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**01** USC Canada's urban farm in Montreal, populated with ancient, exotic, and native plants.

**02** Hamidou Abdoulaye Maïga picking fresh peanuts.

**03** Freshly picked African eggplant.



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could grow organic herbs, ornamental plants, and exotic ancient, and native vegetables in Montreal. At first, without a greenhouse or extensive tracts of land, his plants took over the basement of the housing co-op where he lived with his family. Now, a few years later, Hamidou Horticulture products can be found all over the island—most predominantly in the Grand Potager greenhouse in Verdun and the USC Canada cropland in Senneville.

Maïga's passion for agriculture was sown a long time ago. Parallel to his career as an accountant, Maïga worked on his family's farm in Niger, where he was in charge of delivering fruits and vegetables. "We were making organic baskets without even knowing such a thing existed." While he nurtured the dream of living on his native land, the lack of access to training and resources was a harsh reality he couldn't ignore. So he ended up

in Quebec, determined to create a network. In his opinion, a partnership is the key to accessibility, which remains one of the biggest challenges in urban areas. "At first, I carried my burden alone. I mentioned what I was doing to people I met here and

there, and they would say: 'Yes, we'll help you.' And they showed up." Then, so did success, which wasn't too far behind for Maïga and his modest team of volunteers.

The growing interest in urban agriculture may have something to ➤

**It was important to me that my girls kept in touch with their African roots.**