



Youth Are Our Greatest Resource

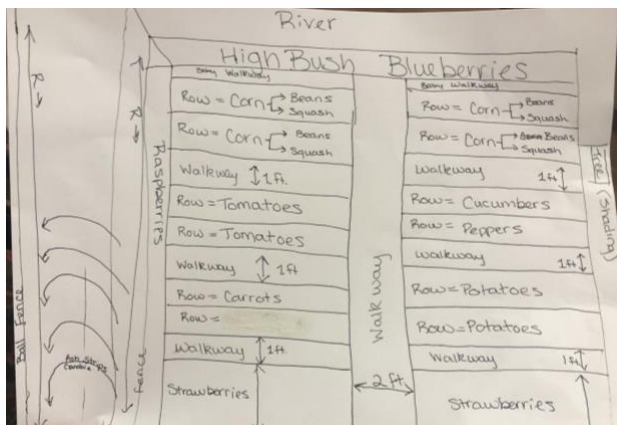
IAC Eastern Region

Five years ago it was common to hear elders lament the involvement of youth in agriculture. Those grumbles have turned into applause for the hundreds of youth who have taken advantage of IAC's youth programming in partnership with NRCS, dozens of Tribes, and local organizations.

Starting as a Youth Participant, Maria Sockabasin, now 19 attended her first IAC Youth Summit three years ago. In that short time she has developed into a leader for her community, landing an internship at Penobscot Community Garden in Maine. She continues to dedicate herself to teaching her peers and the next generation by actively participating in the planning of the 2019 Eastern Native Youth Food Sovereignty Summit, to be held August 1-3, 2019. No longer just a participant, Maria has grown into a leader and contributor of youth programming at IAC.



Maria Sockabasin, 19, proudly showing her garden plan



Maria's garden plan

Maria, like many youth in our programs, has absorbed so much knowledge in her time at IAC's events and in her higher education pursuits. During an IAC site visit this June, Maria provided a tour of the gardens she has been preparing by hand. She was proud to show us the garden plan she drew up, saying "Look! I used what I learned at the Summit last year to plan the garden." Maria then asked about varieties of corn, beans, and squash that can be grown together. IAC staff was happy to provide that nugget of knowledge along with a healthy dose of encouragement to keep up the great work.