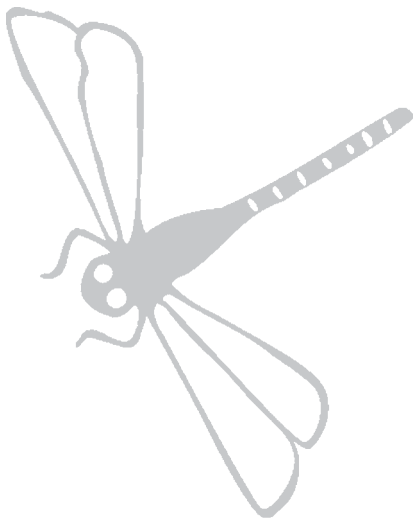
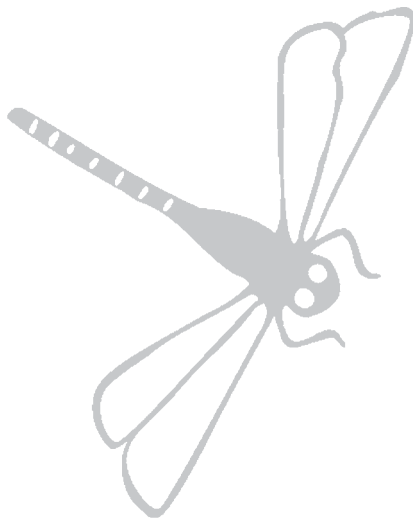
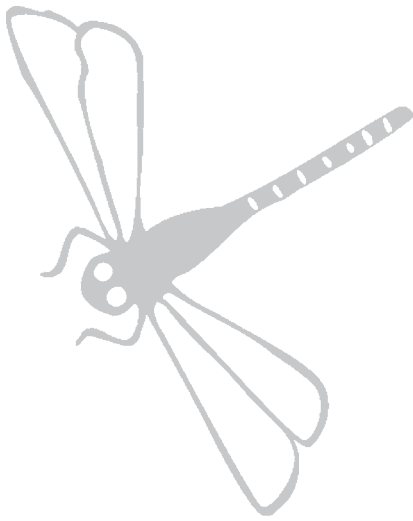


# Food for the SOL

*A Food, Justice, and Community Building  
Curriculum for Youth*



Compiled and Edited by Kaitlin Doherty and Deb Habib  
SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden Project  
Seeds of Solidarity Education Center  
Orange, MA



#### Food for the SOL:

A Food, Justice and Community Building Curriculum for Youth

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Donate on line at [www.seedsofsolidarity.org](http://www.seedsofsolidarity.org) or mail a check to Seeds of Solidarity, 165 Chestnut Hill Road, Orange, MA 01364

On our website you can also:

View our Grow Food Everywhere video that features the voices of SOL Garden youth leaders, access other publications, join our mailing lists, learn about our other programs, and more.

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# Acknowledgements

## *Gratitude runs deep.*

There are many who make the SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden program possible. Seeds of Solidarity co-founder Ricky Baruc has been a visionary, teacher, and mentor to so many young people from the program's inception in 1998. Kaitlin Doherty, Seeds of Solidarity program director, is an amazing and valuable member of our educational team, skillfully and compassionately sharing the activities with SOL Garden youth participants over three years, listening to and weaving their responses and insights to improve the lessons and overall curriculum.

We are blessed that many amazing educators have interned with us in the SOL Garden program over the years, contributing actively to program design and spirit, and the lessons contained within. Thank you Nia Keith, Annie Kleffner, Casey Beebe, Kacie Breault, Mary Spaulding, Maria Chambers, Amanda Blomberg, Susie Spagnoli, Kerry Doyle and Carrie Petrik.

While this curriculum was not funded through any one or specific source, the program is made possible and free to youth in our low-income, rural community because of the steadfast support of grants from public sources and private foundations, and donations from individuals that contribute annually to our organization. Current and steadfast funders of SOL Garden include: The Green Leaf Foundation, The Frances Fund, Cardinal Brook Trust, Hannaford Brothers (healthy snacks!) and the Massachusetts Cultural Council Youth Reach Program.

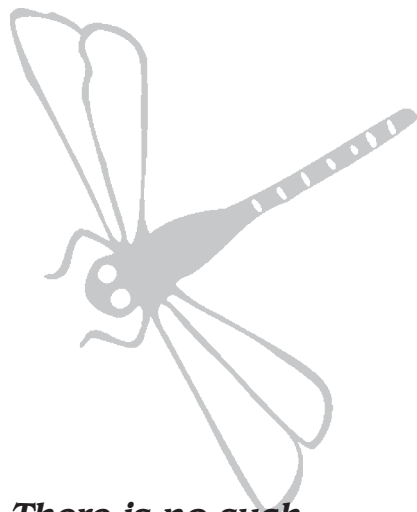
And, we celebrate over 200 young people who are the inspiration for the program and this curriculum. Through their leadership, sincerity, thirst for meaning in life, and thousands of pounds of food grown for our community, they cultivate a beautiful present and a hopeful future.

Deborah Leta Habib, Ed.D  
Executive Director  
Seeds of Solidarity



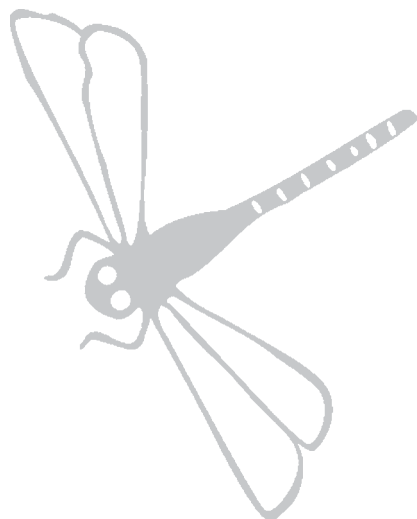
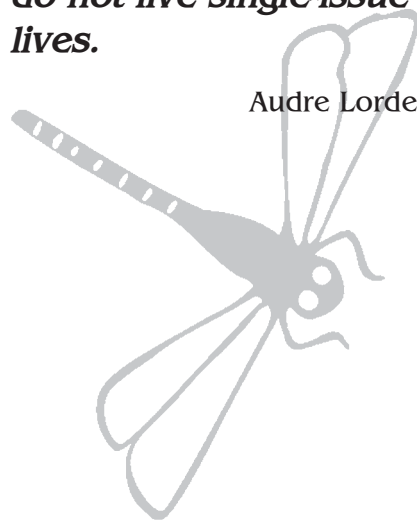
***Perhaps a new spirit  
is rising among us. If  
it is, let us trace its  
movements well and  
pray that our own inner  
being may be sensitive  
to its guidance, for we  
are deeply in need of  
a new way beyond the  
darkness that seems  
so close around us."***

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther  
King, (excerpted from:  
Beyond Vietnam)



***There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.***

Audre Lorde



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# Introduction

## ***Food for the SOL:***

### ***Lessons from the SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden project at Seeds of Solidarity***

***Welcome. We are happy to share this compilation of activities and practices to inspire leadership among youth and build food self-reliance and healthy, just communities.***

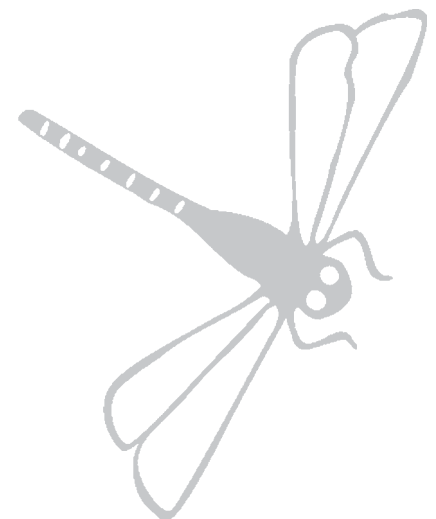
Initiated in 1999, the SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden project at Seeds of Solidarity Education Center has inspired over 200 young people to use their bodies, minds, and hearts to cultivate food and a hopeful future. SOL Garden is part of a national and international movement that engages young people in growing food in and for their communities. This is a challenging time to be coming of age; youth are well aware of environmental and human suffering, and economic challenges locally and globally. To survive and thrive in life one must develop internal strength and resources to get through hard times personally, as well as vision and practical skills to provide for basic needs such as food, energy and shelter. Meaningful youth programs can provide young people with a safe and productive community setting to grow and transform, while cultivating food and skills for activism. The evolution of authentic knowledge about food, health and justice and the experiences of community that emerge at SOL Garden are powerful and lasting.

The growing techniques practiced at SOL Garden are informed by methods in place at Seeds of Solidarity Farm. Our mantra is "Grow Food Everywhere" with the joyful yet urgent message that we must decentralize food production by building healthy soil, sharing and promoting skills to grow and prepare fresh food towards health and access for all. At Seeds of Solidarity and in SOL Garden we emphasize reverence for the land through no-till practices, season extension, solar greenhouses and "the cardboard method." At our site, solar electricity is used to power well pumps and irrigation, all buildings model energy efficiency, and vehicles run on vegetable based fuels. One area of the Seeds of Solidarity site is devoted to the SOL Garden educational program. It includes a 1/4 acre garden, a 40' by 28' greenhouse and the SOL Shack meeting space, all of which have been cultivated



***Imagine a place where you can go to forget your life, whatever that may be... you can exist in a place where nobody's going to judge you, where nobody's going to exclude you. A place with pristine nature. And you get to work outside with your friends. Anybody who would say no to that is crazy. Just a beautiful experience to have.***

Malcolm, SOL Gardener



and built by the hands of young people over the years, with Seeds of Solidarity staff and interns who believe deeply in youth as stewards and changemakers.

**The topics in this curriculum reflect the sequence that is carried out for the first 12 weekly sessions of our program each year, with a group of approximately 20 young people aged 15-18.**

A SOL Garden season starts at the beginning of April. During the school year, local young people come to the Seeds of Solidarity site one day a week after-school. During the summer months, SOL Gardeners care for the garden, bring food home to their families, donate 25 bags of produce a week to low income elders, and transform their harvest into “Food for the SOL” cuisine sold at our Garlic and Arts Festival. In the fall months, SOL Gardeners continue on as community leaders, speaking at events, organizing a community food forum, and helping to inspire the next year of SOL Gardeners to join. SOL Garden participants start seeds, transplant seedlings, and learn about mulching, worms, composting, harvesting and marketing, and all other elements of cultivating an abundant vegetable garden.

**The activities that make up each topic within were developed or adapted for use by Seeds of Solidarity staff and interns, improved each year based on experiences implementing them with SOL youth participants.** They are intended to develop content wisdom on topics relevant to food, health, justice and sustainability. They are also designed to



build community, fostering positive communication, compassion, inquiry and self-confidence. Each weekly topic includes an opening conversation, experiential activities, and dialogue to integrate. Following the opening lessons, coined “enlightenment activities” by one of our youth leaders, we work together on gardening, greenhouse and building projects. We then return to the circle to conclude our two and a half hour block together with a reflective activity based on the theme of the week.

**The activities within this curriculum, while developed for use with a community based program model such as SOL Garden, can also be adapted for use in a high school setting.** They can be used in the sequence presented within, or you might find that an activity is suitable for a single workshop or presentation for teenagers or adults. We invite you to adapt and use the activities to inspire leadership and ecological literacy among youth and others to build food self- reliance and healthy communities.

A new dream is possible. Food sovereignty is the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities; and a movement that recognizes food as sacred nourishment, not a commodity that some profit from while others starve. Youth growing food in and for community builds personal skills for self reliance, strong communities, and is critical to local and global movements towards food sovereignty.



# Building Community

## *Food For Thought*

Engaging youth in growing food and helping to strengthen local food security and sovereignty through their actions is a goal of our and many youth agriculture programs. And, the social skills that develop and sense of happiness that evolves while engaging with others in a safe and productive setting is meaningful and lasting. Many of our activities begin with “group bonding” activities. Our first day of the program cycle is focused on getting to know and trust each other, and generating the shared values that guide the program.

### *Activity: Mingo*

#### **Purpose**

Mingo (a cross between mingling and bingo) is an icebreaker that helps participants get to know each other and begin to build personal connections. It is also a valuable way to help facilitators learn about each participant and the cultural and food system knowledge they bring to the group.

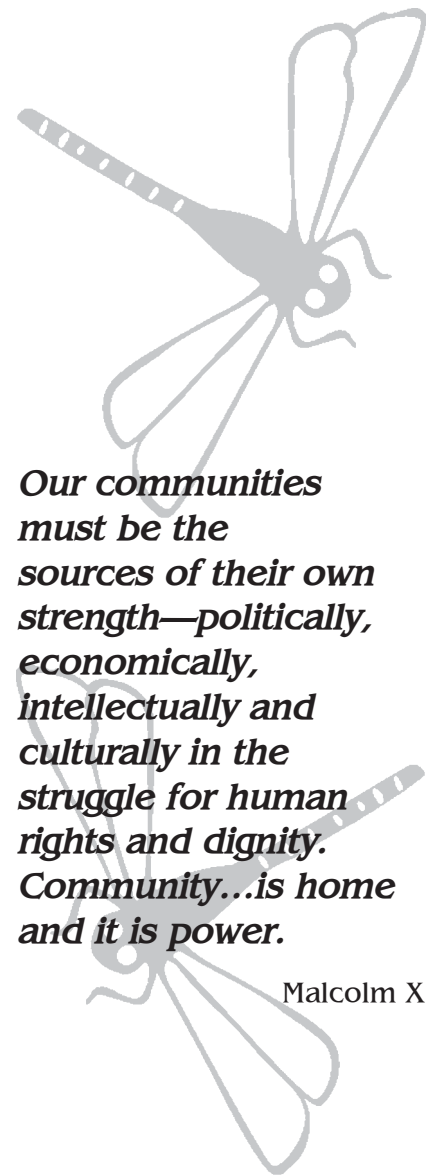
#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Copies of Mingo Board for each participant (from appendix)
- Clipboards or cardboard pieces as writing surfaces
- Pen or pencil for each participant

#### **Approximate Time** 15 Minutes

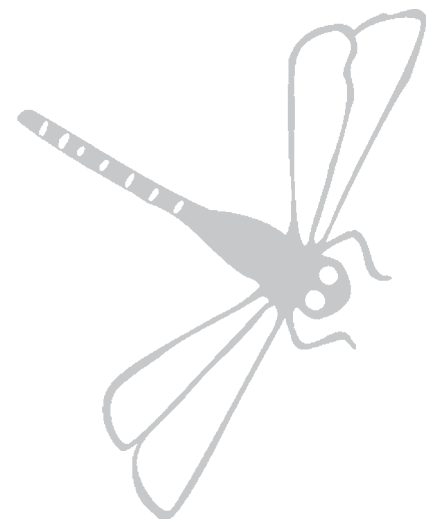
#### **Process**

Give each participant a Mingo board, a cardboard clipboard, and a pencil. Invite participants to mingle, asking each other a question on their board. Some simply build friendship: “someone who enjoys the same music as you” while others, such as “someone who can define food justice” spark thinking about content that will unfold over the course of the program. When the minglers find someone who participates in an activity or knows the answer to something noted on their board, he/she signs their name on that square. Encourage participants to ask one person a question at a time, to try to obtain as many different signatures (thus connections with different group members) on their boards as possible. When someone gets 5 in a row, they have MINGO. (Alternately,



***Our communities must be the sources of their own strength—politically, economically, intellectually and culturally in the struggle for human rights and dignity. Community...is home and it is power.***

Malcolm X



simply have participants make as many connections as possible over a 10 minute period of mingling.)

When several participants start calling out “MINGO” or when time is up, the leader can pull the group together and facilitate a discussion about commonalities and differences they discovered among the group, and to identify any new terms on the Mingo Board.

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

Initiate questions that further the group process and let participants reflect on new knowledge about themselves and others gained through the activity, such as those below. The follow up discussion is also an opportunity to begin to discuss some of the food system terms included on the boards.

- How many people did you find you had something in common with?
- Which terms were familiar? Where did you hear them?
- Which terms on the board were new to you?

### ***Activity: Cultivating Shared Values***

#### **Purpose**

Instead of perpetuating the concept of rules where an authority figure generally sets behavioral expectations without collective input, we include time during the first session of the program for the group to generate a list of shared values. Once created, the list of values is displayed in our meeting space, or painted individually onto colorful flags that adorn the garden. Throughout the season, we return to these values to reflect on how we are doing and progressing, individually and collectively.

#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Poster board, dry erase or chalk board to record group values
- Scrap Paper
- Pencils

**Approximate Time** 20 Minutes

#### **Process**



Assemble the group in a large circle and explain that we will generate and discuss values that will promote a positive, supportive, and safe experience for all in the program. These are not rules to be imposed, but instead values or ways of being at SOL Garden that we all agree on and commit to uphold. Divide the group into four smaller groups. Ask each small group to brainstorm words and concepts that they feel will make the program a positive experience. It is helpful if at least

one youth mentor, those who have been in the program for at least one year, can be present in each group. After all the ideas have been shared, each small group should choose three concepts that everyone in their group agree are important and/or unique. Come back together as a large group and invite each group to share the three values that they agreed upon. Write these values on poster board or chalkboard. Are there any truly important ones that are not yet put on the list? Discuss any that may be new or unclear concepts, encouraging participants to offer definitions to give these meaning. Let the group know that these values will be worked with again in the next week's activity, and will help guide the program throughout the season.



### ***Reflection: Speaking from the Heart***

New beginnings can be challenging! Speaking from the Heart is a great reflective exercise that recognizes each youth's courage for signing up and showing up. It allows participants to debrief their initial experiences with the program while deepening their connection to another group member.

