

BEYOND THE PLATE WORKBOOK

2022



PREPARED BY MARY BALOG, RDN



PART 4

explore local and
seasonal food





REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Congratulations on completing Part 4 of the "Beyond the Plate" workshop series! In this fourth presentation, we discussed local food, in the geographical sense: Exploring your food environment and neighborhood options; as well as locally *grown* food and seasonal produce. We also introduced some concepts related to Gentle Nutrition and mental health.

This workbook will give you space to reflect and work through some of these topics.

I. We'll begin by exploring local food, in the literal sense! Spend some time evaluating your neighborhood food options. Where can you get food? What types of food can you find at each place? How do you get there? Is it close enough to walk, or do you need a car, or a bus? Do you need assistance with getting food delivered? Are there online grocery options? Getting enough consistent food is the first priority. *Remember that all food is food, and no food has moral value.* There is no "perfect" way to eat, so give yourself grace as you juggle the different pieces of your life. Take care of yourself as best as you can, and reach out for support if you would like additional ideas or guidance.

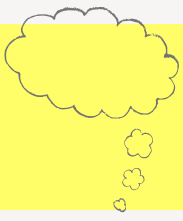


EXPLORE YOUR PLACE

1. What food options are available in your neighborhood? Check all that apply. Are there others you would add to the list?

- Locally-owned Grocery Stores
- Supermarket Chains
- Specialty markets
- Bulk food stores
- Co-ops
- Farmers Markets/Farm Stops
- Bakeries
- Convenience Stores/Liquor Stores
- Pharmacies with limited food section
- Food Pantries
- Farms and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's)
- Community Gardens
- Dollar Store
- Delis or restaurants
- Other _____

2. Of the above list, where do you normally get food from? How do you get there? Or is it delivered?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

3. Do you go to multiple places for different items? What are the pros/cons to some of the places you get food from?

4. Is it difficult to find particular ingredients or foods in your neighborhood?

II. The practical aspects of eating can often be the most challenging: planning your food, getting the food, purchasing the food, storing food, preparing the food, and doing so, while also juggling other responsibilities is not always easy. Spend some time reviewing the following questions to bring attention to the sources of meal time or food stress. Our food circumstances are complex, and have many pieces, but there are resources and professionals who can help. As always, please reach out if you would like individualized advice or guidance.

MEALTIME STRATEGIES



5. After assessing your food options, consider some of the barriers or goals you have related to food and nutrition. Do you feel like you eat enough food? Do you feel like you get enough variety of foods? Do you feel like you have a balance of nutritious and satisfying foods? Why or why not?

6. Do any of the following circumstances prevent you from consistently eating enough food, or getting a variety of food?

- Limited neighborhood options
- Tight food budget
- Busy schedule
- Restrictive diet rules
- Food restrictions for medical reasons
- Unreliable transportation
- Homebound
- Other _____



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

7. Based on your answers from question 6, what kinds of resources or support would be helpful?

- Applying for food assistance
- More affordable food options
- Transportation for grocery shopping
- Online grocery shopping/grocery delivery
- Help unlearning diet rules that cause worry or limit my food choices
- Support in evaluating my food intake & relationship to food
- Services for folks who are homebound
- Information about eating for a medical condition
- Other _____

8. Review the resources on page 10 for organizations and websites that may help with some of the above issues. Are there any resources you'd like to research? Are there any not on the list that might be helpful to also research? List them below. Again, if you would like additional guidance for local food services, tools, and programs, please reach out for help!

9. Food preparation and busy schedules can also be sources of mealtime stress. Consider common convenience food options below: Are there any that would help with time or budget constraints?

- Canned foods
- Frozen foods
- Prepared foods (Frozen, microwaveable, or fresh from a deli or store)
- Chopped ingredients
- Meal kits
- Fast food or takeout food
- Recipe ideas or meal planning
- Other _____

10. Do any selections from question 9 bring up food-related concerns or judgements?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

11. Reflect on the origins of any negative beliefs you hold about "convenience" or "processed" foods. Refer to the following articles, written by Registered Dietitian, Wendy Lopez, co-founder of Food Heaven. Each article helps put the use of "convenience" or "processed foods" into a non-diet context. What are 1-2 takeaways from each of these articles? (Note: The titles are a link to the article!)

