



## 6 BLUEBIRD TRAIL

*Bluebirds are an important part of our ecosystem.*

PK–5TH GRADE

*Learn how we can attract bluebirds to our farm and encourage them to continue living here.*

### 1. GET STARTED

Why do you think bluebirds, and other bird species, are an important part of our garden and farm ecosystem?

Birds help our farm in many ways. They are insectivores, meaning that they eat insects that can damage growing produce. Birds also eat weed seeds, which help prevent weeds from taking over. Those jobs are particularly important on an organic farm where we don't use chemicals to protect our plants. Finally, just like bees, birds are pollinators and help all of our fruits and vegetables grow.

### 2. DIVE IN

As we walk the trail, we will stop to see if there are any bluebirds in our boxes. These boxes were placed here to provide a safe place for these beautiful birds to build their nests. Although they were once very common, the bluebird population has recently declined due to loss of habitat, pesticide use, removal of dead trees and the introduction of other birds who compete to build their nests in the same tree cavities.

**Note:** At the first box, there is a mirror, step stool and screwdriver to help you open the boxes. Since the boxes are placed high, it is sometimes easier for an adult to take a picture of what is inside the box.

How to Monitor:

- ▶ Approach each box quietly.
- ▶ Tap on the side of the box. Stand to the side in case an adult flies out.
- ▶ Open the box. A female bird may stay sitting on the nest when you open the box. If she does not leave, do not disturb her.
- ▶ As you look into the box
  - Observe the the shape of the nest and the material it is made of
  - Count the number of eggs—what color are they?
  - Do you see any nestlings or fledglings?
- ▶ Close the nest box, tighten the screw, and make sure the box is securely closed.
- ▶ Record your data in the chart in the resource book.

### LEARN MORE

Watch the FoodPrints TV video on [The Garden Ecosystem](#) to learn more about the important roles each species plays in our environment.

Encourage feathered friends to your own backyard with this [DIY Recycled Bird Feeder](#).

### WHY DO WE HAVE A BLUEBIRD TRAIL AT THE JK COMMUNITY FARM?

The bluebird nests built along the trail are designed to provide the bluebirds a safe place to build their nest. Once a very common bird, the bluebird population experienced a severe decline in the mid-20th century. Thanks to a network of bluebird trails around the region their population has rebounded and stabilized. They are monitored regularly to ensure that they are thriving in the nest.

# FIELD TRIP MAP

parking lot



1 HUMAN SUNDIAL

picnic tables



2 GREENHOUSES



3 RAISED BEDS



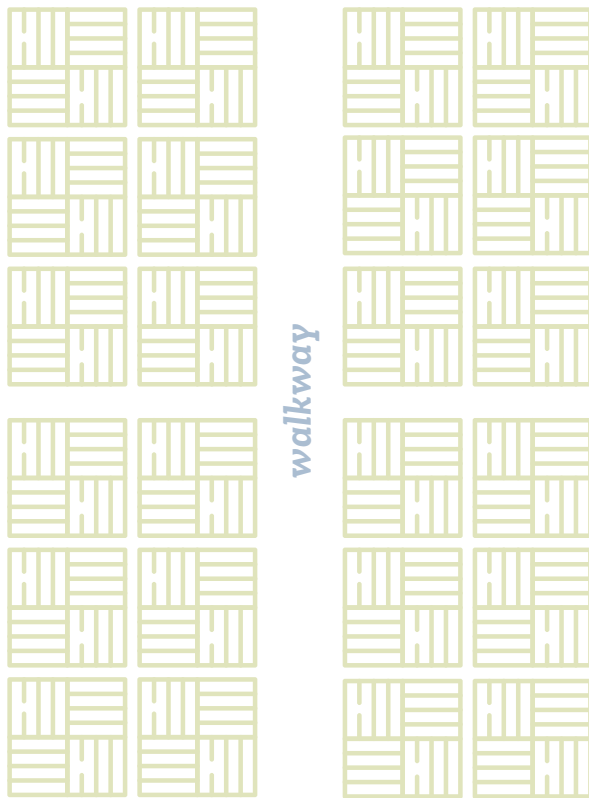
4 "APIARY" BEE HIVES



5 THREE TIER COMPOST SYSTEM



6 BLUEBIRD TRAIL STARTING POINT



7 BEE HOTEL



10 EDIBLE FLOWERS



9 SENSORY FOOTPATH



8 POLLINATOR HABITAT