Prior to this activity facilitators may want to spend some time considering optimal pairings, for example pairing new participants with returning participants. After the group is paired off, ask the youth to find a comfortable place to sit and spend some time chatting using the questions as a guide to their conversation.

#### **Prompts**

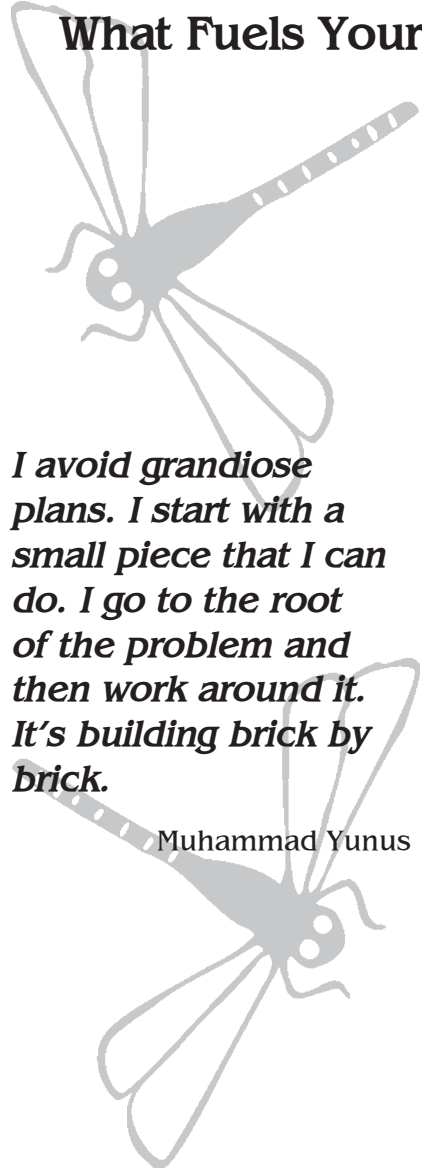
- What part(s) of the program are you excited about?
- What is one thing about the program you are uncertain about?
- What's one thing you hope to get from this program?
- Who is someone, currently or historically, that inspires you?
- If you could be anywhere right now, where would you be and what would you be doing?

#### **Closure**

- Small groups come back to full circle, and if desired, a few people can share something they discussed (or learned about themselves or partner, without breaking confidentiality) in the conversation.



# What Fuels Your Life? Learning the Landscape



***I avoid grandiose plans. I start with a small piece that I can do. I go to the root of the problem and then work around it. It's building brick by brick.***

Muhammad Yunus

## ***Food For Thought***

The focus of this week is a tour of the site. In our case, the SOL Garden program is located on one portion of our overall Seeds of Solidarity site. We tour the entire site to develop a sense of place, a connection to the whole organization, and learn about the farming and renewable energy practices in a place that inform SOL Garden. Our site consists of solar greenhouses, energy efficient structures, solar electric and hot water systems, no-till growing fields, and vehicles fueled by biodiesel (a vegetable based fuel). We emphasize strategies to live harmoniously with and listen to nature, and demonstrate practices that mitigate climate change and reduce consumption. Whatever your site - rural, urban, or suburban, consider how to best introduce youth to the practices and methods in place that promote sustainable agriculture, energy use, humans co-existence with the natural and built environment, and each other.

## ***Activity: Food and Energy What Do You Know?***

### **Purpose**

This is a short active icebreaker game that introduces participants to a variety of topics in a fun and energetic way and sets the stage for "why we do what we do" at SOL Garden.

### **Materials and Preparation**

- Make the statements and companion cards (in the appendix) into game cards. We like to laminate them so they can be used multiple times. One side of each card has "I have..." statements, and the other side corresponding information, which will be read after each round. You may adapt or create new statements and corresponding facts that introduce the participants to upcoming topics. Place the cards "I have..." side up in bowl or basket that will go in the center of your circle.
- If doing this activity with young kids, or if you'd like a more structured layout, place a paper plate per participant, less one, in a circle surrounding the basket of cards to mark spots.

**Approximate Time** 10 minutes

## Process

Ask participants to stand in a circle with the basket of cards in the center. Explain that participants will move to another spot on the circle if the statement they hear is true for them.

We like to do a practice round. Ask for a volunteer to read the first card aloud. "I've heard the term Renewable Energy." Invite participants to move quickly to a new spot if the statement is true to them. After everyone has moved to a new position,

the last person to find a spot steps into the middle of the circle, and prepares to read the next card. Meanwhile, the person who just read a statement reads the related fact on the back of the card aloud. For example, "Renewable energy is also called "clean energy" or "green power" because it doesn't pollute the air or the water." Repeat until done with all cards, or as many as you wish to use to get the groups bodies and minds warmed up.



## Debrief and Dialogue

In a large group discuss any new terms or surprising facts revealed during the game.

## *Activity: Site Tour – Learning the Landscape*

### Purpose

To familiarize the group with the features of the site: natural, built, and human.

### Materials and Preparation

Paper for the participants to record any new things learned.

**Approximate Time** 20-30 minutes

## Process

Recall any values generated in the previous week that will help the group to stay together while on the tour, listen to each other, ask questions, and respond to others they encounter (neighbors, others on site or in the workplace) with courtesy. Throughout, encourage participants to ask questions about what they see, rather than simply listening to a group leader. Allow time for quiet observation periodically in between explanations of the various elements of the site. With SOL Garden or other visiting groups to our site, we sometimes insist that everyone needs to ask at least one question by the end. At the same time, if one person is dominating the group, we encourage them to be patient to allow space for the quieter members to voice a question or idea.

## Debrief and Dialogue

After the tour, bring the group together to reflect upon their experience. Here are some examples of questions to encourage reflection.

- What new things did you learn about Seeds of Solidarity (or your organization)?
- What is something you may share with a friend or family member about something you learned while on the tour?
- How is SOL Garden (or your program) a part of the larger whole of Seeds of Solidarity (or your farm/organization)?



### ***Reflection: Values Flags***

For this activity you will need pieces of pre-cut fabric (a foot square or a bit longer is good) preferably weather resistant banner type fabric, a line from which to hang the flags, fabric or acrylic paint, paintbrushes, cups with water, large pieces of cardboard to lean/paint on, and your list of values.

This is a creative extension of the activity in Week One: Cultivating Shared Values. Explain that we are going to create a visual reminder of the values held by the group by creating small flags that represent each value. Some participants may have seen colorful Tibetan prayer flags. The idea is that the wind carries what is written across a place or landscape to provide ongoing encouragement and spread that value or hope.

Ask each group member to choose one of the values that resonates with him/her the most. They then take a piece of fabric and create a visual depiction of this value using words, colors, symbol or drawing. Leave 1-2" of space at the top where the flags will be folded over the rope when hung. Later, once the flags are dry, attach them to a line and string them up in a prominent or significant spot on your site. Entries to a field, building, or meeting space are all great.

### ***Reflection: A Message to the Future***

This is a popular activity we do each year. Using the template (in the appendix) invite participants and facilitators to write a *letter to yourself* that will be mailed to them in about 6 months. Explain that the letter is an opportunity to capture how you're feeling right now in your life and consider any advice or thoughts to share with yourself. This letter will be kept in a sealed envelope and will only be read by the author so go for it!





# Food Systems: Farm to Fork

## *Food For Thought*

The average meal travels 1,500 miles from farm to table in the United States. At SOL Garden, participants are encouraged to think about the source of the food we eat, the path of travel from farm to table and how to reduce reliance on fossil fuel energy in this process. A Food System, be it local or global, is shaped and defined by the production, processing, transport, storage, marketing, preparation, consumption, disposal and decomposition of food. Think about the many settings in your community that have a food system – schools, restaurants, workplace lunchrooms, colleges, hospitals, prisons. Each of these has their own food system adapted to get food from source to people. Understanding how food systems function and the human and energy resources involved is critical to making change towards fresh local food for all in our communities.

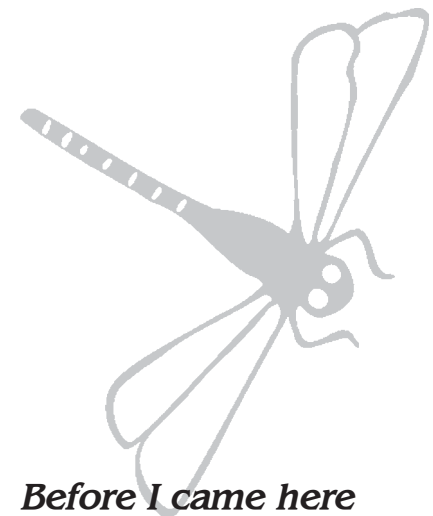
## **Activity: Food System Pair Up**

### **Purpose**

This icebreaker is a great way to familiarize participants with important words, phrases, and acronyms that play a role in food systems.

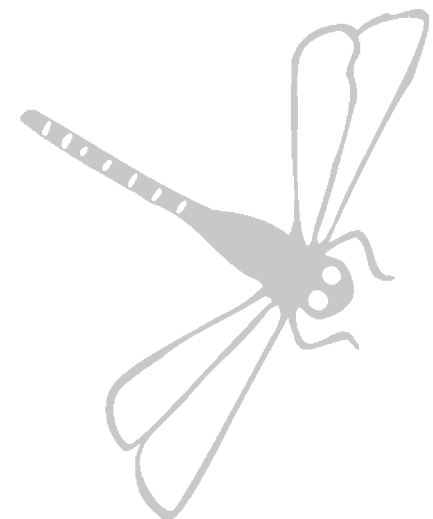
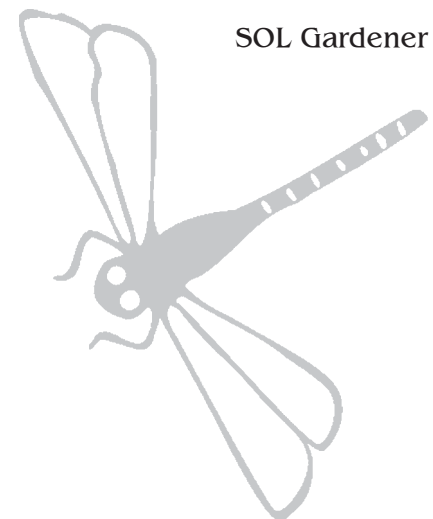
### **Materials and Preparation**

- Good and sticky tape
  - Cards with food system terms written on them (2 cards for each term). Choose terms that are important to your food system discussions and knowledge building for your group. Consider creating bilingual or multilingual cards so all have the opportunity to learn new terms in languages that might be spoken by their peers or community members. Your terms might include:
- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ⊗ Food Miles                          | ⊗ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) |
| ⊗ Biodiesel                           | ⊗ Farmers' Market                       |
| ⊗ Stewardship                         | ⊗ Carbon Footprint                      |
| ⊗ Energía Solar                       | ⊗ Conservación                          |
| ⊗ Climate Change                      | ⊗ Food Justice                          |
| ⊗ Orgánico                            | ⊗ Community Food Security               |
| ⊗ Sustainable                         | ⊗ Food Desert                           |
| ⊗ Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) | ⊗ Local                                 |
| ⊗ Fair Trade                          |   |



***Before I came here  
I thought food was  
just food. Now I know  
where it comes from.***

SOL Gardener



**Approximate Time** 15 minutes

### Process

Choose sets of cards equal to your number of participants, ensuring that everyone gets a card and that matching pairs of cards are distributed. Shuffle the cards and ask all participants to stand in a line facing the same direction. Attach a card, words facing out, to the back of each participant in random order. Have a couple of youth leaders assist with this in order to expedite the process. Once everyone has a card, ask the participants to mingle, asking each other for a clue to the meaning of the term on their back. Participants are allowed to describe the meaning of the term but try not to immediately tell each other what word is on the other person's back. Using the clues they gather from the other players, everyone must try to find the person with the term that matches the one on their own back. Once they think they have found their match, they can stand with their partner and ask the facilitator to confirm.

### Debrief and Dialogue

After a pair has found each other, ask them to find a spot to discuss their term and how that term may be important or related to the work they will do in the program. Once all the partners have found each other, gather the group and discuss any terms that need further illumination.



### ***Activity: 1,500 Miles From Farm to Table***

#### **Purpose**

We use this activity to introduce participants to the concept of a food system so they can understand why SOL Garden advocates growing, purchasing, and eating local food. Through this hands-on activity the youth begin to understand how far food travels from farm to table and be able to give meaning to the term *food system*.

#### **Materials and Preparation**

Participants will create two food chain stories; one describing locally sourced and produced French fries, and the other describing well-travelled fries. We often create the cards ahead, but you can also engage participants in making the cards.

- 2 Balls of string or yarn
- Script for the conventional and local French fries stories
- Cards with pictures and/or words, as listed below. Cards should be large enough to be seen and read by a group, at least 6" x 9".

For the conventional French fry food chain create cards with words or images depicting:

- Idaho potato
- Big tractor
- Texas supplier of fertilizers and pesticides
- Factory in California where potatoes are made into frozen French fries
- Truck/Trucker (3 or 4 cards)
- Hannaford's Central distributor in Maine (the supermarket central distributor and location)
- Hannaford's Market in Orange, Massachusetts (or your supermarket and town)
- Consumer in a car

For the local French fry food chain creates cards with words or images depicting:

- SOL Garden (your youth program/school here)
- Manual tools or tractor (depending on what you use)
- Manure and compost from a local farm
- (Insert your town/city name) Farmers' Market
- Consumer in a car

For both stories:

- 5 or 6 cards with the words "fossil fuel"
- Consumer using public transportation, on a bike, or walking

## Process

Ask the group questions such as: Who likes French fries? Baked potatoes? Mashed potatoes? Where do potatoes come from? Has anyone ever grown a potato? Does anyone know how farm your food travels, on the average, from farm to table? (Answer: 1,500 miles)





**Start with the conventional French fry food chain.** Ask the group to form a circle and give each participant a card (or two, depending on group size). Hand out all the cards in the conventional food chain set except the fossil fuel cards.

Ask participants to look around the circle and familiarize themselves with everyone's card. Clarify any new terms.

Ask the narrator (either someone from the group or facilitator/teacher) to read the story of the Conventional French Fry (below) slowly, once through.

While the narrator reads the story again ask participants to work together to form a "food chain" creating a line to sequence all the steps and inputs required to get a conventionally grown Idaho potato from farm to table, moving slowly into position as the narrator reads the story of it's travel (below).

Once the group has agreed on the sequence the narrator or facilitator connects the participants and their cards with string adding the fossil fuel cards when appropriate to emphasize the many connected and energy intensive steps in the potatoes' travels.

**Repeat process using Local French Fry food chain.**

Note: If the group is larger than 12, two smaller groups can be formed and each do the food chains—one conventional, one local, at the same time then compare.

### **Story of Conventional French Fries:**

The potatoes are grown in a large-scale commercial farm in Idaho where synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are used. These fertilizers and pesticides were manufactured in Texas. After the potatoes are grown, they are harvested and shipped to a factory in California where they are cut and frozen into French fries. They are bagged and labelled and then shipped across the country in a freezer truck to Hannaford's Central distributor in Maine. From the distributor they are shipped again to Hannaford's Market in Orange, Massachusetts, where a customer purchases them.

### **Story of Locally Produced French Fries:**

SOL Garden grows potatoes using compost, and mulch from local farms. They use no-till raised beds rather than a tractor. They sell their potatoes at the Orange Farmer's Market. A consumer purchases some potatoes and goes home to cut and fry them up into French fries. They might even recycle the oil and make biodiesel!

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

- Ask students to compare the two food chains by identifying any steps that could be cut out.
- What are some of the pros and cons of food that is sourced nationally or internationally versus food grown locally? (Consider: energy inputs, nutritional value, access to a wide variety of foods).
- Which food system uses more energy? Less energy? How can we cut down our use of fossil fuels when producing food?
- How do non-local vs. local food systems impact or create jobs? The environment? Packaging and waste?

- What choices can we make regarding our food choices that can save energy? Create local jobs? Improve the environment? Build strong communities? Reduce waste? Promote access to fresh food for all?

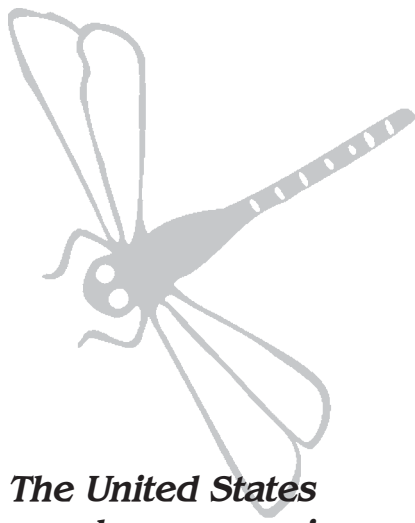


### ***Garden and Building Projects***

#### ***Reflection: Local Foods Taste Testing***

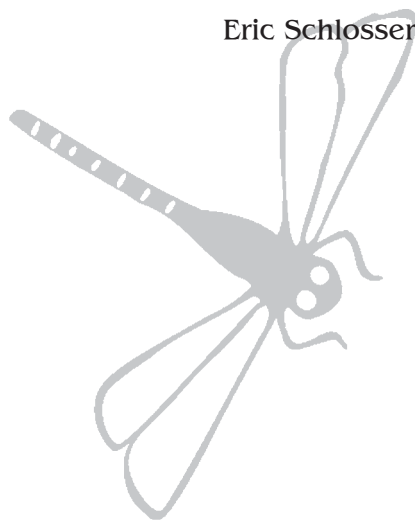
Enjoying small samples of local foods is a great way to celebrate the bounty of your region while introducing teens to their options of where and how to buy local foods. Spinach, cheese, asparagus, seasonal berries and local ice cream, be creative and invite your participants to try new things. Often times when faced with new foods we invite students to take a “No Thank You Bite,” or a very small piece after which they are free to leave the rest, or eat it all if they discover they love it (Thanks to the educators at Vermont Feed for the no thank you bite tip!).