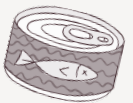
- ["This Dietitian Wants You to Eat More Processed Foods"](#) By Wendy Lopez, MS, RD, CDE, for Food Network
- ["5 Ways to Make Sure You Eat When You're Sick of Cooking and Burned Out By Daily Life"](#) By Wendy Lopez, MS, RD, CDE, for SELF



Finally, remember that "healthy eating" looks different for everyone- there are many ways to consume adequate fruits, veggies, vitamins, minerals, protein, fat, carbohydrates, and satisfying "play" foods- using fresh, homemade, refrigerated/frozen, or shelf-stable foods. Aside from that, "healthy eating" is not just a matter of choosing a healthy balance of foods, but also includes having a healthy relationship to food. When we break out of rigid diet rules, and unlearn "food morality" that often contributes to guilt or shame, we have space to embrace the many purposes of food ("All foods fit!"), and can utilize foods depending on our shifting day-to-day priorities.



For example,



Some days we just need fuel to get us through the day; some mornings, we may opt for a balanced, robust meal to support our bodies through a busy morning;

other times, we may be in a rush, so we grab what's readily available; other times we want to slow down and savor a meal with friends/loved ones;

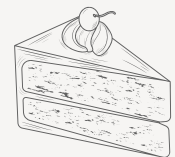


we may sometimes try to prioritize nutrition;

while choosing "fun foods" other times;

sometimes cooking can be relaxing;

other times we are low on energy;



or we might need strategies for food preparation to accommodate different skills and abilities in the kitchen, and so on.

Also keep in mind that any attempt at "optimizing our nutrition" is not really going to help, if we fundamentally aren't eating enough food for our body to function. We also will have a harder time putting energy towards other personal goals, or supporting community or work initiatives that are important to us, if we aren't adequately fed. Choose the foods that help you consistently eat throughout the day, and if you have additional health or wellness goals, find a professional to explore how, or whether, nutrition can support those goals.

Refer to Part 2 of the Workbooks to find organizations or individuals who may be able to help you work through your individual food or nutrition goals.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

III. Considering all of this, we can introduce some concepts related to Gentle Nutrition: Variety, Moderation, and Balance. Some of the following questions are adapted from the Intuitive Eating Workbook by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch.

Variety in our food choices not only provides an array of nutrients, but also an array of textures, flavors, colors, and other sensory characteristics that make food satisfying.

Moderation is dependent on how much food is "enough" for you. You might feel like you're eating moderately if you have a fairly consistent eating pattern (versus erratic eating or binge/restrict behaviors), don't frequently feel extremely hungry or extremely full, and don't feel a sense of deprivation or preoccupation with foods. It can take time to learn how to recognize what "enough" food is for you, but with support and practice you can understand more about how food makes you feel.

Balance might initially make you think you have to eat the "perfect" balance of nutrients at each meal; however, this is not realistic nor necessary. Studies show that individuals who are eating intuitively, end up getting an adequate distribution of nutrients over a week's time. In other words, our food intake may fluctuate day-to-day, but overall it likely averages out when eating in attunement with hunger cues, food preferences, and needs.

GENTLE NUTRITION

12. When you hear the word "variety", what comes to mind? Does it sound like a health care mantra that might be difficult to achieve? Or might the idea of eating a variety of foods make sense to you?

13. If you've had a habit of only eating certain "allowed" foods, or if you have become routine in your eating, how can you increase the variety of your foods?

14. Now think about "moderation". Is it a boring concept? Or perhaps something that describes the way you eat right now?

15. If you feel like you are not eating moderately right now, what do you think you need help with?

16. When you think of "balance", do you have concerns that each meal has to be perfectly balanced? Or do you think of balance in broader terms?

17. Think about a typical week. In that week, do you believe that you get the balance you need? Are there any areas that might need some attention in order to balance out the week?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

IV. For some, "Gentle Nutrition" might look like focusing on variety, asking "What can I add to my meals or snacks this week?", rather than focusing on what to exclude. When it comes to supporting mental health, it might look like taking into account foods that provide beneficial vitamins and minerals- while also considering which of those foods are available to you, and seem appealing to you.

Refer to the tables below that highlight seasonal fruits and vegetables, as well as other foods, and their role in mental health. Consider if there are any foods you might like to add.

Note This is general information. If you have specific dietary needs, medical conditions, or otherwise, please defer to your healthcare team or physician before making changes. It's also important to note that nutrition is a supplemental tool to support your physical and mental health, and should not replace current therapies or medications you are using.



