!
- Local libraries may offer seed sharing, or towns may have seed/ling swaps
- Eagle/girl scouts may need service hours so building beds, or starting gardens is a great task!



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## Maintaining and enjoying the garden

- Request help from your community including semi/retired gardeners, agriculture students, 4-H, family members ect...
- Utilize local farmers for support in pest management, weed control, best practices and more!
- Host a farmer's market on site for your families.
- Invite local chefs to do a cooking demo with your garden.
- Share your bounty with families or food shelves.

# Center the foods of all peoples in your curriculum

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- Have play food and posters of many types of food from all cultures.
- Lead discussions around types of foods that may be new/different or familiar to the members of the class.
- Have books about different cooking experiences that reflect the diversity of your program and beyond.
- Have opportunities to experience new flavors, produce and meals.



# Classroom Cooking

- How can you adapt the recipe to meet various abilities or dietary needs
- Ways to highlight different cultures through choice of recipes/ingredients
- Bring the home into the school by sharing and trying recipes
- Invite families to come in and cook in the class or create a communal eating event.
- Provide taste tests for children to try with their families at pick up time or take home.



# Where does your food fit in?

- On a piece of a paper:
  - A time when you felt left out by food choices available.
  - How did that make you feel? How did it affect your engagement at the time?
  - A time when you felt like you were seen/included based on food choices?
  - How did you feel? How did it affect your engagement at the time?
  - Why do you think you remember these moments? Why are they significant?



# Cooking and eating

Coordinate the cooking staff, nutrition staff and food suppliers on including local/fresh or culturally relevant foods into the school meals.

Partner with local farms for ingredients, meal planning and recipes ideas .

Engage families in sharing recipes that you can include or try in your program.

Be aware of and considerate of cultural and health related practices around food.

Have conversations with families about their dietary practices and children's individual dietary needs.

Highlight and honor foods from all cultures and backgrounds. Teach respect for food and everyone who eats it.

# A classroom scenario

You want to do a classroom cooking project, where every child bring an ingredient to make stone soup. At school, the children will chop ingredients and make the soup. Discuss how you'd plan for these considerations:

- Uri keeps kosher and can't eat any non-kosher meat products.
- Hiram just immigrated from Columbia. His family doesn't speak much English.
- Irene's family is on food stamps.
- Jasmin has Celiac's disease and can't eat gluten products.
- Xi's family is from China. They mostly shop at the local Asian food market and they are most familiar with produce that is native to China and relevant to their recipes.



# Community

- Local farmers, farmers markets, farm stands, and food forests.
- Agricultural colleges or tech programs.
- Current or retired gardeners.
- 4-H, eagle scouts, girl scouts looking for projects.
- Grocery stores, food suppliers.
- Beekeepers, Livestock managers, chefs, nutritionists and so much more!