We created an informative handout that lists where you can find food from local farms in our area (in appendix). Make one that reflects the food and farms, and serves as a resource for your own area. This could also be a great research and graphics project for youth to create themselves.



***The United States  
now has more prison  
inmates than full-time  
farmers.***

Eric Schlosser



## Fast Food, Real Food

### ***Food For Thought***

1 in 4 Americans visits a fast food restaurant every day. Fast Food has become a significant part of food culture in the United States that we've also spread like a plague globally. Fast food has a devastating impact on the health of our bodies, our communities and the environment. Former Surgeon General David Satcher reported, "Fast Food is a major contributor to the obesity epidemic." McDonalds operates more than 300,000 restaurants worldwide and relies on our youth to fill these minimum wage jobs: 1 out of every 8 workers in the US has worked at McDonalds at some point. Plus, the "food" used by the fast food industry keep corporate agriculture in business, relying on cheap meat and grains that perpetuate the use of genetically modified seeds (GMOs), destructive farming and grazing practices, and devastation of ecosystems from prairie to rainforest.

A generation ago a much larger portion of our family food budgets were spent on food purchased to prepare in the home: Now that budget is spent outside the home, mostly at fast food restaurants. This lesson is designed to encourage participants to consider the impacts of fast food culture on their lives, health, and communities, and explore the process of slowing down and enjoying locally grown and unprocessed foods with their friends and family. This is not a new concept, but a restoration of traditional ways; reclaiming the power and beauty of breaking bread and enjoying real food with family and in community.

### ***Activity: Food Free Association***

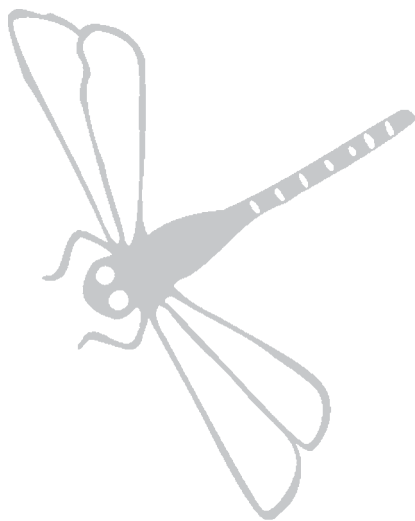
#### **Purpose**

We use free association as a way to open up a topic for conversation and to assess a group's understanding of a given topic. This icebreaker can be used for any topic, but for these purposes is used to get participants thinking about what "Food" means to them.

#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Dry erase board, chalk board, or large newsprint
- Markers

**Approximate Time** 10 minutes





## Process

Write the word “Food” at the top of the board or newsprint. Invite participants to call out words that they associate with the word, encouraging them to say whatever comes to mind, and for everyone to listen to each other without judgement. For example participants might offer words such as “comfort food,” “fast food,” “family dinner,” or frozen food. Or they might name a favorite like pizza or a cultural dish, or a place they often eat like Subway, McDonald’s school, or a burrito stand. As students generate these words, write them up on the board. The idea is to have a free flowing non-judgemental brainstorm.

## Debrief and Dialogue

Once you’ve filled up your newsprint, invite students to reflect upon the word associations on the board:

- Were they surprised at any of the words that came to their mind?
- Was it easy or hard for words to flow?
- Have they stopped and thought about food in this way before?
- You may want to ask the group to identify any trends or different ways to group the words.

## ***Activity: Fast Food, Real Food Game***

### Purpose

This fun activity invites youth to explore the different concepts and practices comparing fast food and real food. It encourages participants to think about the food they put into their bodies and the effect it has on their health and the world around them. Through this activity participants will also begin to explore the concept that knowledge is power and that we all have choices we can make everyday.

### Materials and Preparation

- Make game squares by copying each fast food vs. real food statement onto 8 1/2” by 11” pieces of paper and taping them to pieces of cardboard or putting them in a plastic sleeve for easy re-use.
- Place these game pieces in random order on the floor, flat ground or tarp, in a spiral shape with the center piece reading “healthy people, strong communities.”
- Make a giant dice (this can be made by writing numbers or drawing the correct number of dots to all six sides of a small cardboard box).

## Process

Divide into four to six teams, ideally with about three players in each depending on the group size. One player on each team is the “game piece,” another the “reader,” and the third the “dice roller.”

Teams each take a turn rolling the dice, with the designated “game piece” moving around the game board as the squares dictate, forward or backward. In order to keep the game moving, players only move in response the first card they land on. The goal is to get everyone to the center of the spiral: “healthy people, strong communities.” But depending on how quickly the game is moving, you may decide to just have one or

two teams make it to the center. Before starting explain that this game is a provocative way to think about food in our society, but not meant to judge or create division among those who eat fast food regularly or sometimes, and those who don't.

Some considerations: To save time and to ensure opportunity for the youth to come across new information, our facilitators often make the game squares ahead of time using the statements we provide below. But you may choose to engage youth in generating and making the game pieces themselves, or play this a second time, adding youth-generated game pieces.

Some of the ones we suggest convey strong perspectives, so we suggest that facilitators research the background on these to be prepared to provide more context for youth as part of the dialogue.

### Fast Food, Real Food Game Statements for Squares:

- Already a gardener? Plant non-hybrid seeds like Hopi corn, ancient wheat, and heirloom tomatoes and keep cultural traditions and gene pools vital! *Move ahead 2 spaces*
- Buy a slice of fast food pizza for lunch; spend \$4.00 on pizza and soda. Still hungry. *Move back 1 space*
- Cook chili with your family with vegetables from your garden. *Move ahead 3 spaces*
- Support a local restaurant or diner, be kind to the wait staff and thank the chef. *Move ahead 2 spaces*
- Invite a farmer to speak at your school. *Move ahead 2 spaces*
- Eat chips, donuts and diet soda for lunch, really fast. Get bloated with gas. *Stay 1 turns*
- Buy a package of Twinkies; throw away the wrappers (plastic takes 10-20 years to decompose). *Move back 2 spaces*
- Eat a greasy burger from cows raised on a factory farm. Uh-oh e.coli too. Spend 4 days on the toilet. *Stay 1 turn*



- Carry a reusable water bottle and drink lots of water. *Move ahead 2 spaces*
- Destruction of rainforests and peasant farms due to excessive cattle grazing for fast food burgers. *Move back 2 spaces*
- Meet with your principal and food service director about buying locally grown apples and other produce for your cafeteria. *Move ahead 3 spaces*
- Drink a Pepsi One. The diet industry spends \$33 billion a year in advertising. *Stay 1 turn*
- Drink an average of 2 soft drinks per day, consuming the equivalent of 2 cups of sugar each week. *Move back 1 space*
- Shop at a local farmers' market for produce, and then make a friend lunch. *Move ahead 1 space*
- Eat at Taco Bell, corn tortillas made with genetically engineered corn and tomatoes grown by underpaid migrant workers. *Move back 1 space*
- Help children make pizza from the garden vegetables you helped plant at their school. *Move ahead 2 spaces*
- Wait in line at a fast food drive-in for 15 minutes with your car running, using fuel and emitting exhaust. *Move back 1 space*
- Head to Burger King with your date, throw away burger boxes, cups, straws, napkins, and ketchup packets. Too much garbage to move. *Stay 1 turn*
- Make pesto pasta from SOL Garden basil at the Garlic and Arts Festival and serve it with a compostable bowl and utensils. *Move ahead 2 spaces*

### Debrief and Dialogue

Once the game is over, use these reflective questions to generate a discussion about lingering questions or new information.

- Which fact that you landed on surprised you the most?
- How do you think commercials and other media messages impact consumption of fast food?
- Some people claim fast food is cheaper? Do you feel that is true or not? What are some long-term "costs" associated with fast food? (Depending on how far you want to take this, these could include: human health, deforestation, climate change from factory farming, labor issues, loss of cultural diets)
- Does the information you learned in this game encourage you to think about any of your eating habits and choices you have?

Remind the group that this game is a provocative way to think about food in our society, but not meant to judge or create division among those who eat fast food regularly or sometimes, and those who don't. Cost, subsidies, and access to food remain critical justice issues in that "cheap food" is often the most filling and that fresh fruit and vegetables are often hard to find in urban and rural "food deserts." At the same time, personal choices, for example gaining more taste and nutrition (and pleasure) by cooking nutritious rice and beans rather than buying fast food makes economic and nutritional sense. Knowledge is power, and youth engaging in community activism can make getting real food to more people possible.





## ***Garden and Building Projects***

### ***Reflection: Mindful Eating***

This is a wonderful exercise to awaken the senses and enjoy Real Food through mindfulness practice and conscious eating. This activity can be done with any of your favorite recipe(s). Check out our favorite recipes in the appendix of the curriculum. We like to use gazpacho since it's savory and includes lots of ingredients, but it's also a great opportunity to introduce food that's in season.

Prepare gazpacho or your favorite recipe ahead, enough so that each participant and staff has a small bowl full. Provide each participant with a small portion, and once everyone has one, invite them to begin eating slowly and in total silence. Challenge them to try to make the cup last 3 minutes (the facilitator can time this.) After 3 minutes, ask participants to brainstorm the ingredients they tasted and identify any locally sourced ingredients. Ask participants to share their experience of deliberately eating slowly and how this is similar to or different from how they normally eat.

# Food Literacy

## *Food For Thought*

Food Labels are often over-looked by consumers in a hurry to shop in the midst of a busy day. Without the time or skills to decipher the labels, we often grab the products with the most catchy advertising – very often overlooking the less glamorous, yet more important nutritional and source of origin information also found on food labels. It is important to encourage young people to read labels and understand that they have rights as consumers as well as significant buying power. Food that contains organic ingredients is sometimes labelled. Even so, it is still not always clear what these mean. For example, years ago “organic” was synonymous with small and local. Now it can mean organic agribusiness, or that though grown without pesticides, it has still travelled thousands of miles from the other side of the globe. If inquiry is required for foods that are labelled, what does this mean about foods that are not labelled? It is estimated that over 60% of the food in the average grocery cart contains genetically modified food yet is not labelled as such in the U.S. Understanding how to read labels empowers us to learn about the source of the food, and make informed choices related to food miles, our carbon footprint, personal health, and labor and justice issues.

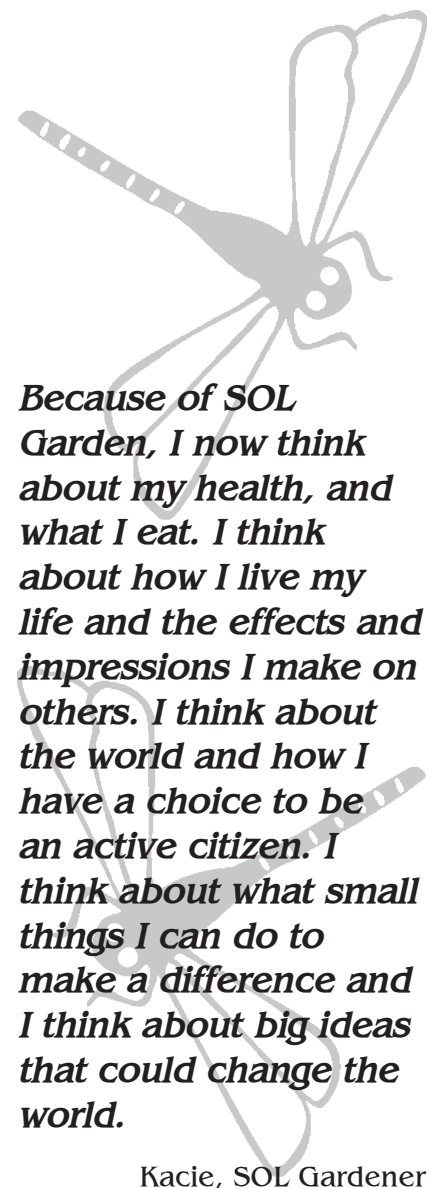
### **Activity: Label Quiz Show**

#### **Purpose**

This hands-on activity is designed to encourage participants to think about the ingredients in the foods they eat. It encourages youth to explore what food manufacturers choose to include or exclude in food labels and their rights as consumers.

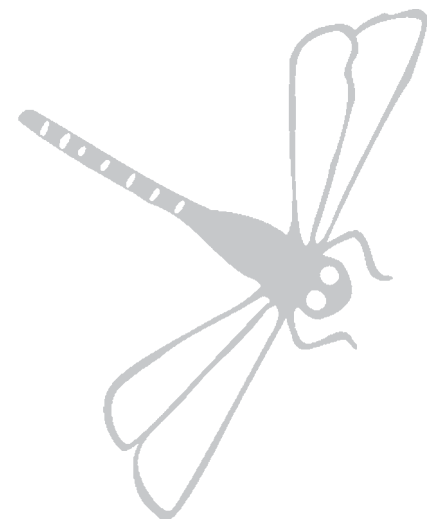
#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Gather together 10-20 different boxes, cans, or packages of food (these can be empty). Try to compile a mixture of supermarket or convenience store typical as well as locally produced and those labelled with “organic”, “natural”, “hormone-free”, or “GMO-free”.
- These will be used in a quiz show: if you wish to use our quiz show script that follows this activity



***Because of SOL Garden, I now think about my health, and what I eat. I think about how I live my life and the effects and impressions I make on others. I think about the world and how I have a choice to be an active citizen. I think about what small things I can do to make a difference and I think about big ideas that could change the world.***

Kacie, SOL Gardener



you can choose some of the same products, otherwise you will need to create your own product descriptions.

### **Approximate Time 20 Minutes**

#### **Process**

Participants begin by becoming familiar with food labels in general. Pass out a few different boxes and cans of packaged foods from the collection you are working with, and ask participants to look at the packages and answer the following questions.

- What is one thing that the label tells you?
- What is one thing that the label doesn't tell you?

Answer any questions participants have about label information. Point out how labels are set up with the ingredient of most quantity listed first. What do the labels tell you, and what don't they tell you? For example, do the labels say where the food was grown? Is it GMO-free? Pesticide Free? What does the term "natural" food on the label mean? Did you know that sometimes a serving size is much smaller than the item itself, but people interpret the nutritional label as if it is for the whole thing, not the recommended serving size? Is any of the nutritional info on these items surprising?

#### **Quiz Show**

Put the boxes and cans in the middle of the floor, and have the group circle around and examine the products for a few minutes. Once the participants are familiar with the products ask everyone to find a spot in a circle around them. The game begins when the facilitator reads a clue describing one of the food products. When a participant thinks they know the food products described they respond with a "ding, ding" sound and grab the appropriate package. Once a participant makes a match, they sit aside with their product, allowing all the other participants to make a match before rejoining the game play. You can vary this rule depending on your ratio of products to participants; the idea is everyone will end up with at least one product match. You can also play this with pairs working together to match products, for the added benefits of teamwork. To ensure fairness, and to reduce random guessing, we usually implement a rule stating that the facilitator must read the entire clue before anyone moves to claim a product.

When all the packages are gone, have a few people share what clued them in to find their item. Have everyone look at their item, and share a few additional insights about the product that they can deduce from the label, as well as things they still don't know about the product even after reading the label.

#### **Debrief and Dialogue**

- Does learning to read labels make you feel empowered or overwhelmed?
- What do you want to know about the things you eat?
- In Europe consumers demanded change, and now much food is labelled for GMOs. Should this also be done in the United States? Consider and discuss some of the food safety and culture issues facing people around the world who use a language not commonly used on labels or oral language, who may not be able to read important safety info.
- What about issues of economics and poverty? Many "cheaper" foods are high in empty calories such as ones we see on the labels: carbohydrates and sugar,



yet these foods are filling, enabling people in poverty or on limited incomes to buy more for less. How can we become informed and teach others about food literacy, but understand the challenges of poverty at the same time?

- How can you exercise your rights as an active consumer? List some ideas. These may include: Buy local food products that enable you to meet the grower or producer and ask questions directly; read labels and teach others to do the same; talk to grocery managers and request local, GMO free, organic and/or fair trade products; call companies and ask them specific questions about their products and practices.



### ***Garden and Building Projects***

### ***Reflection: Food Story Placemats***



Although it's important to understand the language of labels, it's equally important to recognize the personal and cultural connections we have with our food. This activity allows participants to describe the personal significance of a particular food or dish and to share their food story with the group.

Using paper and colored pencils or markers, ask participants to design a placemat that tells a cultural or personal food story. For example, a food story may illustrate a special dish that is served at a holiday meal, a traditional food from their country of origin, their personal choice to become vegetarian, or possibly a story of hunger. The placemat can describe any significant food story the teens want to share.

This activity is about understanding that food connects and nurtures us with more than just its ingredients. You may choose to share your stories now or collect the placemats so that they can be used for the following week's cooking activity (lamine or put in a re-usable plastic sleeve). At that time, the participants will have the opportunity to share their food stories as part of a meal preparation and feast.

## **"Know your labels" Quiz Show Questions**

**Bob's Red Mill 5 Grain Cereal:** Nothing but wholesome whole grain ingredients from this Oregon based company.

**Red Bull:** This popular and controversial product made in Austria makes claims to do everything from increasing endurance to reaction speed. It contains the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee and also contains Taurine, a controversial ingredient said to cause nervousness, headache and insomnia.