GENTLE NUTRITION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Vitamin	Role in Mental Health	Dietary Source
Vitamin A	Deficiency is associated with mood disorders and anxiety.	Cantaloupe, Peaches, Plums, Raspberries, Watermelon, Arugula, Cabbage, Celery, Chard, Collards, Kale, Cucumber, Lettuce (Romaine), Peppers, Radishes, Zucchini, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Beef Liver, Lamb Liver, Cod-liver Oil, Bluefin Tuna, Mackerel, Salmon, Trout, Blue Cheese, Camembert Cheese, Cheddar Cheese, Feta Cheese, Goat Cheese, Roquefort Cheese, Caviar, Hard-boiled Eggs
Vitamin B1 (Thiamin)	Deficiency is associated with anxiety and mood disorders, as well as sleep disorders and reduced ability to focus.	Plums, Broccoli, Carrots, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Mushrooms, Peppers, Zucchini, Barley, Beef, Black beans, Eggs, Lentils, Nuts, Oatmeal, Pork, Salmon, Sunflower Seeds, Tuna, Whole grains
Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)	May help alleviate emotional periods	Plums, Broccoli, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Mushrooms, Peppers, Zucchini
Vitamin B3 (Niacin)	Deficiency is associated with depression, anxiety, and mental disturbances	Nectarines, Peaches, Plums, Carrots, Corn, Eggplant, Mushrooms, Peppers, Red Potatoes, Zucchini
Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)	Deficiency is associated with mood, anxiety, memory, and sleep disorders.	Watermelon, Bok Choy, Carrots, Cauliflower, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Leeks, Mushrooms, Onions, Peppers, Red Potatoes, Radishes, Zucchini, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Eggs, Fish, Milk, Peanuts, Pork, Chicken, Turkey, Whole-grain cereals, Oatmeal, Wheat Germ
Vitamin B9 (Folate)	Deficiency is associated with Depression, Bipolar, and Schizophrenia. Also associated with mood, memory, and sleep disorders.	Cantaloupe, Nectarines, Peaches, Arugula, Bok Choy, Beets, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Kohlrabi, Lettuce (Romaine), Leeks, Mushrooms, Onions, Peppers, Red Potatoes, Zucchini, Tomatoes, Beans, Whole Grains



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Vitamin	Role in Mental Health	Dietary Source
Vitamin B12	Deficiency is associated with Mood and sleep disorders, OCD, and Schizophrenia.	Mushrooms (Chanterelle and Trumpet), Beef, Clams, Fortified Cereal, Milk, Yogurt, Swiss cheese, Nutritional Yeast, Organ Meats, Salmon, Sardines, Trout, Tuna
Vitamin C	Highly concentrated in the brain, plays an important role in the formation of neurotransmitters. Deficiency associated with Schizophrenia, as well as Mood, Anxiety, Focus, Memory, and Sleep disorders.	Apples, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cantaloupe, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Raspberries, Watermelon, Arugula, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Garlic, Kohlrabi, Lettuce (Romaine), Leeks, Mushrooms, Onions, Peppers, Red Potatoes, Radishes, Zucchini, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Black Currants, Thyme
Vitamin D	Plays a role in the formation of nervous tissue. May also clear away toxic amyloid protein buildup in the brain. Deficiency is associated with Anxiety and Sleep disorders.	Mushrooms (UV Light) , Canned Tuna, Cod-liver Oil, Egg yolks, Herring, Oysters, Salmon, Sardines, Shrimp
Vitamin E	Protects the fatty sheath surrounding the axon of brain cells. Deficiency is associated with Schizophrenia, Anxiety, Memory and Sleep disorders.	Apples, Blackberries, Peaches, Broccoli, Chard, Collards, Kale, Peppers, Radishes, Almonds, Peanuts, Sunflower Seeds, Trout
Vitamin K	Deficiency is associated with Memory disorders.	Blackberries, Blueberries, Peaches, Plums, Arugula, Broccoli, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Collards, Kale, Cucumber, Garlic, Lettuce (Romaine), Leeks, Peppers, Radishes, Zucchini, Tomatoes, Beef Liver, Chicken, Hard Cheeses, Soft Cheeses, Nattō, Pork Chops, Prunes
Choline	Needed to make acetylcholine which plays a role in memory, concentration, focus, and high order thought processes.	Peaches, Cauliflower

