**What was the most interesting idea you learned on the Bellevue farm gardens field trip, and why was it so interesting to you?**

1. After thinking about it, the thing that I found most interesting today was the 3 sisters. Firstly, I never knew that the 3 sisters even existed in the plant world. The way we use 3 different plant species together to help one another grow and thrive is so fascinating. I find this whole concept interesting because it makes me wonder what other species this is used on currently and what species has the potential for it to be used on. And this goes for plants or animals. Are there possibilities for animal species to have this relationship so they promote one another to thrive in a habitat together.
2. The most interesting thing I learned was that they had an excess of nitrogen in the plots of their three sisters' gardens. I thought this was interesting because they had mentioned that the garden was recently ‘revived’ and so it is impressive that the soil is already that nutritious. It goes to show how important crop rotation is!
3. The most interesting thing I learned on the field trip was the medicine wheel that originated from Indigenous teachings. It is made up of sweetgrass, tobacco, sage and cedar. I find this fascinating because of the medicinal properties of plants, and their role in indigenous culture, whereas western cultures tend to have a much more modern focus when it comes to medicine.  I think it's very valuable to have this connection to plants.
4. The most interesting idea I came across on the trip to Bellevue was the overarching theme of interconnectedness. The most obvious example of this was learning about how the garden is managed, and how important it is to ensure the plants can work together (and us with them) to ensure things can grow. However, I also found the amount of different people with unique knowledge required to run the historical site striking. The whole site, from the grounds to the exhibits, has to run like an ecosystem of a sort, all connected and somewhat dependent on each other to keep running.
5. The most interesting idea I learned about during the field trip was the companion growing of the three/four sisters. The concept is not completely new to me as I've learned about them before, but by being there in person, I could see how the corn supported the structure and the squash covered the soil. This was interesting to me because it made me contrast this sustainable way of gardening to the destructive practice of monoculture in intensive farming.  Also, learning about the "fourth sister" that attracts pollinators further illustrated the sustainable aspect of the garden.
6. In my opinion, the most interesting idea I learned on the trip today was during the game/exercise on resources involving water, food, and shelter. This was interesting to me because it highlighted how quickly energy and resources can be depleted in a population between generations, greatly impacting a given population. It was such a simple and fun game, but I found it very thought provoking.
7. The most Interesting idea from today's field trip in my opinion was crop rotation. I have never investigated crop farming before, on my own or within course work (extensively) and I found it to be such an interesting practice. I am surprised I had never heard about it before (or I had it didn't stick with me). This visit prompted me to do some research on crop rotation and I am quite interested in the sustainability of the practice, in terms of natural pest control and disease prevention in addition to he discussed soil health. In addition, it was lovely to get outside, experience the historical sight, and hear the birds that are usually drowned out on campus.
8. I thought the most interesting aspect of yesterday's field trip was learning about the importance of location when it came to the placing of the plants on the Bellevue property back when the garden was feeding 4 members of the household. Not only were the three sisters (corn, squash, beans) put together, but the medicine wheel was also meant to be placed near the kitchen and the hollyhocks near the bathrooms! I thought the four quadrants of the garden and the sectioning of perennials vs. pollinators vs. compost, etc was all very strategic and went to show the importance of location in terms of efficiency and health of the plants!
9. That whilst there are many reasons as to why a person might not be the most moral, it is still important to discuss what their impacts were on influencing spaces and people around them. A second thing that I had learned was that taking care of the medium your plants are growing in is just as important, if not more important than growing your plants. As without good soil, there is no chance of successfully growing and harvesting any crops. The final thing that I learnt is that a sense of community is extremely important and reconnecting with your inner child and nature should be something every person experiences.
10. The most intriguing lesson I learned from Bellevue House is the importance of plant rotation. While it may seem obvious that each plant requires specific nutrients in varying quantities, the revelation that planting crops repeatedly in the same location leads to a gradual depletion of nutrients was a concept I had never considered before. This underscores the critical role of maintaining soil health for sustainable agriculture. In essence, it highlights the need for thoughtful agricultural practices to ensure long-term productivity and environmental stewardship.
11. What I found most interesting about the tour of the gardens was how they had implemented a three-sisters plot with the rest of the typically European style vegetable garden. The idea that First Nations people would readily teach and help implement their traditional agricultural methods to help settler colonialists better adapt to the Canadian environment makes me think quite deeply about what the societal dynamics between colonialists and local people. I find it interesting because it shows that at least some members of colonialist society were open to the idea of adopting local cultural practices, at least when it comes to agriculture.
12. Yesterday at the Bellevue house farm garden I found their technique to produce new fertile soil through decomposition interesting. I was particularly intrigued by how they showed that physical labor was required to move the substrate and flip it around with pitchforks. This made me wonder how these processes may occur in natural environments without humans available to aid in the breakdown of organics. Since then I have wondered are there differences in the final products across the different processes.
13. During the field trip to the Bellevue House, I have not only learned the history of Sir John. A McDonald and the history he had with this place, but also the kitchen farm they have created back in the days and how the people who work there today have applied different ways to grow these plants. As someone who did not grow up with a garden or in Canada, I have learned lots in both the history of Canada and the planting methods today. One of the new concepts that is so famous, which I have only heard of before, is the companion planting with the three sisters plants. They are beans, corn and squash, and by planting them side by side with each other, they help each other to grow better. Cornstalk provides trellis so that bean plants can climb, bean roots are able to fix the nitrogen in the soil, so that other plants can use it as nutrients of their own. Squash have wide leaves that can provide shade to the soil in order to prevent water loss, they can also keep the weed away from growing in the area. I was really interested in this because I am first amazed by the intelligence of the indigenous people to become so efficient in planting; next, it brings me to think that nature has a way to solve the problems, and I wonder if I can further apply this concept of companionship to other things, such as other plants, fungus, animals, or think of them as a whole.
14. The most interesting idea I learned was that the kitchen garden viewed was able to support a family of 4 for one year. This was interesting as it showed how responsible planting of seasonal crops can be very sustaining even in limited space.
15. The most interesting concept from yesterday’s field trip was easily the three sister growing method. Specifically companion planting has always peaked my interest because of the multiple species interactions. Additionally, after taking multiple Indigenous Studies courses, I enjoy seeing these concepts applied in real life contexts. Appreciating indigenous knowledge, while teaching it to those who may not be introduced to these concepts beforehand.
16. The most interesting thing I learned yesterday in the farm garden was that planting without using crop rotations can deplete the soil in such a short period of time. This was interesting to me because it raised questions as to how historic farmers gaged how often crop rotation was necessary since they had no complex tools to analyse which nutrients in the soil are lacking. It made me wonder if our longest harvested lands would be significantly more fertile if crop rotations had been common practice worldwide even a couple hundred years ago.
17. The most interesting idea I learned was the importance of rotating plants when gardening in the same area over multiple years. I knew from personal experience that it was good to change up what you were planting but I had never stopped to think about why. Now that our guides explained to us the importance and what had happened to their garden, I can better plan what I’m planting the next year in order to help the soil as much as possible.
18. The most interesting thing I learned on the trip was the way the three sisters was planted, with the beans surrounded and supported by the corn and the squash acting as ground cover at the base. I think this planting arrangement is very interesting because it displays that there are valuable interactions between organisms that we miss with western monocultures. It shows the benefit of diversity for humans, and for the plants themselves as each species plays a different role in the arrangement to benefit the other. It is a testament to the necessity of conserving all parts of an ecosystem.