

# Community Sacred Tobacco Gardens

## Summary

Wabanaki Nations have a unique relationship with tobacco. The first thing that comes to mind for many Indigenous peoples' when they hear the word "tobacco" isn't the modern-day commercialized tobacco, but rather, traditional tobacco—a medicine with purpose.

## Need

Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness's Wətamáweyi Program centers its prevention strategies around engaging communities in Wabanaki culture and traditions. *SAMHSA Native Connections* states, "protective factors reduce the risk of youth engaging in substance misuse". Protective factors such as "cultural connectedness" are one of many used in our Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program, which is why we felt there was a need to bring Sacred Medicinal Gardens to each of our communities.



Pictured on the right: ceremonial



"The more medicines we grow, the more we can share and harvest."

-Tami Connolly, Penobscot Nation

## Success

Sacred Tobacco Gardens are now established in each Wabanaki community. This is a huge step forward in reinforcing "tobacco is sacred" messaging to our communities. We can use these garden spaces to actively educate our youth and community members.

Pictured on the right: Sacred Tobacco Garden Bed



## Program Description

Creating a Sacred Tobacco Garden space was a goal of ours stepping in to the new year. Each of the 5 Wabanaki Communities received a garden bed, soil, and tobacco plants to begin the process of self-sustaining their medicine supply for community gatherings, ceremonies, etc. With caretakers in each community, tending to the plants, we hope to bring a sense of pride into our communities. We are renewing our traditions of growing our own medicines.

## Sustainability

On top of providing all five Wabanaki Communities with the tools to sustain their own medicine, these Sacred Tobacco Gardens allow us to continue our connections with each community. We are also able to create new connections through education—sharing the process of where traditional tobacco comes from, and the importance of *keeping tobacco sacred*. We also hope this gets tribal workspaces interested in developing or updating their tobacco policies.

## For More Information Contact Us At:

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Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness  
Cultivating the health of our communities



MAINE PREVENTION SERVICES

Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services