Mineral	Role in Mental Health	Dietary Source
Calcium	Acts as a second messenger in the brain; when a chemical signal reaches a neuron in the brain, calcium ions send the signal into the cell by bringing important proteins together.	Blackberries, Cantaloupe, Plums, Raspberries, Arugula, Bok Choy, Beets, Chard, Collards, Kale, Cucumber, Green Beans, Kohlrabi, Onions, Tomatoes
Iron	Necessary for the synthesis of neurotransmitters and carries oxygen to the brain. Deficiency is associated with ADHD and Mood disorders.	Peaches, Raspberries, Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Cucumber, Kohlrabi, Lettuce (Romaine), Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Dark Chocolate, Red Meat, Legumes, Pumpkin Seeds, Shellfish
Magnesium	Improves neuroplasticity, which improves brain health, and it helps protect the brain tissue from brain damage. Deficiency is associated with ADHD, Bipolar disorder, Fatigue, Anxiety, and Mood disorders.	Peaches, Arugula, Beets, Broccoli, Corn, Cucumber, Fish, such as Salmon and Mackerel, Legumes, Nuts, Whole Grains
Zinc	Research has found that zinc may improve thinking power and memory. Works in conjunction with Vitamin B6 to encourage the proper function of neurotransmitters. Deficiency is associated with ADHD, Bipolar disorder, Fatigue, and Mood disorders.	Cantaloupe, Peaches, Plums, Broccoli, Corn, Cucumber, Zucchini, Tomatoes, Beans, Nuts, Poultry, Seafood, Whole Grain
Potassium	Deficiency is associated with ADHD, Anxiety, and Mood disorders.	Blackberries, Cantaloupe, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Raspberries, Watermelon, Arugula, Bok Choy, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Collards, Kale, Corn, Cucumber, Green Beans, Lettuce (Romaine), Peppers, Red Potatoes, Zucchini, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

V. Exploring locally GROWN food is another way to expand your relationship to food! Seasonal foods can also be an interesting way to incorporate more variety. Not only can locally grown food support your physical and mental health, but also your emotional and social wellbeing! Engaging with local growers, or other community members through food, is a way to forge new connections and strengthen your community tapestry. Some examples for how to begin exploring locally grown food and seasonal food are listed below.

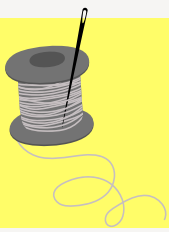
EXPLORE LOCALLY GROWN FOOD



18. What is your experience with locally grown food, gardening, farming, or seasonal foods so far?

19. Of the following suggestions, do any stand out to you? Are there other ideas not listed here that you would be excited about exploring?

- If you have an interest in connecting with local growers, or exploring seasonal foods, get to know which farms or farmer's markets are available in your area.
 - Use a directory for more info! (See page 10 for suggestions)
 - When using the directory, did you find any farms or food artisans nearby? What do they produce? Would you be interested in visiting, or reaching out directly to find out how to support them?
 - Do you have any farmer's markets nearby? What days and times do they operate? Would it be possible for you to visit sometime?
- Use the local food recipe catalogues on page 10 to inspire seasonal recipe ideas.
 - What are 1-2 recipes that you might like to try?
- Consider how your relationship to food relates to your relationship to community and to the land. Explore community garden initiatives, or start learning with your own indoor herb garden; container garden; or backyard garden. Find a local class if you don't know where to start or refer to some of the guides on page 10.
- Start a cooking club in your neighborhood or among friends to practice cooking with seasonal ingredients. It could be a way to share meal prep duties among friends/family, or it could be an opportunity for social connection through regularly planned shared meals.



THREADS TO FOLLOW

VI. Whether you are looking for local food resources and programs to assist with practical aspects of getting food or preparing food, or are curious about seasonal foods and local food growers in your area, these resources may steer you in the right direction. Every city or town has their own local food web, so it may be easier for you to connect with city officials, local grocers, or neighbors to understand more about your immediate local foodways. If there are any gaps, hopefully, together we can fill them in! Please reach out if you have questions or suggestions.

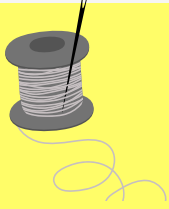
LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

Bookmark these!



- Michigan Bridge Card Website for Food Assistance:
 - <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov>
- Food Bank council of Michigan:
 - <https://www.fbcmich.org/resources/find-a-food-bank/>
- Feeding America West Michigan:
 - <https://www.feedwm.org>
- Food Bank of Eastern Michigan:
 - <https://www.fbem.org/where-to-get-food/find-a-food-pantry/>
- SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>
- Buy food online with SNAP/EBT:
 - <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/food/buy-food-online>
- Eligible Food List for SNAP/EBT:
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>
- Double Up Food Bucks:
 - <https://doubleupfoodbucks.org>
- Michigan Family Fitness Foundation Reduced-Cost Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Directory:
 - <https://michiganfitness.org/food/michigan-farm-to-family-csa-directory>
- Taste the Local Difference Food and Farm Directory:
 - <https://www.localdifference.org/find-food-farms/>
- Fresh Food Connection, a collaboration with MDHHS and Taste the Local Difference:
 - <https://freshfoodconnections.org>
- USDA Local Food Directory:
 - <https://www.usdalocalfoodportal.com>
- Seasonal Recipes & Profiles:
 - Edible Wow: <https://ediblewow.ediblecommunities.com>
 - Taste the Local Difference: <https://www.localdifference.org>
- MSU Extension Community Food Systems Resources:
 - https://www.canr.msu.edu/community_food_systems/
- What's in Season & Market Finder App:
 - <https://mi.whatsinseasonapp.com/>
- MSU Extension Garden Guides:
 - https://www.canr.msu.edu/mi_fresh/michigan_fresh_general_gardening_tips
- Keep Growing Detroit Garden Guides:
 - <https://www.detroitagriculture.net/gardenguides>
- Nature and Nurture Seed Company Growing Tips:
 - <https://natureandnatureseed.com/pages/growing-resources>





