

# Investigating the Impact of the Mazaanag on Soil Health



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**Presenter: Erika Resendiz Alonso**

Originally from Mexico, where she learned to grow food on her grandparent's Milpa, Erika Resendiz Alonso moved to Minnesota in 2008, and has continued to carry and develop generations of knowledge of working the land as a leader in sustainable agriculture in urban and rural communities across the state. Through her work as an Ag Community Outreach Coordinator through Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Erika engages local community members to advocate for organic agriculture, healthy eating, food justice, and mindful relationships with land and food systems. Always keen to share her skills and information, she spearheaded the Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program, which she has coordinated since 2019.

# Bimaaji'idiwin Ojibwe Garden Program

Translated from Ojibwe, Bimaaji'idiwin can be understood as "saving each other's lives," "giving life to one another," or "symbiosis," reflecting the reciprocal relationship between Anishinaabe and cultivated plants. The Ojibwe Garden Program attempts to do so through education, outreach, and preservation that promotes a balanced relationship with the earth and the things which we are provided.



- Demonstration and community garden
- Native food and medicines
- Healthy foods and other foods
- Different ways of growing vegetables

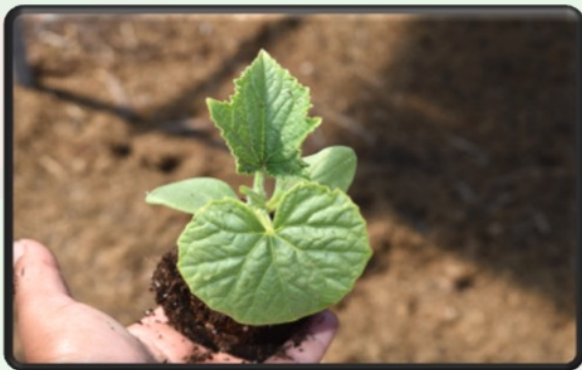


- Harvest for donation for community and other programs
- Saving seeds and sharing in the community
- Collaborating with other programs
- Volunteers and interns
- Garden foods demonstrations



# Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program

This program supports all people who desire to grow their own food or vegetable farming businesses by providing access to education, land, infrastructure, markets, resources, farmer connections and to help reach their goals. It provides outreach through Bimaaji'idiwin Demonstration Gardens and builds relationships across generations and communities through collaboration with local youth and adult programs and connecting producers with agricultural experts.





- From February through October, participants attend classes on the topics of soil, seed saving, seed starting, pollinators, production, management, marketing and operating a farm business.
- Community outreach
- Multi-generational programming
- Hands on growing assistance at a dedicated plot
- Seeds, tools, supplies, workshops, webinars, trainings, farm tours, ag conference





- Farm mentorship
- Gitigaaning, garden plot, Na'enomogamig, irrigation, buildings, utilities
- Adapted from Big River Farms model
- Home gardening
- Evaluation in October









# Started utilizing Mazaanag in the garden as a mulch

- 2017: small amount in a 20x30 plot and a raised bed at the garden
- 2018: same places and more raised beds at the garden
- 2019: a few more growing spaces in the garden and mulch for garlic
- 2020: gardeners begin at the farm utilizing
- 2021: more gardeners at the farm utilizing, home and gardens
- 2022: continue utilizing
- 2023: research year one will begin



2022 awarded Grant from the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research, NCR-SARE's Research and Education Program



# **Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program Grants**

- Our programs would not have been possible without funding from the following grants:
- **2501 USDA Grant**
  - Started the 2018 pilot year
- **Special Emphasis USDA NIFA**
  - 2020
  - Once the 2501 cycle completed, the Special Emphasis grant allowed us to continue the PTP
- **Tribal extension 13 Moons USDA NIFA**
  - Collaboration between 13 Moons cultural programming and agricultural support for the PTP
- **Native American Agricultural Fund (NAAF)**
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS The Racial Justice and Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements)**

# Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program

What is included in this program?



- Education

- Classes, assistance creating a business plan, record and reports, introduction to organic farming, marketing

- Peer to Peer Mentoring

- Farm tours, in-field help, community work

- Land Access

- Infrastructure

- Farm operations, buildings, utilities

- Marketing Opportunities

- Farmers Market, Individual Market



# Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program

## Program Highlights

- 1 Sustainable Agriculture Conference
- 5-8 winter-spring classroom trainings
- 5 in-field trainings, including field trips to other farms and short skill sessions
- Plot to practice growing vegetables.
- Tractor tillage and water access (with some irrigation supplies)
- Training in organic transition
- Access to additional resources and other infrastructure
- One-on-one meetings and in-field consultation with farmer mentor and staff



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## We want to know the impacts of using mazaanag mulch on:

- Soil temperature
- Soil moisture
- Soil nutrients
  - ✓ Impact on soil in long term





Spirit Lake Native Farms has been donating us mazaanag for agriculture use.





- **Who?**
- Bimaaji'idiwin Producer Training Program participants
- FDLTCC students
- FDLTCC Youth Program participants

- **Where?**
- At the FDLTCC garden
- Bimaaji'idiwin Ojibwe Garden
- Gitigaaning (gardens) Farm



# Miigwech



Questions?

Gracias



Erika Resendiz Alonso  
Agricultural Community Outreach Coordinator  
[erika.resendizalonso@fdltcc.edu](mailto:erika.resendizalonso@fdltcc.edu)  
(218) 878 – 7141

Facebook: Look for us at Environmental Institute at Fond  
du Lac Tribal and Community College and [13 Moons Ashiniswi  
giizisoog | Facebook](#)

