



***Culturally
Relevant
Crops for our
Communities (CRCC):***



A SNAPSHOT OF GREATER VICTORIA

REPORT SUMMARY

DEC 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Culturally Relevant Crops for our Communities (CRCC) project has been several years in the making. Throughout our work since our inception in 2020, we have hosted community conversations, many food literacy educational workshops, have conducted two thorough community-based research projects, and most importantly, have built relationships across boundaries of race, age, ability, faith/religious affiliations, sexual orientation & gender identities. Through these conversations and events, we have come to understand that many communities face multiple intersecting barriers to accessing local, nutrient-dense food and culturally significant foods, and that this has important implications for understanding overall health and wellbeing.



RESULTS

Through the results of our community research studies (["Food Insecurity Preliminary Study: The Experiences of Black Individuals in Greater Victoria"](#) in 2020, and ["Culturally Relevant Crops Survey"](#) in 2023), and through engagement sessions with program participants over the years, we have come to understand that the factors that affect people's abilities to access culturally relevant foods are multi-faceted and complex. By far the largest barrier for survey respondents was cost - 81.2% indicated that the price of their traditional foods prevented them from accessing it (see following pages).

The IBPOC (Indigenous, Black & people of colour) representation highlights the importance of addressing the structural issues around food accessibility and its intersection with culturally relevant foods. Approximately 1/5 of respondents indicated that they neither know their ancestral foods nor how to prepare these foods. This finding points to a loss of ancestral knowledge related to traditional and culturally significant foods, which is tied to lack of food literacy and structural barriers.



WHAT WE HEARD...

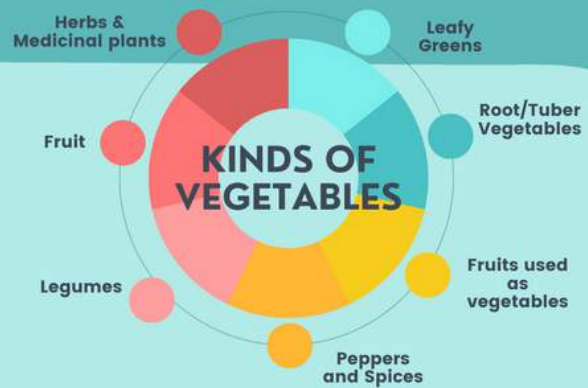
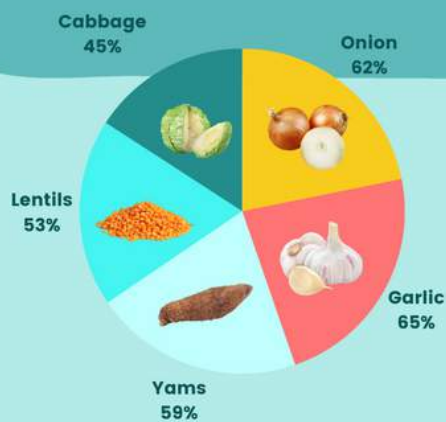


Identify as IBPOC



4 out of 10 respondents were students

Responses to which foods respondents cook with regularly and would like to see in our CSA Boxes:



Top answers for where respondents purchase their food:



Top barriers reported for accessing fresh, locally grown, culturally relevant foods:

- Too expensive
- Not available
- Not knowing what their ancestral/cultural foods would be
- Not knowing how to prepare culturally significant meals