**Near East CousCous:** This grain is precooked and ready in just five minutes. The company who makes this product is part of a large multi-national corporation called the Hain-Celestial Group. It's hard to tell where any of the ingredients come from or the product is processed.

**Coke:** This is a fat-free and low-sodium food guaranteed to give you a temporary boost, (and cavities)!

**Silk Soy Yogurt:** This snack is made with organic and non-GMO ingredients. The company that makes it is linked to Phillip Morris, a major tobacco company.

**Hannaford's Pasta Sauce:** This healthy food is distributed regionally from Scarborough, ME, but we don't always know where it is made or the ingredients grown just by looking at the label.

**Muir Glen Organic Tomatoes:** This organic product is made with ingredients "your grandmother would love!" (Though a large corporation now owns this once small company).

**Hershey's Chocolate Syrup:** This childhood favorite is sweetened with high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), a culprit in childhood obesity.

**Sweet tarts candy:** Mmm Mmm! It doesn't even contain any food! Just chemicals and dyes.

**Bananas (Dole or Chiquita, non-organic):** This fruit is grown in Central America, with pesticides that are often illegal for use in the US, and grown as a monocrop.

**Bananas (Organic and Fair Trade):** The sticker on this item tells you that laborers were treated and compensated fairly.

**Clam Chowder:** This much loved dish is a New England favorite, but which brands contain MSG, chemical preservatives, or artificial flavourings? Have you tried making it from scratch?

**Equal Exchange Hot Cocoa:** The label tells us the workers were paid a just wage but does not speak to the distance it travelled to our tables.

**Amy's Organic Butternut Squash Soup:** The company that made this product supports the labelling of all GMO foods, so you won't find any on their label as they don't use them.

**(Generic) Pancake Mix:** The ingredients in this mix allow you to make breakfast in half the time. Making the same dish from scratch would require fewer ingredients. Do you know what all the ingredients are?

**Orville Redenbacher Popcorn:** The ingredient in this crunchy snack is almost exclusively grown from GMO plants, but you won't see that on the label.

**Canola Oil:** This cooking ingredient keeps things from sticking to the pan, and may or may not contain GMO's.

**Local Milk:** This product has traveled less than 100 miles to reach our table and with no growth hormones to boot.

**Odwalla Juice:** This yummy drink is GMO-free but now owned by Coca-Cola.

**Celestial Seasonings Tea:** The label on this product claims to be "environmentally friendly", "ethically traded", and "100% natural" but doesn't tell you what any of that means.

# SOLar Cooking

## ***Food for Thought:***

At this point in our gardening program season, connection to working the land is blossoming, and participants have gained an understanding of seeds, soil, compost, and mulching as essential ingredients to the practice of growing food. Perhaps some early crops have been tasted, and certainly participants have experienced the amazement of returning to see tiny seeds they started sprouting visible life. Along with acquiring the skills to grow food, skills to prepare food cannot be understated. Cooking is meditation, power, and nurturance. Much can be learned by following or creating recipes, chopping and stirring over laughs and conversation, then sitting down to enjoy a feast prepared with fresh, seasonal food and through collective activity.

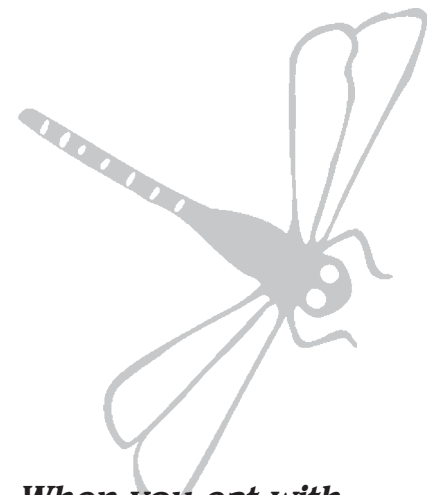
## ***Activity: SOLar Cooking – local recipes and breaking bread together***

### **Purpose**

In this activity, the participants experience the simple pleasures of cooking a healthy, local feast. We power our kitchen appliances for this activity from the solar panels on our SOL Patrol van. Obviously not essential but adds to the fun and environmental education! We include some of our favorite recipes for this activity (in the appendix) that incorporate seasonally available and local products or those we are growing and will later harvest (such as tomatoes). We also chose recipes that can be prepared with limited time. Use these, or locate recipes that are traditional or seasonal to your region. If your program time allows, you can engage youth in researching possible recipes in the weeks prior, with criteria such as: incorporates local seasonal food, economical to make, healthy and delicious. Refer back to the Fast Food, Real Food activity as you introduce the cooking experience. This activity celebrates the power of preparing and breaking bread together over real food, and the joy of savoring something you have taken care to co-create with others.

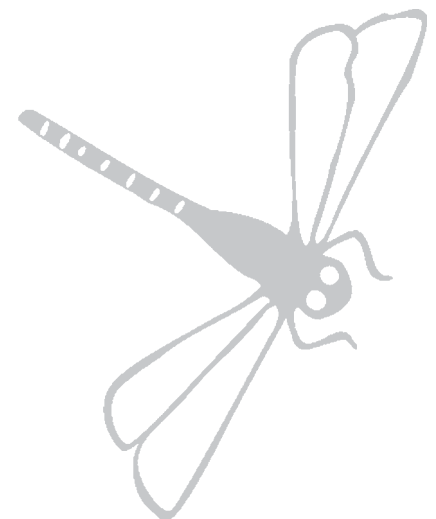
### **Materials and Preparation**

To maximize the amount of hands-on engagement in this activity, we prepare a few different recipes simultaneously in small groups. We've found that 3-4 people at each cooking station working on one recipe works well. To



***When you eat with awareness, you find that there is more space, more beauty... You had the essence of mindfulness already, but you hadn't discovered it. So when you make an effort to eat mindfully..., you find that life is worth much more than you had expected.***

Chogyam Trungpa





avoid confusion, try to set up each station with all the ingredients and cooking tools needed. Ingredients and materials will depend upon what you decide to cook but some materials may include:

- Recipes printed out and laminated
- All ingredients
- Cutting boards, Knives
- Camp stove and propane
- Compostable Utensils, Plates, Cups
- Outdoor tables and chairs
- A little booklet of the recipes for youth to take home, or post these on a website, blog or facebook if your youth participants use these

**Approximate Time** 45 minutes

### Process

Begin by presenting the menu. At SOL Garden we take a moment to explain how solar electricity will be used to prepare today's feast. You may want to pause to consider any sources of energy and water that will help make the meal possible. Divide the teens into five groups. Each group is responsible for preparing one recipe for the feast. Divide staff or youth mentors up among the groups equally. Make sure all chefs have washed hands, and provide gloves for food safety, and to add authenticity to this food preparation, imagining we are chefs in a fabulous local café. Review the recipe and prepare the meal making sure every participant has a way to contribute to the creation of the meal.



As groups finish, they can help set a table with all the finished dishes. Food is about aesthetics as well as nutrition, emphasize good presentation. You may want to add fresh flowers or a piece of art made by youth to the center of the table. Use the (laminated) placemats from the previous week's Food Story Placemats activity. If you are not using real plates and silverware, consider pre-purchasing compostable products, such as Taterware brand utensils (made from GMO free potato starch!) as well as all paper plates, napkins and cups that can be composted.

Invite the teens to gather around and share a moment of appreciation for the food before serving themselves. Enjoy the act of eating in community.

### Debrief and Dialogue

While eating, ask the teams to share about the food they prepared. Where did the ingredients come from? How does it feel to eat a local meal that you have prepared yourself?

After or during the meal, have the youth share their placemat food story with the group.



**Garden and Building Projects**

# Diverse Farming Traditions

## *Food For Thought*

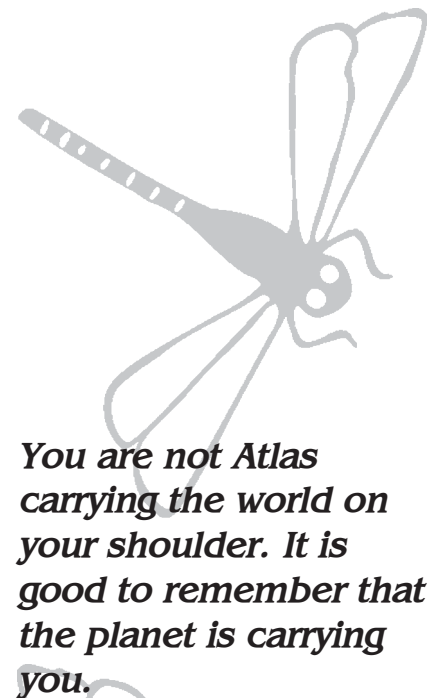
According to the US census, less than 1% of the American population claim farming as their primary occupation. At the same time in the US there is a growing number of small-scale farmers raising crops or animals on less than 10 acres. Add to that an increase in rural, suburban, and urban gardeners and community-based groups growing food to nourish themselves and their neighbors. In fact, subsistence farming, or farming on a small-scale where people grow enough food to feed their family and perhaps barter for other goods has been happening for thousands of years. Between 30-40% of the world's population and about two-thirds of the world's farmers live on small acreage subsistence farms.

There are as many approaches to farming as there are farmers. Ways of growing food are often deeply connected to culture, ecology and climate as farmers work with nature and the resources they have available to cultivate the land and raise crops. Sadly, traditional methods have sometimes been lost to agribusiness models of production that emphasize yield, mechanization, and profit over ecology and tradition. Yet across the globe, farmers maintain tradition, even in the face of pressures such as climate change and genetically modified seeds that have contaminated ancient and heirloom strains of seed. Powerful food sovereignty survives and blossoms across the planet.

## *Activity: Farm Culture Theatre*

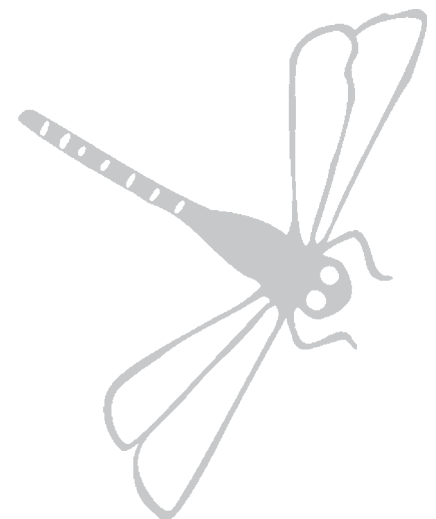
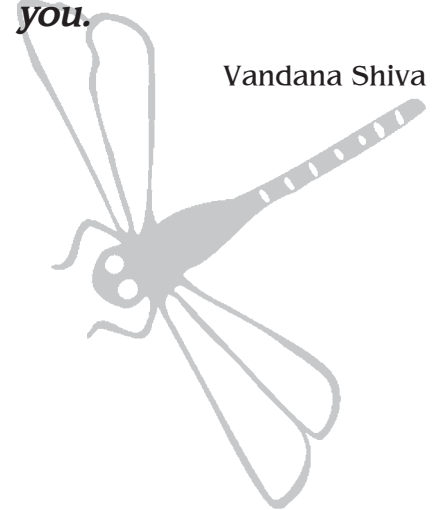
### **Purpose**

The goal of this theatrical activity is to introduce the teens to various farming practices used around the world while exercising creativity. Diverse farming practices can have vastly different effects on the planet. Through creating a skit in small groups, learners contemplate the varied impacts of farming on land and culture. Connections between food, the health of the planet, and traditional and current farming practices are illuminated, giving youth a broader context for their own community-based food cultivation.



***You are not Atlas  
carrying the world on  
your shoulder. It is  
good to remember that  
the planet is carrying  
you.***

Vandana Shiva



## Materials and Preparation

- 1 copy of each of the Farm Stories (in the appendix)
- Varied props (paper grocery bags, newspaper, various empty containers, scrap paper, hand tools) plus tools and materials found on the site
- Dry erase markers and wipe board

**Approximate Time** 30 minutes

## Process

Give a brief overview of the four different approaches to farming presented in this activity: integrated, conventional, organic and urban. This is by no means all the farming practices used in the world, but some common models. Write these methods on the dry erase board for later reference, and if you want to, continue to brainstorm other approaches.

Break the larger group into four smaller groups, with a youth leader, intern or staff in each to help guide the process. Give each group a copy of one of the Farm Stories, and explain that they will create and perform a short skit that illustrates their particular story. The groups will break out to read over their story, but before they do so, encourage each group to involve everyone in some way—as a narrator, actor, or as part of the set. Place the props in an accessible location and invite youth to use these or be creative (while respectful) with other props they might incorporate. Encourage them to act and improvise based on the story but not needing to follow the script exactly, though some groups will gravitate towards having one member narrate as it is performed. Allow the teens 10-15 minutes to read, plan and then practice their skit. Each skit should be no more than 3 minutes long. Choose a location that is conducive as a stage. When the actors are ready, invite each group to take a turn performing their skit for the





others. It is most fun when you ham this up with a program staff or youth leader as MC, introducing each group with celebration, and concluding with bows and applause.

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

In a large group discuss the potential impacts (pros and cons) that these practices have on the health of the environment, people and community.

- How were the practices represented in each skit similar to, and different from each other?
- What is their potential to feed people effectively, now and in the long-term?
- How are these similar to or different from what we do at SOL Garden?

What are some other approaches to farming that people are aware of, perhaps having heard of but not sure what they mean?

This is a good time to clarify these, as some may have different names for similar approaches. If there are any hard to define or describe, some participants may volunteer to research other farming methods and share findings at the next session.

You may also talk about the activity process:

- Who enjoyed acting or directing?
- What teamwork strategies helped your group worked together in a short time to produce a piece of art and expression?



### ***Garden and Building Projects***

#### ***Reflection: Global Gallery***

We have found Peter Menzel's book, "Hungry Planet" a wonderful resource. Check out his collection of photos that explore what families around the world eat. Search the web for his collection of photos, "What the World Eats." You may have luck at: <http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html>. Print off the pictures, be sure to include the photographer's descriptions, display them and invite the participants to simply look at them, react, and share any comments.

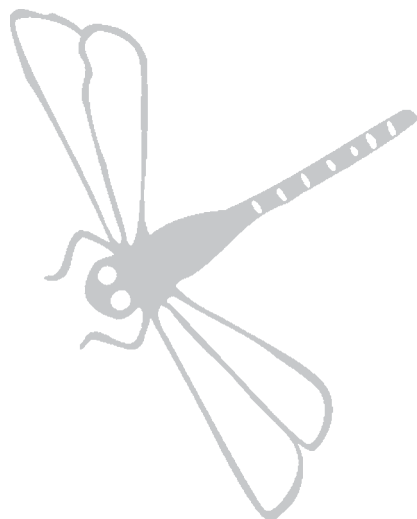




***Dadle pan a aquellos  
que tienen hambre,  
y dadnos hambre de  
justicia a nosotros que  
tenemos pan.***

***May there be bread for  
those who hunger, and  
hunger for justice for  
those of us who have  
bread.***

Nicaraguan Blessing



## Justice and Fairness

### Food for Thought

There is a great deal of focus on local food these days in our society, particularly in certain regions. In fact, a few years ago, the word “Locavore”, one who eats food primarily grown from within 100 miles from where they live, was even added to some dictionaries! However, the words organic, or natural, or fresh, or even locavore don’t often tells us about labor practices involved in growing or producing food, and whether these practices promote social justice in addition to producing delicious food. Justice and fairness also means that people across socio-economic lines have access to quality, healthy food, and the freedom to practice self-reliance and act upon cultural choices in regards to growing and eating food. When we think about food, health and environmental concerns may come to mind first, but values of justice and fairness in food and agriculture are critical. True food security means that there is not justice until all have food, and that wealth or poverty are not indicators of who is nourished with fresh, healthy, and traditional food, locally and globally. This is a vast, yet essential task. Our SOL Garden program builds skills for self-reliance, and engages us in sharing food we grow in our communities towards health and justice. In regards to purchasing power and solidarity with farmers around the world, one of the many ways that people can promote human dignity and justice in regards to the food they eat is to choose food that has been produced by a growers cooperative, or has been certified as Fair Trade.

### ***Activity: Who Benefits?***

#### **Purpose**

This activity examines consumer choices, specifically the choices we have to support the fair treatment of farmers around the world.

#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Print one copy each of the “Who Benefits” worksheets on coffee, banana and chocolate (appendix). The blank copies are for the teams of participants to fill in. Print the answer sheet for facilitator reference, but don’t show the answers until it’s time!

- Gather examples of Fair Trade labelled products, including bananas, chocolate and coffee. Facilitators may need to prepare by familiarizing themselves with the meaning of fair trade, and, what this label implies, and fair trade certifying organizations and companies such as Equal Exchange, the oldest and largest fair trade company in the US.

**Approximate Time** 30 Minutes

### **Process**

Divide participants into three groups. Give each group a different blank worksheet (one group gets the chocolate worksheet, another the banana, the third group gets the coffee). Ask the groups to imagine that each product costs exactly one dollar. From that dollar they should discuss, agree, and write down approximately how much of the dollar they think goes towards each category.

Bring the large group back together and invite each smaller group to share their guesses and explain their logic. After the participants have shared their guesses the facilitator can share the actual numbers from the “Answer Edition”. Compare the two: Did they expect that farmers/producers would receive a larger amount? Pass around one or more examples of these same products, but produced with Fair Trade guidelines (tasting the chocolate is always a hit). Explain the meaning of fair trade, and how it supports farmers towards a living wage and better working conditions. Discuss the pros and cons of fair trade.