THREADS TO FOLLOW

SEASONALITY GUIDE VIA TASTE THE LOCAL DIFFERENCE



Grown in MICHIGAN

⇨ SPRING ⇨
⇨ SUMMER ⇨
⇨ FALL ⇨
⇨ WINTER ⇨

FRUIT
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
JAN
FEB

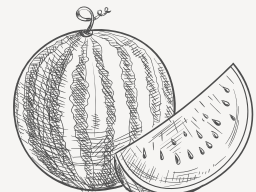
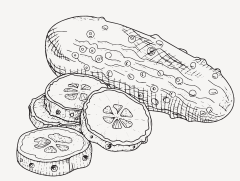
FRUIT	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
APPLES							AUG	SEP	OCT			
APRICOTS					JUL	AUG						
BLACKBERRIES							AUG	SEP				
BLUEBERRIES					JUL	AUG	SEP					
CANTALOUPE							AUG	SEP				
CHERRIES					JUL	AUG						
CRANBERRIES								SEP	OCT	NOV		
GRAPES							SEP	OCT				
NECTARINES							AUG	SEP				
PEACHES				JUN	JUL	AUG						
PEARS							AUG	SEP				
PLUMS							AUG	SEP				
RASPBERRIES					JUL	AUG	SEP					
RHUBARB			MAY									
SASKATOONS					JUL	AUG						
STRAWBERRIES				JUN	JUL							
WATERMELON							AUG	SEP				

VEGGIES

VEGGIES	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
ARUGULA			MAY	JUN			SEP	OCT				
ASIAN GREENS		HOOP HOUSE	MAY	JUN			SEP	OCT	HOOP			
ASPARAGUS			MAY	JUN								
BEETS				JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
BROCCOLI				JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV			
BRUSSEL SPROUTS								OCT	NOV			
CABBAGE					JUL	AUG		OCT	NOV			
CARROTS					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV			
CAULIFLOWER					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV			
CELERY					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC		
CHARD		HOOP HOUSE		JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	HOOP			
COLLARDS		HOOP HOUSE	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT			HOOP HOUSE	
CORN					JUL	AUG	SEP					
CUCUMBERS				HOOP	JUL	AUG	SEP					
EGGPLANT					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
GARLIC					JUL	AUG						
GREEN BEANS					JUL	AUG	SEP					
KALE		HOOP HOUSE		JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT			HOOP HOUSE	
KOHLRABI				JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
LETTUCE		HOOP	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	HOOP			
LEEKs			MAY				AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV		
MUSHROOMS	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
ONIONS					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
PARSNIPS		APR	MAY				SEP	OCT				
PEAS			MAY	JUN			SEP	OCT				
PEPPERS					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
POTATOES							AUG	SEP	OCT			
PUMPKINS								SEP	OCT	NOV		
RADISHES		HOOP	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
RUTABAGA								SEP	OCT	NOV		
SALAD GREENS		HOOP HOUSE	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT			HOOP HOUSE	
SCALLIONS			HOOP HOUSE	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	HOOP			
SPINACH		HOOP HOUSE	MAY	JUN			SEP	OCT			HOOP HOUSE	
SUMMER SQUASH					JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT				
WINTER SQUASH								SEP	OCT			
SWEET POTATOES							AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV		
TOMATOES					HOOP		AUG	SEP	OCT			
TURNIPS			MAY	JUN			SEP	OCT				

PRODUCE IN STORAGE

localdifference.org





until next week!

"Every living person should have the right to a healthy environment, healthy food, and clean water. As a climate changer, my challenge to you is take the time to know where your food comes from, ask questions, visit a farm or a community garden."

-Karen Washington
*Founder of Rise & Root Farm,
Co-founder of Black Urban Growers*