WHAT WE HEARD

CULTURALLY RELEVANT CROPS REPRESENTATION

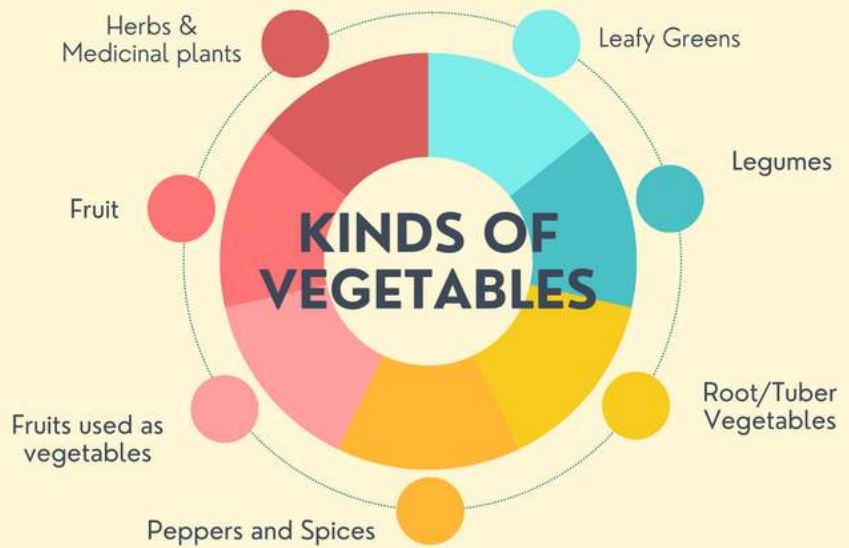


Data collected by: Iyé Creative
Illustrated by: Razan Mereeb

vancouver foundation



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Leafy Greens



Legumes



Root/Tuber Vegetables



Peppers and Spices



Fruits used as vegetables



Fruit



Herbs and Medicinal Plants



Graphic representation of the culturally relevant foods that were most commonly referenced in the survey.

FOOD-RELATED MEMORIES

These are a small selection of food-related stories that were shared as part of the 2023 Culturally Relevant Crops survey. By examining the intersection of identity, storytelling, and placemaking through culturally relevant food narratives, we shed light on the profound ways in which food connects people to their land, their culture, and their sense of self, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of food in our lives and societies.

- I remember learning to cut veggies for soup with my mum and feeling so proud and excited to see the beautiful meal come together!
- I remember hopping over stones in my Vavó's garden, and pick the strawberries as they became ripe (even though I was told to wait until there was more!)
- Quince on homemade yogurt makes me think of my parents.
- Picking wild saskatoon berries in my grandmas yard as a kid and then getting to eat the fresh pie later
- Watching my grandmother make cocoo from cornmeal and okra and flying fish with tomato and onion gravy... sooo tasty
- I have shared home made Indian food with my friends from various countries and they loved it! I love cooking for friends.
- My grandma grows lemongrass in her small garden in Mexico. When I would visit her, we would cut lemongrass every morning and make tea and drink it together. One of my favourite memories with my grandma and her lemongrass was when a heavy storm hit in the afternoon in Mexico, and we closed all the windows, made fresh cacao and lemongrass tea and just listened to the storm together on her couch while she told me about growing up on the ranch/ "el rancho".
- I remember eating perogies, saurkraut and sausages with home made pickles from a huge ceramic barrel at my Oma and Opa's house as a child
- My grandma making sweet potato candy by the wood fire and burying them too under the ambers to roast them.
- There's so many, for me it's partaking in sobre mesa after dinner, i.e., talking about politics and family drama.
- I make the world's best pea soup, because my father is French Canadian. The first time I brought it to work, my coworker beside me smelled it and said it smelled amazing, so every time I brought pea soup to work, I brought some for my coworker too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are grounded in both the results of our research and the lived experiences of community members. Our aim is to ensure equitable participation in our local food economy and to outline steps for cultural reclamation through food. By integrating these two key elements, we hope to foster a more inclusive and culturally diverse local ecology.

1

Continue the local cultivation of culturally relevant crops,

such as collard greens and shiso, and explore opportunities to expand this initiative. This not only promotes diversity in local agriculture but also sustains cultural food traditions,

2

Foster intergenerational relationship-building

for skill sharing and knowledge transfer specifically relating to transference of cultural heritage,

3

Encourage Local Municipalities to Advocate for Culturally Relevant Foods

and increase land access for food growing purposes for culturally diverse community groups, recognizing that access to culturally relevant foods is a determinant of health for individuals and the community at large,

4

We recommend facilitating the acquisition of Community-Owned Assets and Culturally Diverse Kitchens,

including cooperatives and social enterprises that can own culturally diverse community kitchens and specific cooking utensils for diverse cooking methods. These spaces will serve as hubs for sharing, preserving, and celebrating various culinary traditions, while also promoting local circular economy,

5

Conduct further research

to explore and document the process of creating a sense of place and belonging through food experiences. This research can provide a deeper understanding of how individuals from diverse cultures connect with their cultural roots and personal histories through food while living in diasporic communities. The findings can inform policies and initiatives that foster cultural preservation and community well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Report co-written in October 2023 by Ariel Reyes Antuan and Anna Maria Stone of Iyé Creative.

Graphics and design by Jess Barton and Razan Mereeb of Iyé Creative.

To continue the conversation, reach out to us at any time at creativecollective@iyeherstories.com to share your comments, reflections, and thoughts from the heart!



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