While fair trade practices help ensure a better wage and conditions for farmers and producers, these crops are still considered luxury crops. Luxury crops come primarily from the global south where the majority of the world’s poor live. Even with fair trade, it is important to keep in mind that by growing these export crops, peasant farmers may not be producing or maintaining their traditional staple crops to feed their families and communities.

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

- Ask the group if they know of, and then share some examples of other items and goods that have changed as a result of the fair trade movement, for example, sweatshop free clothing, much of which was brought about by youth! Seeds of Solidarity purchases our tee shirts from a company called No-Sweat. We do have choices to shop with our values as consumers.
- This activity focuses on fair trade and labor practices. What are some other ways that justice and fairness can be promoted in agriculture and the food system?
- What can we do in our own community to increase access to fresh and healthy food for all? Share some concrete ideas, plus the joys and challenges of these.



### **Garden and Building Projects**

### **Reflection: Social Movements: Sheroes and Heroes**

Ask participants to share any names of “heroes or sheroes,” past or present, local or international that have worked for change and justice in food and farming. Provide

some examples such as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta who founded the United Farm Workers movement to support rights for migrant laborers in the 1960's, which continues today. This could lead to a discussion about their own role models, and qualities and characteristics of social justice leaders.



# Youth as Changemakers:

## *Food for Thought*

Teenagers are at a powerful point in identity development. They are aware enough to care deeply about issues that impact their lives and communities. With support from adult mentors and peer leaders, youth can identify, research and carry out thoughtful action in response to issues that warrant change towards a more just and healthy food system. Through a process that involves needs identification, understanding issues from multiple perspectives, and seeking and forging relationships with allies to carry out a service or action, youth gain leadership skills that they can use in other settings, plus channel (or ignite) passion for change in meaningful ways.

## *Activity: Thoughtful Action*

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is two-fold—it engages youth in exploring the topic of hunger as they analyze an example of a youth led response to alleviate hunger. They examine action steps taken, then develop their own sequence of thoughtful activism and service.

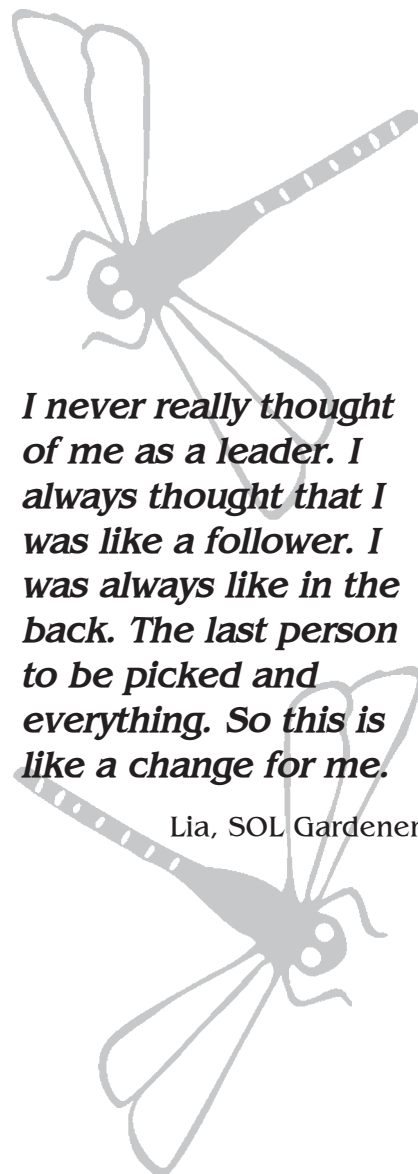
### **Materials and Preparation**

- A copy of the FoodWalk for Hunger Scenario (or one you create based on a need in your community)
- Four sets of action step cards. A set of cards can be made on index cards ahead of time. Each set includes cards pre-written with each of the following steps (Shuffle each set before distributing):
  - Identify Needs
  - Gather Information on the Topic
  - Find Allies and Others Interested
  - Develop a Mission/Vision Statement
  - Decide on an Appropriate and Manageable Action
  - Decide who carries out which tasks
  - Let others know How to Get Involved
  - Inform the Media and Community
  - Do It!
  - Let People Know about the Outcome
  - Meet to reflect on successes and challenges
  - Find Ways to stay involved in the Issue
- 2 Blank Cards for Youth to add their own Steps.



***We must be the change we wish to see in the world.***

Mahatma Gandhi



***I never really thought of me as a leader. I always thought that I was like a follower. I was always like in the back. The last person to be picked and everything. So this is like a change for me.***

Lia, SOL Gardener

**Approximate Time** 40 minutes

## **Part One: Analyze a Youth Action**

### **Process**

Warm-up to the activity with a few minutes of conversation. Ask the group if they have ever taken action on an issue that they believed in. If so, have a few people share briefly what the topic was, and what the action was. Explain that we will listen to a scenario then talk about it. As the group is sitting in a circle, ask for a few volunteers who like to read aloud and have them take turns reading the scenario to the group.

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

- What was the issue that Marisol and her co-organizers were responding to?
- What steps were taken to prepare for and then reflect on the action?
- What do these terms mean to you: Organizer, Ally, Service, Activism
- What else stands out to you in this story?

Now, we will practice our organizing skills again:

## **Part 2: Organize!**

### **Process**

Divide the whole group into 3 or 4 smaller groups. Explain that the groups will be given some shuffled “Steps into Action” cards, and they must work together to organize them into a sequence that makes sense to them. There is not one right answer, and there are also two blank cards provided that they should use to add steps if needed.

Give each small group a set and allow about 7 minutes for them to sequence these in an order they agree on.



### **Debrief and Dialogue**

Come back together as a large group. Have each group lay out their sequence then compare and discuss these together. Are certain sequences better in particular situations, or are they simply different ways of achieving a goal? If groups added any new steps or cards, take particular note of these and why the group thought they were needed. How does this activity, both the story and the sequencing, make participants feel about taking action?



### ***Reflection: Serving for Change***

While this activity is about taking action more than the topic itself, the issue of hunger and food insecurity is a huge one. Bring the activity home by brainstorming ways that your program or organization does or could take action to address food insecurity, or other pressing community issues. For example, during the summer SOL Garden donates harvests and donates weekly bags of produce to low-income senior citizens through a FarmShare Program run by a community partner. You may also choose to take a week and complete a service project in your community, like establishing a food-producing garden at your local library.

### ***Food Walk for Hunger: Scenario to Read Aloud***

Marisol, a youth leader in the SOL Garden program is walking to high school. Passing by the local food pantry, she sees the line for the weekly food distribution. Marisol sees some older neighbors that she recognizes from her block waiting on line for the doors to open. She remembers that they are now taking care of their grandchildren full time, and thinks that it must be harder to buy enough food for everyone. Her neighbor looks away with a bit of shame, but Marisol smiles warmly; her family was on this line a few times when her mother was out of work, and she knows it helped them get through hard times. The rest of the way to school, Marisol thinks about hunger. In her social studies class, they talked about hunger and malnutrition in Africa, but not in their own community. Marisol talks with her best friend about her concerns for people in her community who don't have enough to eat and they agree that it makes them feel sad and helpless sometimes.

Later that day, she talks with her social studies teacher, who tells her about an organization called WHY: World Hunger Year that has a lot of information and things people can do. After school Marisol goes to the library and looks up WHY and some other hunger organizations, including in her own county. She learns a lot about causes of hunger and poverty, how many people use food banks and food pantries, and also some great ideas of ways to help. A few ideas catch her eye. The next day she talks to her best friend who says she wants to help, as does another friend. She also talks to her social studies teacher who says he will meet with them one day after school to hear their ideas and offer advice, and also suggests they call the director of the local food pantry. Marisol and her friends, meet with their teacher and she shares her idea: to organize a Food Walk for Hunger later in the fall, that carries surplus food donated from local farms to the food pantry. They come up with a list of farms that might be willing to donate, and one of her friends agrees to call them. A town official offers to meet with the students and the chief of police so she knows about the event and can help ensure safety for the walkers. The social studies teacher provides a sample press release and flyer, and one of Marisol's friends who is a good writer and artist agrees to work on publicity. A guidance counsellor suggests that students who participate in this project during out of school time might be able to get service learning hours that students need to graduate.

*(continues next page)*

The date is set for the walk to coincide with the end of the fall harvest. The youth decide on a mission statement so they can easily explain the purpose of the walk to others, and spread the word. Each of the youth organizers carries out their roles, talking and meeting regularly as they plan. Everything is going well, but at the last minute one of the youth's ride falls through and they cannot get to one of the farms to pick up some of the crops. They scramble and finally find a parent who has a van and is able to give them a ride, but the organizers were worried for a while. On the day of the event, over 50 youth show up to walk and help carry the donated food to the pantry. Some carry signs with slogans like "Everybody deserves fresh food." At the pantry, the director, media and other community members are waiting to greet them as planned. The youth deliver 500 pounds of apples, squash, potatoes, and carrots to the pantry.

After hugs and celebration, the youth organizers meet the following week to talk about their experience, what went well and what could be improved. They decide to try to make this an annual event. Working with farmers to get donated produce has also made one of the youth interested in learning more about local farms, and he will volunteer on a few weekends. Marisol and another youth organizer decide to research how they can get more food from local farms into their school lunches.



# Sustainability and Stewardship

## *Food For Thought*

Sustainability and stewardship are core concepts of the SOL Garden curriculum and essential to our ability to survive and thrive together on earth. This lesson introduces participants to these concepts through a hands-on exploration of human and natural systems that sustain life on earth. The reflection activity invites participants to consider further the meaning of sustainability.

## **Activity: Spaceship Earth**

### **Purpose**

This lesson is designed to introduce the concept of natural and human systems and how they work together to sustain life on earth. By using the spaceship as a metaphor for planet earth, participants will come to understand that resources on earth are finite and that in order to sustain life we must practice conservation and transformation of resources.

### **Materials and Preparation**

Enough materials for groups of five:

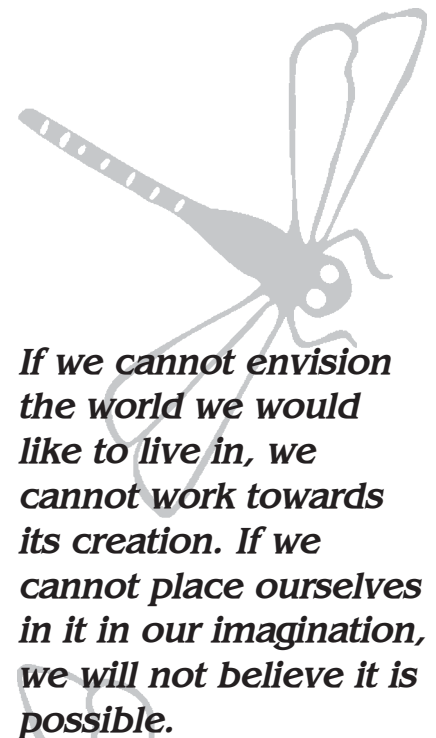
- Blank sheets of paper
- Colored pencils, markers, pens, pencils etc.
- Write the "Principles" on a large piece of paper or white board:
  - Nothing goes in, nothing goes out
  - Every output must be an input
  - Every input must come from an output
  - Your model must involve at least one human and one non-human system

**Approximate Time** 40 minutes

### **Process**

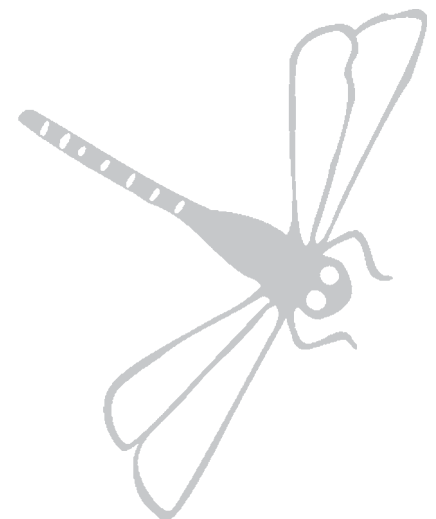
Divide the large group into smaller groups of 4-5. Provide each group with an assortment of colored pencils, markers, pens, pencils and blank paper. Read the scenario on the next page aloud and explain the Principles, which must guide all design decisions for their spaceship.

Give the groups 10-15 minutes to come up with a drawing to represent their spaceship, after which time each group



***If we cannot envision  
the world we would  
like to live in, we  
cannot work towards  
its creation. If we  
cannot place ourselves  
in it in our imagination,  
we will not believe it is  
possible.***

Chellis Glendinning



may share their concept for 2-3 minutes. Give a minute or so after each for the other participants to ask the presenting group to further explain or clarify any design features. Don't give away the metaphor of the spaceship as planet earth too soon; see if the groups "got it" as part of their conversation and designing process. Once everyone has shared, continue the conversation with the debrief questions, or others that arise.

### ***The Scenario*** (Adapted from Science NetLinks)

*In recent and alarming news: ground control at NASA has completely lost track of Spaceship SOL Garden. The ship and its crew are suspected to be hurtling through space destined for a far away galaxy, far beyond radio communication.*

*Your team of experts has been specially selected to design and complete the rescue for the lost spaceship SOL Garden, using your specially designed vessel. Your rescue vessel will be in space for at least 20 years and re-supply is not going to be possible – so you must bring everything you need. Since space is limited however you will not be able to carry all the consumable things you will need (i.e. food, water, medicine etc.). You can assume that NASA engineers have developed a fuel efficient propulsion system that will take you as far as you need to go, and get you home again, and that you have artificial gravity and protection from harmful radiation.*

### **Debrief and Dialogue**

- What are the similarities between life on your spaceship and life on our planet, as we know it? What are the key differences?
- Do you think your spaceships could have actually supported life? Were there any needs that were not met by your life-supporting spaceships?
- What are the parallels between life on the spaceship and life on planet Earth?
- How does this exercise make you think about the way that we manage our resources on this planet?



*Handmade Vegetable Cards,  
Phyllis Labanowski*



### ***Reflection: Perspective on Sustainability***

The concept of “sustainability” may be illustrated by the life-supporting systems the groups were trying to create on the spaceships. Write the word “Sustainable” on a dry erase or chart paper and invite students to call out what comes to mind.

Individuals and organizations around the world think about the concept of sustainability in diverse ways. Read all of these aloud, then talk about which of these statements about sustainability are meaningful, and why or why not.

- 1) A technical definition of “Sustainability” as created by The Brundtland Commission, convened by the United Nations and published in 1987 in response to deteriorating natural environments and social conditions defines sustainability as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 2) Mohandas Gandhi, one of the most respected spiritual, political, and humanitarian leaders of all time said:

“There is a sufficiency in the world for man’s need but not for man’s greed.”

- 3) The Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers speaks:

“We are deeply concerned with the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth, the contamination of our air, waters and soil, the atrocities of war, the global scourge of poverty, the threat of nuclear weapons and waste, the prevailing culture of materialism, the epidemics which threaten the health of the Earth’s peoples, the exploitation of indigenous medicines, and with the destruction of indigenous ways of life. We believe that our ancestral ways of prayer, peacemaking and healing are vitally needed today. We come together to nurture, educate and train our children. We come together to uphold the practice of our ceremonies and affirm the right to use our plant medicines free of legal restriction. We come together to protect the lands where our peoples live and upon which our cultures depend, to safeguard the collective heritage of traditional medicines, and to defend the earth Herself. We believe that the teachings of our ancestors will light our way through an uncertain future. ”



## Personal Sustenance

### *Food For Thought*

We have explored the concept of sustainability and stewardship in relation to our communities and the planet. Inward reflection is also critical to the practice of sustainability. This is a challenging time in the world to be coming of age; youth are well aware of environmental and human suffering, and economic challenges locally and globally. To survive and thrive in life one must develop internal strength and resources to get through hard times personally, as well as vision and practical skills to provide for basic needs such as food, energy and shelter. Young people generally do not have many settings where they can share joys and fears with others, and open their hearts towards more loving ways of living together on this planet. This activity creates a quiet and contemplative setting in which participants can explore aspects of their personality and identity and consider how they (do or do not) express and sustain themselves.

### **Activity: Four Elements Identity**

#### **Purpose**

This activity is best done when a strong sense of community has been forged in the group. A goal is to provide a safe and symbolic experience in which to explore personal identity and the ways in which we can better nourish each other and ourselves towards personal sustainability. Many cultural traditions and healing practices connect ways of being and wellness with elements in nature.

#### **Materials and Preparation**

- Prepare ahead of time four signs with the names of the elements on them: earth, air, fire and water. For each element also gather a few symbols, such as a rock, a candle, a feather, and a small bowl of water. Finally, for each element write some descriptive accompanying words, in as many languages as spoken by the group or others that you want to include.

Words might include:

- Earth: solid, centered, grounded, reliable
- Air: easy going, imaginative,
- Fire: opinionated, passionate, driven
- Water: reflective, emotional

***Do you have the  
patience to wait until  
your mud settles and  
the water is clear? Can  
you remain unmoving  
till the right action  
arises by itself?***

Lao-Tzu

***You come here and  
it's like whatever is  
stressing you out  
vanishes because you  
know you have all  
these people here to  
support you and grow  
food with.***

Vanessa, SOL Gardener



- Before beginning the activity place each element name card, along with the accompanying words and symbols in the four corners of the activity space.