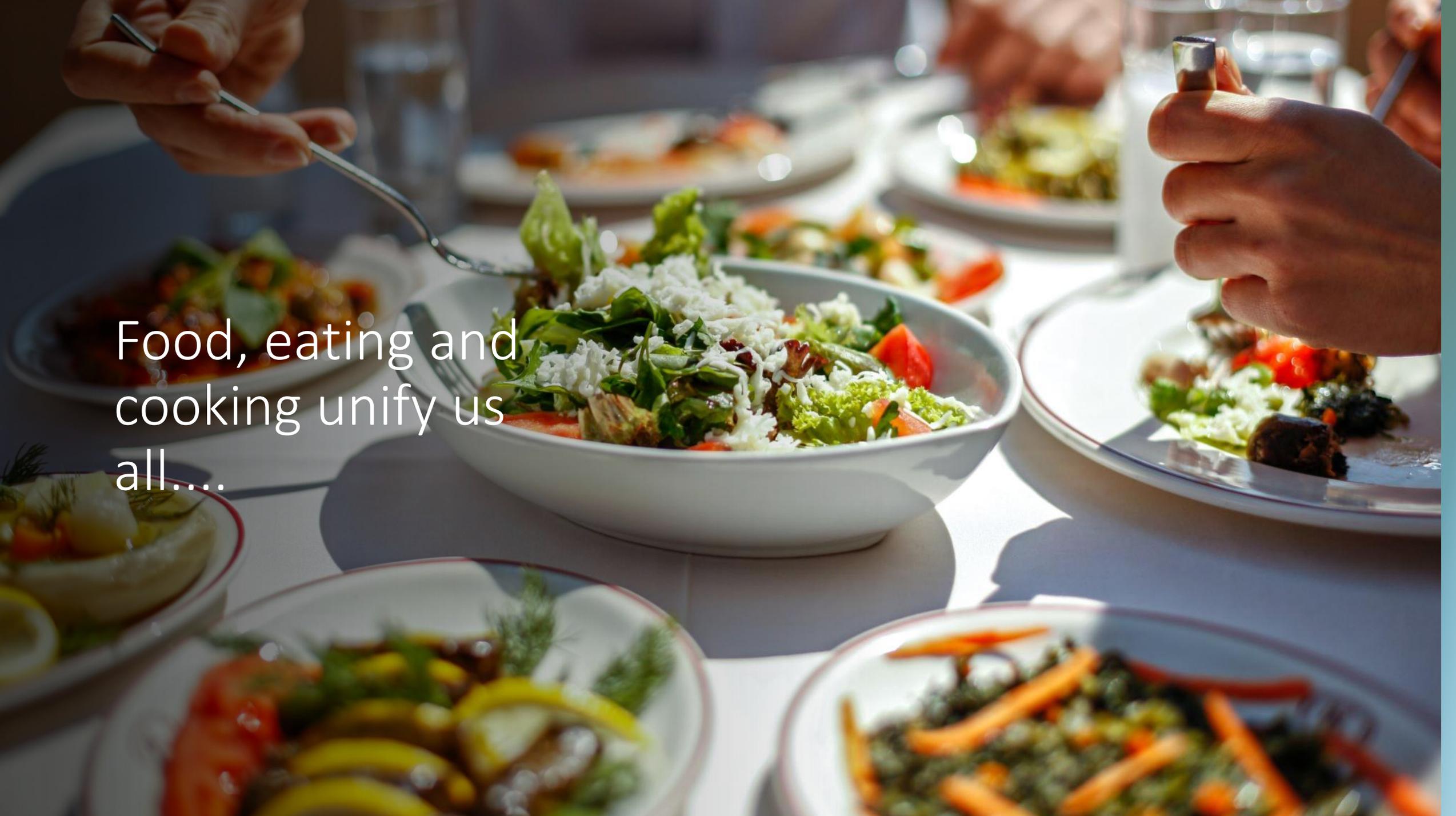
## Community events

- With your neighbor, share a community event you do at your program.
- How does food fit into that event?
- What's one new idea you could use to enhance diversity/inclusion through food at the event?

