

THE AGRO-ECO PROJECT

IMPACT REPORT 2021



A note from the team:

2021 was yet another pandemic year in which we had to curtail farm visits and seminars we had hoped to kick off at our farm. All of our efforts were therefore pushed towards food production for the food pantries that we serve and optimizing our delivery logistics. Despite a very warm and dry start to the season, finished by a very wet August and September, our Farm Manager extraordinaire Katie Greger managed to top last year's production with more volume and better quality crops. Our kales, collards and chards did great throughout the season and we had standout production of tomatillos and cherry tomatoes. We improved our root crop yield with good output from potatoes and garlic in particular. Our pear trees really came into production this year adding hundreds of pounds of fruit to our late summer donation push.

2021 saw significant investment in our perennial crops as well. We expanded our rasp- berry production, installed a kiwi berry trellis and planted a variety of crop yielding trees such as persimmons, peaches, paw paws, hazelnuts and chestnuts. These species were planted with the purpose of perennializing our food donations in the years to come, thereby lessening our reliance on our annual mainstays which inevitably stress our soils.

Once again, we participated in the Bionutrient Food Association's global analysis of nutrient dense foods. As a Grower Partner, we submitted produce samples to the Bionutrient Institute where they were analyzed for specific nutrients with state of the art spectrometry. The results will help in the development of the Bionutrient Meter, a portable spectrometer capable of detecting real time nutritional profiles of fruits and vegetables.

Finally, we produced two educational videos this year, the theme of which was Grow- ing and Cooking with Perennials. In the first video, we visit our neighbors at Big River Chestnuts, where permaculturist Jono Neiger walks us through his incredible agroforestry system anchored around chestnut trees. In the second video, our president Giulio Caperchi demonstrates how to make pasta using chestnut flour and incorporating other perennial ingredients into delicious meals. Please take a look at the following initiatives below for a better idea of our 2021 activities.

-Giulio, Katie & Kate

OUR FOOD DONATIONS



WHO DID WE DONATE TO?

RUTLAND FOOD PANTRY



CHARLTON FOOD PANTRY



ST. JOHN'S FOOD FOR THE POOR PROGRAM IN WORCESTER MA



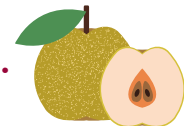
PRODUCE DONATED FROM FIELD



79.5 lbs.



132 lbs.



1903.75 lbs.



LOCAL CHEF INITIATIVE



TEAMED UP WITH OUR LOCAL CHEF TO MAKE MEALS FOR ST. JOHN'S.

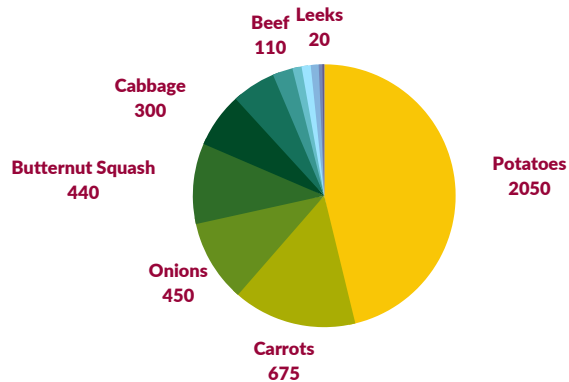


600 MEALS DONATED



GREATER TABLE INITIATIVE

PURCHASING LOCAL FOOD FOR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES



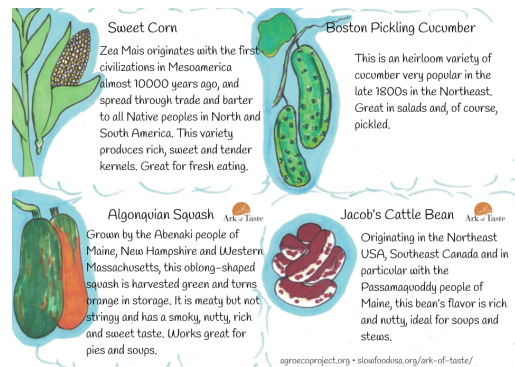
EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SEED PACKET

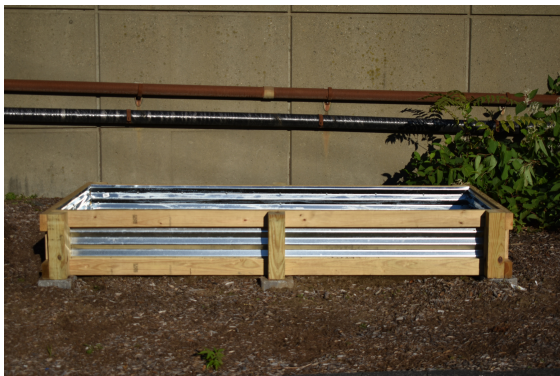
Because of the ongoing pandemic and the impossibility of hosting events on site, we decided to come up with an at-home educational activity this year. This consisted in a seed packet centered around the theme of Food Sovereignty. Our seed packets contained varieties of seeds present in Slow Food's Ark of Taste catalog such as Jacob's Cattle beans, Algonquian Squash and the Boston Pickling Cucumber. The packets, beautifully illustrated in-house by Katie Greger, contained a definition of food sovereignty and a description of the heirloom seed varieties we had chosen. We produced around 50 seed packets and distributed them through the food pantries that we serve.



Slow Food USA



RAISED BEDS FOR WORCESTER'S NATIVITY SCHOOL



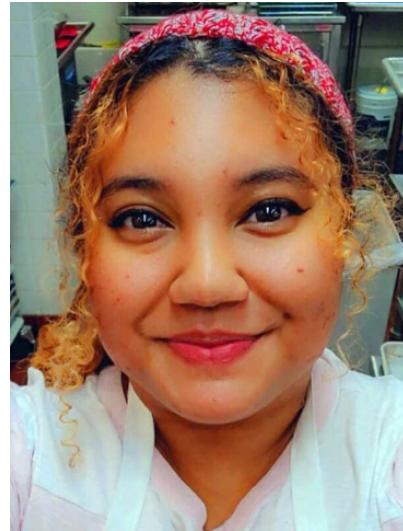
We have worked closely in the past with the Nativity School, a Jesuit middle school that provides a quality, all-scholarship education to underserved boys of all faiths. Last year we provided them with pollinator seed kits and microgreen kits to grow at home while the students were in lockdown. This year our outreach coordinator Kate Gervais personally built two beautiful raised beds for the students and provided them with seeds and plants.



THE **AGRO-ECO** PROJECT

LOCAL CHEF PROGRAM

This year we teamed up with Worcester-based chef Mayari Velasquez of Mayari's Voyage. We hire Mayari to craft dozens of prepared meals a month for Saint John's Food for the Poor program in Worcester. Mayari prepares healthy meals using local ingredients (as well as produce from our farm when in season) and delivers them biweekly to Saint John's. The initiative's aim is to support local chefs who cook primarily with locally sourced ingredients, with the goal of alleviating hunger in our local community.



Mayari Velasquez

BIGGER TABLE INITIATIVE

Our Bigger Table Initiative, spearheaded by our Outreach Coordinator Kate Gervais, is a program that kicks in during the months our farm does not produce any vegetables, running roughly between mid- November and June. The aim of this initiative is to purchase locally produced food through the Worcester Food Hub and redistribute it to the three local food pantries we serve. In this way, the food dollars we spend on donations stay within our Central Massachusetts community benefiting other local farms, significantly cutting down on food miles all the while providing fresh local food (including meat) to local food pantries.