**Approximate Time** 30 minutes

## **Process**

The facilitator introduces the experience by reading the passage below:

*Over the weeks together learning and in the garden, we have explored how to be stewards of the earth, stewards of our communities, and stewards of food culture. Today we are going to focus on personal, emotional and spiritual sustenance. Some definitions of sustain are "to supply with necessities or nourishment; to provide for" and "to keep in existence; maintain". So how can we best nourish ourselves? What fuels who we are and what keeps us going? What blocks our true selves and our ability to open our hearts and minds to change? Are we focusing on the things in our lives that will sustain us? Are we taking enough time to recharge or are we burning the candle at both ends? Hopefully this experience will give us each some insight about ourselves, and ourselves in relation to the earth and each other.*

Ask participants to get comfortable and close their eyes as the facilitator reads the instructions aloud:

*Envision yourself out in the world doing your daily activities. See yourself at school or work. What are you like when you are active in the world? How do you interact with people? What kind of activities do you do? What kind of pace do you keep? Get a clear picture of your daily life out in the world. Now slowly open your eyes.*

Without losing the experience of quiet and introspection created, explain to the group that in each of the four corners is a representation of earth, air, fire, or water. There are also signs with key words that describe each element. Invite everyone to move to the element that best represents his or her outer personality, "the you that you show to the rest of the world."

Once everyone has moved to an element ask them to sit and talk with others drawn to that element for a 5-7 minutes: Each person may share: Why do you think that element best represents your outer personality? When is it helpful, when is it challenging? Share ideas: What can you do to support these qualities of your outer personality?

Once groups have discussed the elements that represent their outer personality. Invite the group to close their eyes again.

*Envision yourself having some quiet time. Where do you go when you want some down time? Are you alone or with a trusted friend or small group? What are you doing? What are your emotions like? Now open your eyes.*

Go to the element that best describes your inner personality, the personality you express when you are having some down time, and are at your most relaxed. Once you arrive, note who else is in your corner. Talk together about what drew you to this element. When are these qualities of your inner personality helpful? When are they challenging? As a group, share a few ideas: what can you do to support this part of your personality?

## Debrief and Dialogue

Invite participants to re-join a large circle to share their reflections.

- Have you ever done anything like this before?
- How did it feel to talk with people with similar outer or inner personalities?
- What ideas did the groups generate about providing personal support?
- What are some ideas or practices for sustaining and nourishing your inner and outer selves?

Nelson Mandela\* said,

“You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself.”

Is this statement meaningful to you in regards to the activity we just did?



### *Reflection:*

There is a message that is attributed to the Hopi Elders, the Hopi being indigenous people of what is now called the United States. Their central village is on one of three Mesas in Arizona and is called Oraibi. It is the oldest continuously inhabited village in the United States since at least 1150 B.C.E (Before Common Era, sometimes referred to as B.C or Before Christ). The Hopi Elders have received and shared vital prophecies. Take turns among participants



reading aloud ‘message from the Hopi Elders’ in the appendix. Invite the group to share any parts that were meaningful, or parts they do not understand. How does it relate to the activity we did earlier? Think of someone that might benefit from hearing it. Without needing to say who they are, consider sharing it with them.

As a small gift to the group and in honor of their commitment to sustaining themselves we usually hand out wallet-sized and laminated Hopi Cards. The template for the cards is also in the Appendix.

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\*Nelson Mandela changed himself and the world as an African anti-apartheid activist, the first democratically elected President of South Africa, a Nobel peace prizewinner, and rooftop gardener while imprisoned for 27 years for his beliefs and actions

# SOL Garden Jeopardy

## ***Food For Thought***

What better way to review topics covered in your curriculum than a rousing round of Jeopardy? A favorite culminating activity for our youth, this is also a great informal evaluation tool, giving facilitators a sense of knowledge retention on curriculum topics. The questions in this version are tailored to reflect this specific curriculum, but questions can be created to suit any curriculum or topic. This activity is most fun when the facilitator plays up the role of TV show host!

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this activity is to reflect on and review information learned during the SOL Garden activities.

## **Materials/Resources**

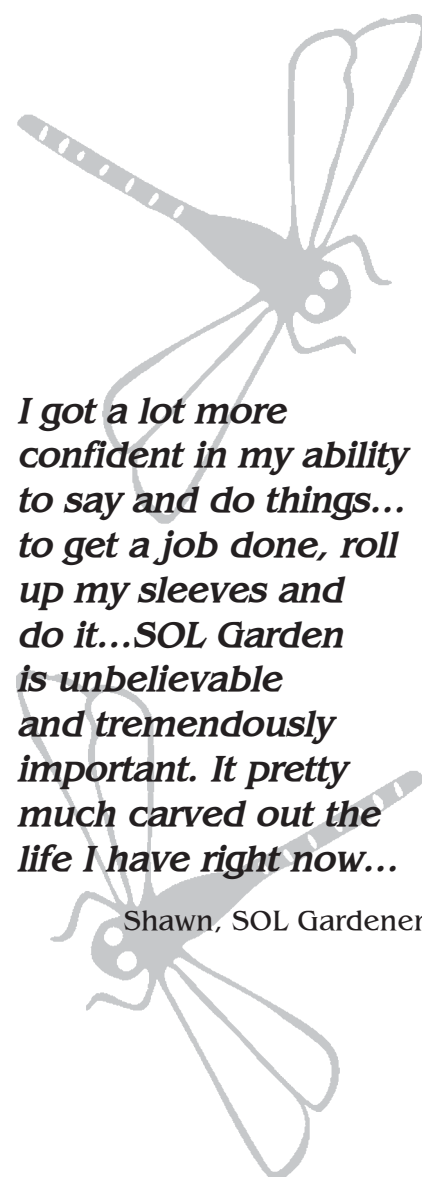
Mount the Jeopardy questions (and answers) either on a wall or a poster board in columns according to categories. The statements can either be enlarged and printed out, or written on individual index cards.

## **Process**

Divide the group into 3 teams and ask each team to designate a spokesperson. This spokesperson will give the final answer after the group has discussed it. Select one team to start and invite them to choose from a category and point column. Then, as in the TV show, the facilitator will read the question aloud, and the spokesperson, on behalf of the team, must answer in the form of a question. There may be several acceptable answers, as agreed upon by the facilitator or other group members. Play until all statements are gone, or as long as you wish

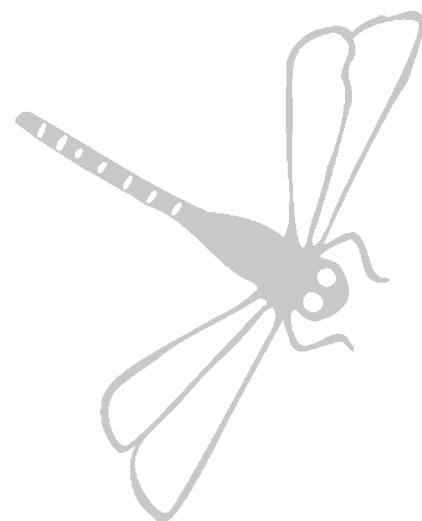
## ***Program Evaluation***

Around this point in the program, we provide participants with a survey to get their feedback on what has been meaningful to them about the SOL Garden program. A sample of our evaluation process, including the end of spring survey is included in the appendix. We find it most beneficial to do it on a day when there is 10 minutes for everyone to sit in a quiet place and fill it out.



***I got a lot more confident in my ability to say and do things... to get a job done, roll up my sleeves and do it...SOL Garden is unbelievable and tremendously important. It pretty much carved out the life I have right now...***

Shawn, SOL Gardener



## SOL Garden Jeopardy Questions:

### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TECHNIQUES

**100 Pts:** This is used to extend a gardening season, a structure built to grow within, even in cold weather.

**(What is a greenhouse?)**

**200 Pts:** This is one way to prepare soil for a garden without using machinery.

**(What is laying down cardboard to eradicate sod and promote worms?)**

**300 Pts:** As the demand for fresh, local produce grows and people want to meet the farmers growing their food, these are increasing in communities across the US.

**(What are Farm Stands?)**

**400 Pts:** Instead of using petroleum-based fertilizers, this can be used to enhance nutrients and life in the soil.

**(What is compost?)**

**500 Pts:** By planting these types of seeds you are helping to maintain cultural traditions and keep gene pools alive.

**(What are heirlooms seeds?)**

**600 Pts:** This is becoming a popular way for consumers to buy local, season food directly from the farmer. Interested consumers buy a share and in return receive a box of seasonal produce each week.

**(What is a CSA, community supported agriculture?)**

### FAST FOOD/REAL FOOD

**100 Pts:** This is the name of a local farm in the North Quabbin region.

**(What is...?)**

**200 Pts:** This is one of many negative impacts of fast food.

**(What is the exploitation of teenage labor, or what is obesity, or what is excess packaging, or what is corporate globalization?)**

**300 Pts:** This is one benefit of eating food from local farms.

**(What is supporting farmers, reducing energy use, or what is eating nutritious food, or what is sharing time with friends and family?)**

**400 Pts:** Food loses these two things when it travels long distances.

**(What is taste and nutrients?)**

**500 Pts:** Made from heavily processed corn, this controversial substance can be found in many processed foods and soft drinks, and has been linked with increased rates of obesity.

**(What is High Fructose Corn Syrup?)**

**600 Pts:** This term refers to the controversial practice of manipulating seeds for corporate ownership.

**(What is genetically modified organisms or genetic engineering?)**



**100 Pts:** When you see this label on a product, you know that the farmers were paid a fair price for their product.

**(What is Fair Trade?)**

**200 Pts:** Although the world is producing sufficient food to feed everyone on the planet, there is a problem with what?

**(What is equal distribution of the food?)**

**300 Pts:** These are two examples of products that could carry the Fair Trade label.

**(What are bananas and coffee?)**

**400 Pts:** These two groups of people are the most vulnerable to hunger.

**(Who are the elderly and children?)**

**500 Pts:** This word refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**(What is Sustainability?)**

**600 Pts:** These 6 principles adopted by grassroots, international groups stress the right of sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all.

**(What is Food Sovereignty?)**

**100 Pts:** We can conserve by reducing our reliance on these non-renewable resources.

**(What are fossil fuels?)**

**200 Pts:** This is once way that we can cut down on the transport of produce and the wasting of energy.

**(What is buy or grow more local produce?)**

**300 Pts:** The average an American's food travels in this many miles.

**(What is 1,500 miles?)**

**400 Pts:** These alternatives to fossil fuels are safe, non-polluting, and abundant.

**(What is renewable energy?)**

**500 Pts:** Biodiesel is a renewable fuel that can be made from:

**(What is any vegetable oil, hemp or algae?)**

**600 Pts:** These convert solar radiation into direct current electricity.

**(What are photovoltaic cells?)**

**100 Pts:** Schools can start these programs to encourage their students to eat healthy and learn about fresh, local food.

**(What is a school garden or what it Farm to School?)**

**200 Pts:** This is one way people can save energy, eat healthy produce, and support the local economy.

**(What is shop at local farm stands and farmers markets?)**

**300 Pts:** Concerned by rising rates of childhood obesity, Michelle Obama did what at the White House?

**(What is put in a garden?)**

**400 Pts:** This is an example of a dish I know how to cook which highlights food from local farms.

**(What is...?)**

**500 Pts:** This is one way that I can fight hunger in my community.

**(What is...?)**

**600 Pts:** This word refers to the act of taking care of something, commonly used in describing an ethic of taking care of our natural environment.

**(What is stewardship?)**



## Celebration and Service

***While at SOL  
Garden I feel Alive,  
Amazing! Myself,  
Accepted, Friendly,  
Safe, Fascination,  
Like I belong, Calm,  
Energetic, Peaceful,  
Wonder, Content, Free!***

SOL Gardeners  
(from a group dialogue)

***It's time for greatness  
~ not for greed. It's  
a time for idealism  
~ not ideology. It is  
a time not just for  
compassionate words,  
but compassionate  
action.***

Marian Wright Edelman

We culminate each season at SOL Garden with celebration to mark the passing of the season, reflect on accomplishments, strengthen the group, and inspire energy to move forward to the next program phase. Celebration is multifaceted, and may involve a service component. For example, at the end of June after the youth have been in the program for 3 months and coupled with the end of school, we take a field trip to an amazing spot called the Peace Pagoda, where we enjoy some solitude followed by putting in a vegetable garden for the monks and nuns, and for hundreds of visitors to learn from. Then we head off for a swim and picnic, telling stories of favorite SOL Garden Spring moments. Other years we've planted a garden at a school, or visited a local restaurant, where we barter some fresh veggies for a chef's cooking demo and tasting.

Sometimes, our celebrations are simpler but still mark the passing of a season and great work together. Throughout the summer, service is consistent in that we harvest and pack 25 bags of produce each week that is distributed to low-income senior citizens in our community. At the end of our summer season, we have a party of local ice cream, and on satisfied stomachs hold a dialogue oriented focus group to garner more insights and stories for collective inspiration as well as useful quotes towards program reporting and evaluation.

Come fall, our own Garlic and Arts Festival provides a great venue for the youth to develop leadership in a celebratory setting, as they help run our organization's booths that feature our farm-fresh cuisine, organic popcorn, to raise funds for our organization. We also take part in other local events where we've provided service such as helping to organize composting and recycling, or selling homemade soup to raise money for local food pantries. Then, we hold a winter event called a Food Forum that brings the greater community together for workshops on food self-reliance, a 'stone soup' lunch, and youth led roundtable conversations.

Whatever the service and celebration practices that work for your program and community, they are deeply valuable, adding strength and spirit to a program, and teaching youth that activism and joy can and must unite!

## Appendix

In addition to the reproducible pages that accompany activities; this section provides other essential components of the overall program:

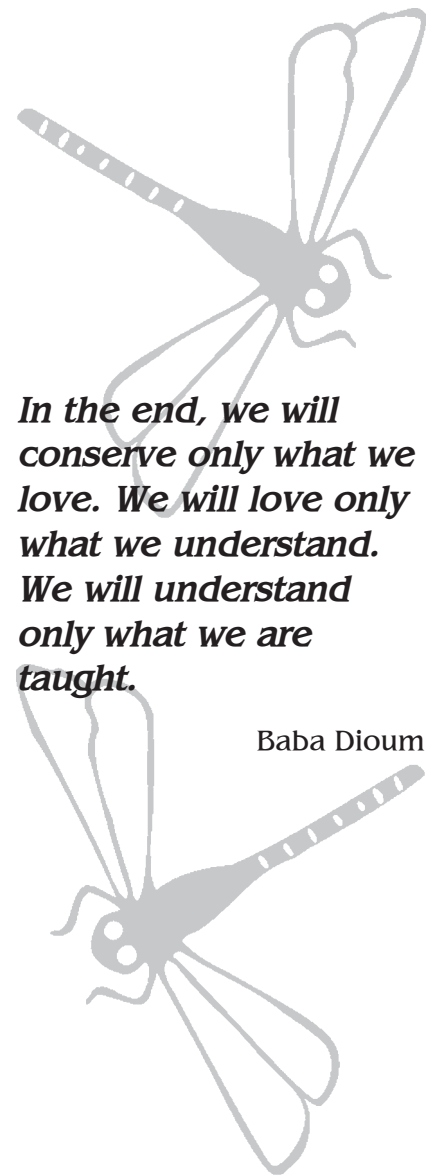
Seasons of No-Till Gardening for Life: A “how to” that describes our “Grow Food Everywhere” approach to farming and gardening at Seeds of Solidarity that is great for youth, school, and community gardens as it does not require machinery and fosters life in the soil, as well as community participation. This is what we practice and teach at SOL Garden.

Sample Gardening Tasks by Week: About half of the time spent during each of the SOL Garden sessions is focused on gardening and building projects. What occurs during this time will vary from program to program, setting and climate to setting and climate, but we’ve included our journal of tasks here.

The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles: Adopted by groups including Via Capesina and Grassroots International, provided here for background information, dialogue and critical thinking.

Food for the SOL Recipes: They speak for themselves. Find them here by season. We make food together during our big cooking week, and at other times too.

Program Evaluation Examples: We gain important perspectives from the youth in our program that lead to program improvement during periodic evaluations that we try to make educational and inspiring for all involved. We include examples of seasonal surveys and focus group questions.



***In the end, we will  
conserve only what we  
love. We will love only  
what we understand.  
We will understand  
only what we are  
taught.***

Baba Dioum





# Seasons of No-Till Gardening for Life

## How Can We Create Self-Sustaining Gardens That...

Eliminate machinery and fossil fuel use, reduce labor of weeding, conserve water, and minimize need for additional fertilizers? The Self-Sustaining Cardboard Garden is one solution.

**You can put down cardboard anytime of the year.**



Worms and microbes decompose cardboard year round, leaving well-aerated and worm-casting rich soil in its place. If you put cardboard on a new area or existing garden at the end of the season in the fall, it will be largely decomposed by the time spring comes, easy to dibble through or dig holes in for seedlings.

One can also put down cardboard in early or late spring for the:

## Insta Garden Approach for Seedlings

- Lay large pieces of cardboard (sheets or well flattened boxes) down to create a nice size, 16 x 16 or so is good for an abundant garden yet manageable. Cover with mulch hay, or well-rotted leaves, to cover and hold down cardboard. If a windy season, water the cardboard well to make it heavy and stay in place.
- When ready to plant seedlings, use a utility knife to cut holes in the cardboard spaced appropriately for whatever you are planting (e.g., broccoli can be 18" apart while tomatoes 3' apart). Make each hole about 6" to 1' in diameter, again, depending on size of plant. A clothesline strung between pieces of rebar pounded into the ground helps make your holes fall in a nice line.
- Shovel out existing soil in each hole and replace with, or mix with good quality, fully decomposed, rich compost (we like chicken compost).
- Put a transplant in each hole, and water in. You can always plant part of your garden with cool



weather crops (kales, broccoli, chard) in late spring, then make holes for and add hot weather crops in early June.