# Government and Policymakers

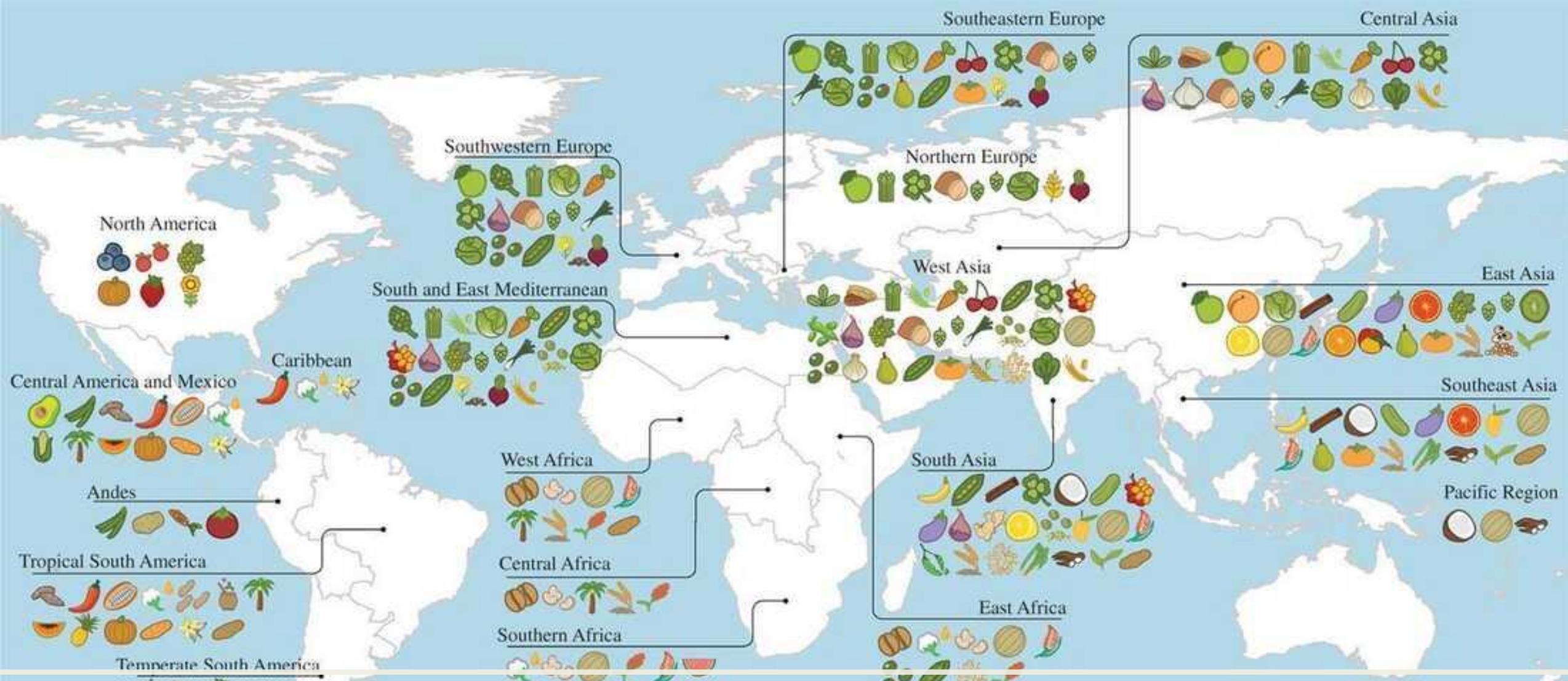
- Could be a workshop all its own
- Promote your work, request resources and demand policies.
- State education departments (early education and elementary education)
- Public, City or State Health Departments, Rec departments and agricultural departments.
- State, city or local representatives, senators, mayors and governors.



A photograph of a dining table with several white plates and bowls filled with food. In the center, a white bowl contains a salad with white rice, green leafy vegetables, and red tomatoes. To the left, a hand holds a silver fork over a plate of food. To the right, another hand holds a silver fork over a plate. The table is set with white plates and bowls, and the background is softly blurred, showing more plates and glasses. The lighting is bright, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

Food, eating and  
cooking unify us  
all....





Where are the main ingredients from?

- |          |             |             |            |                  |         |            |         |                |
|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------------|---------|------------|---------|----------------|
| alfalfa  | beans       | clover      | eggplants  | hops             | melons  | pears      | rice    | sunflower      |
| almonds  | blueberries | cocoa beans | faba beans | kiwi             | millets | peas       | rye     | sweet potatoes |
| apples   | cabbages    | coconuts    | figs       | leeks            | oats    | pigeonpeas | sesame  | taro           |
| apricots | carrots     | coffee      | garlic     | lemons and limes | olives  | pineapples | sorghum | tea            |

# Mapping our food debrief

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What areas are represented in our ingredients?

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What areas are represented in our recipes?

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Do the areas represented reflect our cultural/ethnic identities?

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Which identities are missing?

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How does this inform our current and future work?



## Beyond the Garden-more farm topics

- Maple sugaring
- Orchards/vineyards
- Honey and bee keeping
- Wool craft and felting
- Other Fiber arts  
(angora, Cashmere, alpaca,  
hemp and more)
- Grains and baking
- Meat, dairy and eggs
- Fishing
- Drying, canning and other forms  
of preserving

# More Resources for Farm to ECE

- Seed and seedling donations from local greenhouses
- Discount or donated lumber for garden beds
- Agriculture students, local beekeepers, local agriculture schools, 4-H, Eagle scout projects, grocery stores, etc...
- Local farms, farmers markets or grocery stores might donate unsold products.
- Farm to school programs with online resources: Shelburne Farm, Island Grown Schools, Growing Minds, Mass Farm to School

# Mass Audubon resources for early educators

- Nature and garden PD series
- Customized professional trainings
- Site-visits (can be virtual)
- Curriculum consulting/coaching
- SEEDS program
- Quarterly early ed newsletter
- Free online resources on our website
  - 4 Nature-based STEM units-Available in English and Spanish.
  - Young Explorers
  - Nature Bingo
  - Nature Play Videos



Thank you!



# Thoughts, Questions, Comments

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Mass Audubon Professional  
Development Survey