This same technique can be followed if you put down cardboard in the fall; it will simply be easier to make holes as in step 2—use a shovel or your hands instead of a knife. You may need to add more cardboard around your holes and mulch with more straw to keep garden weed free all summer.

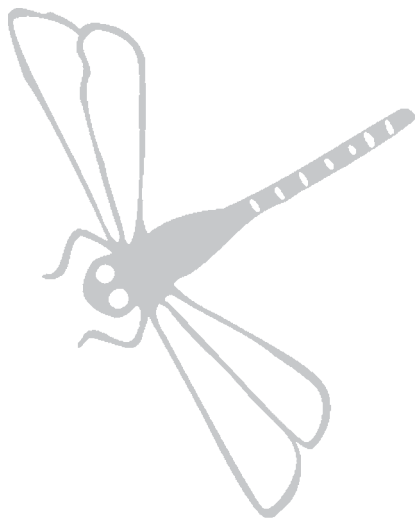
#### **To sow and grow greens using Insta Garden approach:**

Lay cardboard down to make a bed approximately 3 feet wide and as long as you wish. Cover cardboard with at least 6-8" of well composted soil. To conserve high quality compost, use lesser quality soil/compost on the bottom 3-4 ", then finer quality for the top 3-4 ". Gently rake the top of your bed smooth. Water the bed. Scatter sow greens seeds (your choice of Asian greens, spinach, lettuce, arugula, etc...). Gently water seeds. Cover with light layer of compost. Water again. This approach will require careful attention to watering while plants are growing due to the cardboard barrier (Until the cardboard layer is decomposed). You can add protection to your greens bed in early spring or late fall using a floating row cover sometimes called "Remay," available in various grades, which lets light and rain in, but keeps bugs like flea beetles out, and also keeps greens warmer in cool weather.

#### **In your second year after an Insta-Garden:**

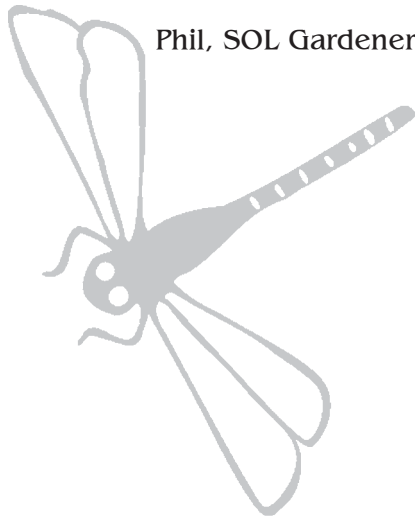
The sod has broken down your soil is more fertile and alive with worm castings, and just some tape remains from the boxes. Then, you can make raised beds and plant, and also continue to put cardboard on beds for a self-sustaining garden.





***I learned how to physically do things that I didn't know how to do otherwise, like building a manual pulley because the electric pump broke, and learning how to build a greenhouse. I feel confident that I can actually do stuff on my own. I've learned how to take charge in a group, watch other people do it and do it myself.***

Phil, SOL Gardener



## Sample Gardening Tasks by Week



### Week 1 (First Week of April)

Prepared beds! One year ago, we covered our garden with cardboard to kill off the grass and weeds and encourage worms. Sure enough, there were plenty of worms and no weeds or sod. We cleared out all the dead plant matter and tomato cages from inside the greenhouse and from the field and did a walk through of the garden to map out our crop plan. Planted snap peas.

### Week 2 (Second Week of April)

Today we started our Seed Sowing. We sowed lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, broccoli, chard, calendula, zinnias, and basil directly into seedling trays. We'll keep them in the greenhouse until they're ready to go out. We also started re-shaping the beds in the greenhouse, by digging the pathways and putting that rich soil in the beds.

### Week 3 (Third Week of April)

We started building a fence around the garden today to keep the animals out. We put stakes in every 20 feet, then wrapped fencing around the perimeter and attached it to each pole. We also planted carrots, spinach and onions in the field. In the greenhouse we tightened the plastic covering and continued to re-shape the beds.

### Week 4 (Fourth Week of April)

Our compost arrived today from a local composting operation! So we organized a bucket brigade transporting compost to a pile in the greenhouse and a pile in the corner of our garden. We also completed the fence around the garden and planted potatoes.

### Week 5 (First week of May)

We sowed a second round of seeds for transplants: cucumbers, melons, squash, and more basil all into seedling trays and, we transplanted our tomatoes, peppers and eggplants to bigger pots.

### Week 6 (Second Week of May)

We're getting ready to plant in the field and greenhouse, but first we measured and marked the holes for the plants. Then we dug holes, and filled them with fresh compost. We planted our cold hardy crops in the field, including leeks and brassicas.



### **Week 7 (Third Week of May)**

We transplanted the rest of our seedlings into 4" CowPots and everyone got to take a couple plants home. Many will also go to local schools and library gardens. We also hilled potatoes.



### **Week 8 (Fourth Week of May)**

We finished transplanting our seedlings then planted 3 varieties of tomatoes in the greenhouse. We gave them a good watering and mulched the beds to keep in the moisture.

### **Week 9 (First Week of June)**

Now that our tomatoes are planted in the greenhouse we built tomato cages and put them around the plants to keep them strong and healthy. We also planted our bush beans and climbing beans in the field.

### **Week 10 (Second Week of June)**

Today we planted to rest of our crops in the greenhouse, including: basil, peppers and eggplants.

We also planted out the rest of our crops in the field including: cucumbers, summer and winter squash, and corn. We mounded our potatoes and picked off pests and their eggs.

### **Week 11 (Third Week of June)**

Now that everything is planted we water twice a week and spread a good layer of mulch over the garden to help keep the moisture in. We planted a second succession of bush beans.

### **Week 12 (Fourth Week of June)**

Today we celebrate our hard work with our annual end of spring celebration. Before we head out on our field trip, hike and feast we harvest and eat our sugar snap peas and water the garden.

### **July, August, September**

We spend our time in these months doing general garden maintenance: watering, mulching and picking pests off our plants (and feed them to our neighbors chickens!). And of course, the highlight of these months is harvesting, tasting, sharing and taking home the bounty of the garden as well as donating produce to low income senior citizens and transforming it into farm fresh cuisine to sell at the Garlic and Arts Festival!

Come fall, when plants are done we pull them up and put the bed "to sleep" by layering it with cardboard and hay, so it's ready for next spring.

# Food for the SOL Recipes

## SPRING

### SALAD GREENS WITH MAPLE VINAIGRETTE

6 side servings

Your local farmer will likely have a mix of greens awaiting this delicious dressing.

Wash and spin dry one pound of mixed salad greens – can include a variety of lettuces, spinach, beet greens, Asian greens)

Combine 1 Tbsp. Of real maple syrup, 1 Tsp. Dijon mustard, 1 Tbsp. Lemon juice,  $\frac{3}{4}$  c olive oil,  $\frac{1}{4}$  balsamic vinegar, a pinch of salt and pepper in a jar. Cover and shake well to mix. Toss to lightly coat salad greens just before serving (you may have a little dressing left over for another time). Top with local goat cheese and toasted pecans, walnuts or almonds to make it really special!

### LEMON ASPARAGUS

Ingredients	Equipment	Instructions
⊗ Asparagus	⊗ Knife	1. Snap the tough ends off of the asparagus.
⊗ Fresh Lemon	⊗ Large pot	2. Boil the asparagus until tender, approximately 5 minutes.
⊗ Kosher salt	⊗ Cutting board	3. Drain the asparagus and arrange on a platter.
	⊗ Large platter	4. Cut the fresh lemon in half. Squeeze the lemon juice over the warm asparagus.
		5. Sprinkle with salt.

### GARLIC GREENS PESTO over PENNE PASTA

Ingredients	Equipment	Instructions
⊗ 2 c garlic greens (you can use another spring green such as spinach or arugula, but then you'll need to add some fresh garlic too!)	⊗ Knives	1. Chop garlic greens.
⊗ 1/3 c pine nuts	⊗ Cutting boards	2. Add garlic greens, pine nuts, and Parmesan cheese to the blender.
⊗ 1/2 c Parmesan cheese	⊗ Electric blender	3. Start blender. Slowly add olive oil until mixture reaches the desired texture.
⊗ 1/2 c olive oil	⊗ Measuring cups	4. Add salt and pepper to taste.
⊗ Salt	⊗ Large mixing bowl	5. Pour over penne pasta and toss to coat.
⊗ Pepper		6. Eat and enjoy!
⊗ 1 lb cooked penne pasta		



## FRESH HERB MEATBALLS

Ingredients	Equipment	Instructions
⚙ 1 lb grass-fed ground beef	⚙ Knives	1. Beat the egg in a small mixing bowl and set aside.
⚙ small can tomato paste	⚙ Cutting boards	2. Chop the lemon balm and the oregano.
⚙ 1 egg	⚙ Wisk	3. In a large mixing bowl combine the ground beef, 1/2 of the tomato paste, eggs, salt, pepper, oregano, and lemon balm.
⚙ 1/4 tsp salt	⚙ Small mixing bowl	4. Add the rolled oats until the mixture is firm enough to form into 1" balls.
⚙ pinch black pepper	⚙ Measuring cups	5. Heat the pan. Add the meatballs to the heated pan and cooked until browned.
⚙ 1 tsp oregano	⚙ Measuring spoons	6. Combine the remaining tomato paste with 2 c water and add to the pan.
⚙ 1 tsp lemon balm	⚙ Large mixing bowl	7. Cook the meatballs in the tomato paste sauce for 10 minutes, or until meatballs are no longer pink in the middle.
⚙ 1/2 c quick cooking rolled oats or more to firm meatballs	⚙ Large pan	8. Eat and enjoy!

## MAPLE-RHUBARB SAUCE over YOGURT

Ingredients	Equipment	Instructions
⚙ 5 stalks of rhubarb	⚙ Knife	1. Cut the ends off of the rhubarb.
⚙ 1/4 c water	⚙ Cutting board	2. Cut the rhubarb into 1" pieces. Place in the saucepan.
⚙ 1/4 c maple syrup	⚙ Sauce pan	3. Add 1/4 c water to the saucepan and heat over medium heat.
⚙ Plain yogurt	⚙ Mixing spoon	4. Continue to cook the rhubarb until it becomes saucy. Add a little more water, if needed.
		5. Stir in maple syrup to sweeten. Add more if you would like a sweeter sauce.
		6. Allow the mixture to cool and then spoon over plain yogurt.
		7. Eat and Enjoy!

## SUMMER

### Gazpacho

**GAZPACHO** is a Spanish soup that is traditionally served uncooked, but it needs to sit for several hours for the flavors to blend.

- 4 cups tomato juice
- 1 cups peeled, seeded and chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 1 cup chopped cucumber
- ½ cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped celery
- ½ cup whole-kernel corn
- ½ cup chopped green bell peppers
- ¼ cup chopped scallions (green and white parts)
- ¼ cup chopped zucchini
- ¼ cup chopped green chillies
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

**COMBINE** all ingredients in a large bowl. Cover and chill for several hours before serving.

### More Soup for the Soul:

If you like Gazpacho, see if you can find other soup recipes such as this from diverse cultures that use fresh flavourful vegetables or fruits?

### Pesto

Makes enough for one pound of pasta

Pesto is also great as a dip with crackers or on slices of baguette, especially topped with a softened sundried tomato. Also great on grilled chicken.

Process to a rough paste in a food processor:

2 cups of fresh basil leaves, 1/3 cup walnuts or pine nuts, 2 peeled cloves of garlic, ½ cup grated parmesan or Romano cheese, ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, and a little more if needed to blend well. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss with freshly cooked pasta.

### Cucumber Raita

4 side servings

This Indian yoghurt salad is cooling, and therefore a great summer lunch or side dish.

Peel and chop two cucumbers. Mix with 2 cups of plain yoghurt, 1 heaping Tbsp. of finely chopped mint or dill, a dash of lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste.

## Summer Squash Sundae

4 side servings

A fun and colorful way to serve some delicious summer vegetables.

Chop 2-3 medium yellow summer squash and boil until tender. Mash with butter or olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Set aside while you chop then lightly steam or sauté a big bunch of chard or beet greens with some chopped onions and garlic if desired. Arrange greens on each plate, and then top with a scoopful of the squash mixture and top with a cherry tomato.

## Fresh SOLsa

We love to use our Sungold cherry tomatoes, but any fresh tomatoes will be great. Try mixing several tomato varieties of different colors.

Finely chop one medium onion, two cloves of garlic, and a small, fresh cayenne or jalapeno pepper (this will be medium spicy, depending on the pepper – so add more or less as desired). Dice 4 medium tomatoes (about 2 pounds) and mix in a bowl with onion mixture and heaping tablespoon of fresh cilantro or parsley.

Add a dash of lemon or lime juice and salt and pepper to taste and stir just until combined. Serve with chips.

## TOMATO and CHEESE on BAGUETTE

Ingredients	Equipment	Instructions
✿ Ripe tomatoes	✿ Knives	1. Cut the tomatoes and cheese into 1/4 inch slices.
✿ Fresh gouda cheese	✿ Cutting boards	2. Chop the basil.
✿ Fresh basil	✿ Mixing bowl	3. Cut the baguette into 1/4 slices.
✿ French baguette	✿ Wisk or fork	4. Layer the cheese and tomato on top of the baguette slices. Arrange the assembled food onto a plate.
✿ Balsamic Vinegar	✿ Spoon	5. Sprinkle the chopped basil over the assembly.
✿ Olive oil	✿ Small bowl	6. Pour the balsamic vinegar and the olive oil into a small bowl. Wisk the two ingredients together.
		7. Using a spoon, drizzle the olive oil and vinegar over the tomato and cheese.
		8. Eat and enjoy!

## FALL AND WINTER

### Carrot Ginger Soup

4 servings

Kids love this vitamin rich, easy to make soup!

Peel and chop one pound of carrots into large pieces. Boil carrots in 2 cups of water until very tender. In a skillet, melt 3 Tbsp. Of butter, and sauté one medium chopped onion, 2 cloves of chopped garlic, 1 Tbsp. Minced fresh ginger, ½ tsp. Salt and ¼ tsp. Pepper on low heat until tender. In a food processor or blender, puree half of the carrots and their water with half of the onion mixture, adding a cup of milk while blending. Repeat with the remaining ingredients and another cup of milk, then combine batches. Heat but do not boil soup to serve. Garnish with scallions or parsley if desired.

### Roasted Roots

4-6 servings

A delicious dish to savour and celebrate the autumn harvest.

Wash, cut and slice or dice:

4-5 potatoes, red or white, 1 sweet potato, 1 large onion or 2 leeks, 2 parsnips.

1 c. cubed butternut squash.

Separate one bulb of garlic into cloves, leaving skins on, and toss with the vegetables, 3-4 Tbsp. of olive oil, 1 Tsp. of dried rosemary and ½ tsp. each of salt and pepper. Bake in a covered casserole dish at 375 for one hour or until vegetables are tender. This can be a meal in itself, or serve with a roasted chicken.







## The 6 Food Sovereignty Principles

**1. Focuses on Food for People:** Food sovereignty stresses the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities, including those who are hungry or living under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalized. Food sovereignty rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity for international agribusiness.

**2. Values Food Providers:** Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programs that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.

**3. Localizes Food Systems:** Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers together in common cause; puts providers and consumers at the center of decision-making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.

**4. Makes Decisions Locally:** Food sovereignty seeks control over and access to territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations for local food providers. These resources ought to be used and shared in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity. Food sovereignty recognizes that local territories often cross geopolitical borders and advances the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories; it promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors to resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities; and rejects the privatization of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes.

**5. Builds Knowledge and Skills:** Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organizations that conserve, develop and manage localized food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations. Food sovereignty rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g. genetic engineering.

**6. Works with Nature:** Food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agroecological production and harvesting methods that maximize the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change. Food sovereignty seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialized production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

Source: Nyéléni 2007 - Forum for Food Sovereignty, February 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Sélingué, Mali, Synthesis Report  
<http://www.nyeleni2007.org/spip.php?article334>

# Evaluation

## Through the Seasons

Evaluation is an important component of our program and organizational improvement. Our program staff conducts ongoing evaluation during programs through reflections with participants and other staff. We also conduct more formal evaluations at transition points during the year. The following sample assessments reflect three seasons of SOL Garden evaluation.

## Spring

After our 12-week SOL Garden curriculum we ask our teens to complete a short survey to get a sense of what they've learned the formal SOL Garden curriculum. Here is a sample evaluation that could easily be adapted to reflect your curriculum objectives.

Please share with us...a little about what you've learned so far in SOL Garden!

- 1) Throughout SOL Garden this spring we have explored lots of different topics. For each of the concepts below, check the box that best describes your current understanding of the topics we've covered.

	No understanding	Pretty good understanding	Strong understanding
Solar Power			
Food Miles			
Food Systems			
Different Farming Practices and their impacts of the health of people, communities and the environment.			
Skills to critically read food labels			
Genetically Modified Organisms			
Fair Trade			
Organic			
An idea of what local food you can buy in this area.			
Ideas of easy recipes/ways to prepare local food.			
Benefits of supporting our local economy			
Stewardship			
Sustainability			

- 2) Pick one of the concepts above and share any new insights you've gained about it as a result of your experiences in SOL Garden.
- 3) During your 10 weeks of SOL Garden do you think you have gained new leadership skills? If yes, please describe some specific ways you've grown as a leader.
- 4) During SOL Garden we've talked a lot about the power of choices. Please share with us any new insights you've gained about either the food or energy choices you have in your life.
- 5) Thanks to all of your stewardship, our garden has flourished right along with you! During all of your hard work in the garden, do you think you've gained some practical skills to grow food? Please circle one. No   Sort of   Yes
- 6) Was there any topic discussed in SOL Garden that sparked an interest, which you later researched more or shared new insights with family or friends? Please explain.
- 7) If there is anything else you'd like to say about your SOL Garden experience so far, please do!

## Summer

With the 'formal' spring curriculum over, our summers offer our participants the perfect opportunity to reflect on how their lives or perspectives are shifting because of their participation in SOL Garden. We start to ask our participants how they have started to integrate their new knowledge and skills into their lives beyond the garden. The following sample summer evaluation uses two forms of evaluation.

As a warm-up evaluation, we write the following questions on chart paper and ask each participants to comment on at least three. This generally elicits short, snapshot comments and offers a solid reflective platform for later discussions.

- Why do you come to SOL Garden every (or most) weeks?
- Do you have (or feel more connected to) a garden at home, a family member's home, or another spot because of SOL Garden?
- Who have you shared Vegetables from SOL Garden with? What do you do with them?
- How do you feel when you are at SOL Garden?
- If you could change one thing to improve your school, home or community related to food and energy, what would you change?
- What positive qualities has SOL Garden helped bring out in you?

Once our participants are warmed up we generally segue into a more formal evaluation model, the focus group. When conducting evaluations in this way it is helpful to tape it with an audio recorder and translate it at a later date. Here are some sample focus groups questions designed to get our youth thinking about the impacts of SOL Garden on their lives beyond the garden.

- 1) Do you think differently about food and energy now than before you started SOL Garden? Have you made any changes in how you eat or use energy since you've been involved in SOL Garden?
- 2) Do you feel SOL Garden has had an impact on knowledge and skills that you bring to school? To the workplace? To conversations with your family or friends?
- 3) What have you learned about life or the world as a result of SOL Garden?

## Winter/Early Spring

*The following focus group was conducted after our SOL Garden youth had transitioned into SOL Garden mentors. As mentors they take on additional leadership responsibilities and engage with their community through various events.*

In addition to our full gardening season and sharing produce with elders, and garden stewardship program, SOL Garden was active in several leadership activities in our community this year-- the Garlic and Arts Festival, co-hosting BLAST, composting and recycling support at Cider Days and Red Apple Farm.

- 1) What are some leadership skills you personally feel you've developed in SOL Garden.
- 2) Can you tell the story of a specific interaction or incident at one of the events where you shared the leadership skills and knowledge you have gained through SOL Garden with others? Where you realized-- wow, I am a leader and an educator to others.
- 3) Through your involvement with SOL Garden and the Fall Leadership activities, one way you feel that you have given back to your community? Describe how your actions have enhanced life in our community. Can you think of any other ways that your skills could be used in the community?
- 4) Have the leadership skills and knowledge you've learned at SOL Garden carried into other parts of your lives-- relationships with friends and family, at school or work? If so, describe a scenario/situation.
- 5) Has SOL Garden impacted how you envision your personal future unfolding?
- 6) What is the most important thing we can tell new people they will gain from participation in the program, that encourages them to join SOL Garden.



# Reproducible Activity Pages

## Mingo Board

Mingle, asking questions of others until you find a match for one of the squares below. When you find a match, write that person's name in the appropriate square. Try to get as many different names as possible. When you have five names in a row, you have MINGO. Shout it out!

Someone who has the same number of siblings as you.	Someone who has worked in a garden or on a farm before.	Someone who has visited a farmers' market.	Someone who can define "food justice" (guessing is fine!)	Someone who knows what a "food mile" is.
Someone who likes to cook.	Someone who can name two sources of renewable energy.	Someone you just met today!	Someone who buys local foods.	Someone who can define "sustainable".
Someone who can name the ingredients in pesto.	Someone who has worked in a group to do something positive.	Someone who likes to eat!	Someone who has the same favorite food as you.	Someone who likes to draw, paint, or dance.
Someone who likes to be outdoors._	Someone who knows what "HFCS" stands for.	Someone who can speak more than one language.	Someone who can name one way to fight hunger.	Someone who likes the same music as you do.
Someone who knows what compost is.	Someone who feels they take good care of themselves.	Someone who likes to get dirty in the garden.	Someone who has eaten a veggie straight from the ground or vine.	Someone who loves the earth!

## **“What do you know?” Cards**

**I’ve seen a solar panel.**

**I’ve visited a local farm  
growing food or raising  
animals for the North  
Quabbin region.**

**I drank clean water today**

**I’ve traveled or lived  
1,500 miles away (or  
close to 3,000 km) from  
Orange/Athol.**

**I’ve heard the term  
“Renewable Energy”**

**I enjoy feeling the  
breeze on a warm sunny  
summer day.**

Right now, 7% of our farms grow 72% of our food. Supporting small, local farms helps to build our local economies.

Small family farms tend to be 2-10 times more productive than large and agribusiness farms. Good news! More than 80% of Massachusetts's farms are family owned and small farms.

The average meal in the US travels over 1,500 miles from farm to fork. Food transported from places like California loses freshness during while trucked for days and days, and requires fossil fuels to transport- that produce emissions that contribute to pollution and global warming. What will we do when the fuel is gone?

Iowa is home to more than 600 wind turbines, creating enough electricity to power 140,000 homes.

The sun is a renewable source of energy. The sunlight that shines on the Earth in just one hour could meet world energy demand for an entire year. One quarter of humanity, approximately 1.6 billion people, live without access to electricity.

Around the world, millions of women spend hours each day carrying water. In the developing world, 1 out of 5 children do not have access to clean water. In Britain and the US, the average person uses 50 liters a day of clean water to flush the toilet.

Renewable energy is also called "clean energy" or "green power" because it harnesses the gifts of the earth: sun, wind, and water to make energy that doesn't pollute the air or the water or our bodies.



**I enjoy putting my hands  
in the dirt!**

**I've shopped at a  
Farmers' Market.**

**I've seen a windmill.**

**I'm working with other  
youth to grow food in my  
community.**

**I've replaced an  
incandescent light  
bulb with a compact  
florescent bulb.**

**I like to eat hamburgers.**

Ninety-one cents of each dollar spent at stores goes to suppliers, processors, middlemen, and marketers; only about 9 cents of each dollar actually goes to the farmer. (Some local or regionally based markets try to support local farmers and give them more, others, like Wal-Mart put many farmers and small businesses out of business). The Orange Farmers Market is Thursdays from 3-6 in Butterfield Park from mid May to mid October. Buying at farm stands and food co-ops is also a great way to get support local farmers.

Across the nation, and the world, there are youth working together to grow food and educate their communities about food, environment, health and justice! On the Rooted in Community website 93 youth organizations that grow food are listed, including SOL Garden!

2,500 gallons of water  
and 1 gallon of oil go into  
producing one pound of  
factory-farmed beef.

It takes about 500 years of erosion of rocks and soil decomposition to build an inch of topsoil.

But, encouraging life in the soil by adding compost, mulch and cardboard encourages worms and microbes—who help make rich soil faster.

The wind in North Dakota  
alone could produce a third of  
America's electricity.

Replacing one incandescent light bulb with an  
energy-saving compact fluorescent bulb means  
1,000 pounds less carbon dioxide is emitted to the  
atmosphere and saves \$67 dollars on energy costs  
over the bulb lifespan.

## A Message to the Future

Write a letter to yourself. What's going on for you right now in your life? Hopes? Dreams? Include a couple of things you would like to tell yourself.

Be sure to put your letter in the envelope, we'll store all the sealed envelopes in a top-secret place and you will receive this letter from yourself in about 6 months.

Write on the back in you've got more to say!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

# Where Can You Find Local Food from Local Farms?

## ***At the Orange Farmers Market:***

Butterfield Park – East River Street in Orange  
Thursdays: 3-6 PM, Mid May through Mid October

North Quabbin Community Coop, Orange Innovation Center (you can order a share of fresh vegetables from local farms each week!)

## ***These Local Farms and Farmstands:***

**Seeds of Solidarity Farm**, Chestnut Hill Road, Orange – vegetables and garlic

**Johnson's Farm**, Wheeler Road, Orange – maple syrup and more

**Chase Hill Farm**, Chase Hill Road, Warwick – milk, farmstead cheese, and beef

**Diemand's Farm**, Mormon Hollow Road, Wendell – eggs, turkey, and chicken

**Chestnut Farms**, Hardwick – poultry and meat

**Many Hand's Organic Farm**, Barre – pork, poultry, and soaps

**Adam's Farm**, Athol – meat

**Kings (Orange) and Coolidge (New Salem) Farmstands** – vegetables

## ***Orchards with Apples, Cider, and Berries include:***

**Red Apple Farm**, Phillipston

**New Salem Preserves**, New Salem

**Hamilton Orchards**, New Salem

## ***At Hannaford's you can find:***

Garelick Milk, which includes milk from **Hunt's Farm**

Milk from local **Our Family Farms**

Cheese from **Smith's Country Cheeses**

Apples and Cider from **Lanni Orchards**

Local season vegetables from area farms

## ***Green Fields Market (Main Street, Greenfield):***

Has fruit, vegetables, honey, cheeses, pickles, fresh baked breads, and more from many local farms and food producers

***Get fresh, tasty, nutritious food***

***Strengthen local economies***

***Support family farms***

***Nurture a healthy environment***

***Get more information about local food and farms at:***

***[www.nofamass.org/programs/ofg/farmlist.php](http://www.nofamass.org/programs/ofg/farmlist.php)***

***[www.buylocalfood.com](http://www.buylocalfood.com)***

***[www.pvga.com](http://www.pvga.com)***

***[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)***

**The Annual North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival:**

***Enjoy over 100 vendors. Local farm products, local art, cooking demonstrations, great food, lots of great music and family entertainment. [www.garlicandarts.org](http://www.garlicandarts.org)***



## ***Conventional Farming***

Our Farmer lives in a small town in Iowa. He grows corn on his family farm, just like his father and his father's father before him. Only his method of farming is much different than his grandfather's method of farming. For one thing, Our Farmer's farm is much bigger than it was in his grandfather's day. His farm has grown to stay competitive. Over the years he has bought his neighbors' land as they have given up on farming. Now Our Farmer owns 1,200 acres and it is all planted with corn. The corn comes from seeds genetically engineered by Monsanto.

At the beginning of every growing season, Our Farmer purchases large quantities of pesticides and herbicides to spray on the corn fields. It is rare to see many birds or butterflies in the fields.

Our Farmer spends a great deal of money buying seed, fertilizers and herbicides. He cannot save seed as it will not reproduce and Monsanto might sue him if he did.

Our Farmer relies on huge machines for every aspect of his farming practices. These machines use large quantities of fossil fuels with them Our Farmer grows more grain than his grandfather could have imagined and with half the time and labor. Huge tractors sweep down the fields tilling the soil into rows and planting the corn seeds at the same time. Massive irrigation systems keep his crops watered. Once the plants begin to grow he makes regular passes over his fields with the large tractor to spray his fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Finally, at the end of the growing season, he will use another vast machine that picks the corn, shucks the ears, and mulches the stalks in one pass. After the corn is harvested it will be purchased by corporations that will sell the corn all over the world for cattle feed and the creation of corn products like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). With 1,200 acres you might think the farmer's family has plenty of corn to eat, but in fact, none of the corn they grow is edible by humans.

## ***Organic Farming***

Our Farmer lives on a 15-acre farm in Pennsylvania with her husband, who helps run the farm. Our Farmer grows a wide variety of vegetables on 5 acres and she also makes maple syrup and cuts firewood from her land for sale. She sells her vegetables through a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) to 150 families, who all live all within a 30-mile radius of her farm. When someone buys a CSA share, they pay Our Farmer for the entire share of vegetables up front. Each week Our Farmer harvests veggies for her CSA customers and packages them into reusable boxes. Our Farmer's CSA runs from May until November. She is certified organic which her customers seem to like, but the government requires a lot of paperwork for this, which take its toll on a small farmer.

Although her acreage is not large, it is more than Our Farmer and her husband can farm alone. Our Farmer hires local residents and college students to help with the harvest. Most work for a wage but some work for a share of the crops too.

Tending the crops is a hard job on a small, organic farm. Our Farmer owns one tractor, which she uses to till the soil into neat rows and to poke holes where the seedlings will be planted. Before the seedlings are transplanted, workers walk up and down the rows spreading compost and organic fertilizer.

Insects and weeds can be a problem. Workers hoe weeds in the rows by hand, which is hard work. Our Farmer uses some pesticides approved by organic farming standards and has also learned to use beneficial insects to control pests.

Sometimes, hard weather may mean that a crop will fail, and that can be hard to explain to customers who are used to getting any food they want, at any time from a supermarket. Most of the time, she likes when the customers pick up their produce, and they will sometimes buy eggs or bread that her neighbor bakes too, helping to support not only the farm, but other local foods and families as well.

## ***Integrated Farming***

Our Farmer owns a small, 3 hectare rice farm in Japan. Our Farmer grows rice the old-fashioned way with a few local laborers and no large machines.

In the early summer, Our Farmer seeds his rice paddies and then releases hundreds of ducklings into the watery paddies. The ducklings don't like the rice seeds and will leave them alone, however they do like the numerous insects and young weeds that would normally cause a problem for Our Farmer. The ducklings eat the pests happily so that Our Farmer does not need pesticides or herbicides. As the ducklings wade around the paddies they release waste, which acts as a fertilizer for the rice plants. The churning of the ducklings' feet also stimulates the roots of the rice plants and encourages them to grow faster and stronger.

As the season progresses, Our Farmer releases a small, fresh water fish into his rice paddies. He covers the paddies with an aquatic fern so that the fish will have some protection from the ducks. The ferns fix nitrogen and provide nutrients for the rice plants. The fish eat the worms that are attracted the aquatic weeds and grow fat. The waste from the fish, like the ducks, provides fertilizer for the plants.

Come fall, Our Farmer moves the ducks into a barn where they are fed grain and allowed to fatten to market weight. The ducks also produce eggs for sale and for Our Farmer to eat. At the end of the season, Our Farmer sells his rice, eggs, ducks, and fish to his neighbors. The rice paddies are covered in wheat and allowed to rest for a season. Next year he will rotate his rice paddies to a new field.

(This story was adapted from *The End of Food* by Paul Roberts, page 273.)

## ***Urban Farming***

Our farmers live together on a block in Toronto, Canada. The neighborhood is diverse, made up of families from Haiti and the Ukraine, young couples and some elderly Jews. A non-profit community organization called "Beautiful Cities" just acquired an abandoned lot. Though the land has some trash, the soil is not contaminated. They put a flyer up in the neighborhood inviting people to join a new garden project. In exchange for having their own 10 x 20 plot to grow food on, neighbors receive training in how to grow food. And, they are also asked to contribute 2 hours per month to the common garden area. The food from this common area is donated to a local pre-school where it is used to provide children with fresh food in their lunches.

Neighborhood gardeners are asked to use organic methods in their gardens. People get to know each other as they garden in their plot, and share ideas. One Ukrainian family gave a Haitian family some seed potatoes. The Haitian family shared a few plants for some spicy herbs that were new to the Ukrainians. An elderly Jewish man shared how his family escaped from the Holocaust carrying only a few possessions, including some bean seeds that he grows in a container on his fire escape each year, and now grows in this urban community garden. A young couple that never gardened before planted their tomatoes too early, and the frost killed them. A Cambodian neighbor gave them one of their extras.

People use different methods: some have beds, others rows, some mulch and others even grow their crops in buckets and an old children's swimming pool. Once a week, the children from the pre-school walk over with their teacher. The children wanted to grow a watermelon, and there is a large one starting to climb up a metal fence that separates the garden from a nearby building. When people walk by, they often stop to look; before they ignored this barren lot.

At harvest season, everyone makes a dish from their garden, and they have a potluck feast. Together this neighborhood is growing food, sharing stories, and making their neighborhood more beautiful.

# Justice and Fairness: Who Benefits?

## One cup of Coffee

Cost \$1.00



What percentage of that dollar do you think goes to paying each of these players?

Growers	Exporters	Shippers	Roasters	Retailers
%	%	%	%	%

# One Chocolate Bar

Cost \$1.00



What percentage of that dollar do you think goes to paying each of these players?

Growers	Taxes	Brand	Supermarket	Overhead and other ingredients
%	%	%	%	%



# Three Bananas

Cost \$1.00



What percentage of that dollar do you think goes to paying each of these players?

Growers	Exporters	Shippers	Retailers
%	%	%	%

# Answer Edition

## Coffee

Growers	Exporters	Shippers	Roasters	Retailers
2%	3%	6%	64%	25%

## Chocolate

Growers	Taxes	Brand	Supermarket	Overhead and other ingredients
2%	10%	31%	25%	32%

## Bananas

Growers	Exporters	Shippers	Retailers
2%	32%	34%	32%

## A Message from the Hopi Elders

You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour.  
Now you must go back and tell the people that this is The Hour.

Here are the things that must be considered:

Where are you living?

What are you doing?

What are your relationships?

Are you in right relation?

Where is your water?

Know your garden.

It is time to speak your Truth.

Create your community.

Be good to each other.

And do not look outside yourself for the leader.

This could be a good time!

There is a river flowing now very fast.

It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.

They will try to hold on to the shore.

They will feel like they are being torn apart, and they will suffer greatly.

Know the river has its destination.

The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off toward the middle of  
the river, keep your eyes open, and our heads above the water.

See who is there with you and celebrate.

At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally, least of all  
ourselves!

For the moment we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over.

Gather yourselves!

Banish the word struggle from your attitude and vocabulary.

All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we have been waiting for.







