Ama(i)ze is a friendly maze of little built mounds following a triangular grid. It strives to become both a contemplation and playful experience, enhancing our connection to our roots and the entanglement of our histories and the plants that we rely on for food. It is too an homage to the Three Sisters crop model: an oversized and experimental version to promote it as a living tradition worth a huge comeback.

The conical mounds highlight the physicality of the roots of the selected species, and provide the visitor with a new perspective: miniaturized by the maize and beans growing on the crown while being amazed by the squash plants that will transform a rational layout into a one of lushness and discovery. A sunk arena at the center completes the experience: a circular bench moulded with clay and hay where to sit, play and root one's bare feet into a bed of river sand.

The project offer experiences for the visitors to tell about, including insights about materials and building methods 100% friendly to the environment. Sand, soil, hay, clay, and even the natural fibers of the burlap cones; they all can easily return back to nature.

The garden's suggested plants are corn, beans and squash. Moreover, the selected varieties for the project help to bring visibility to crops developed and preserved by native americans

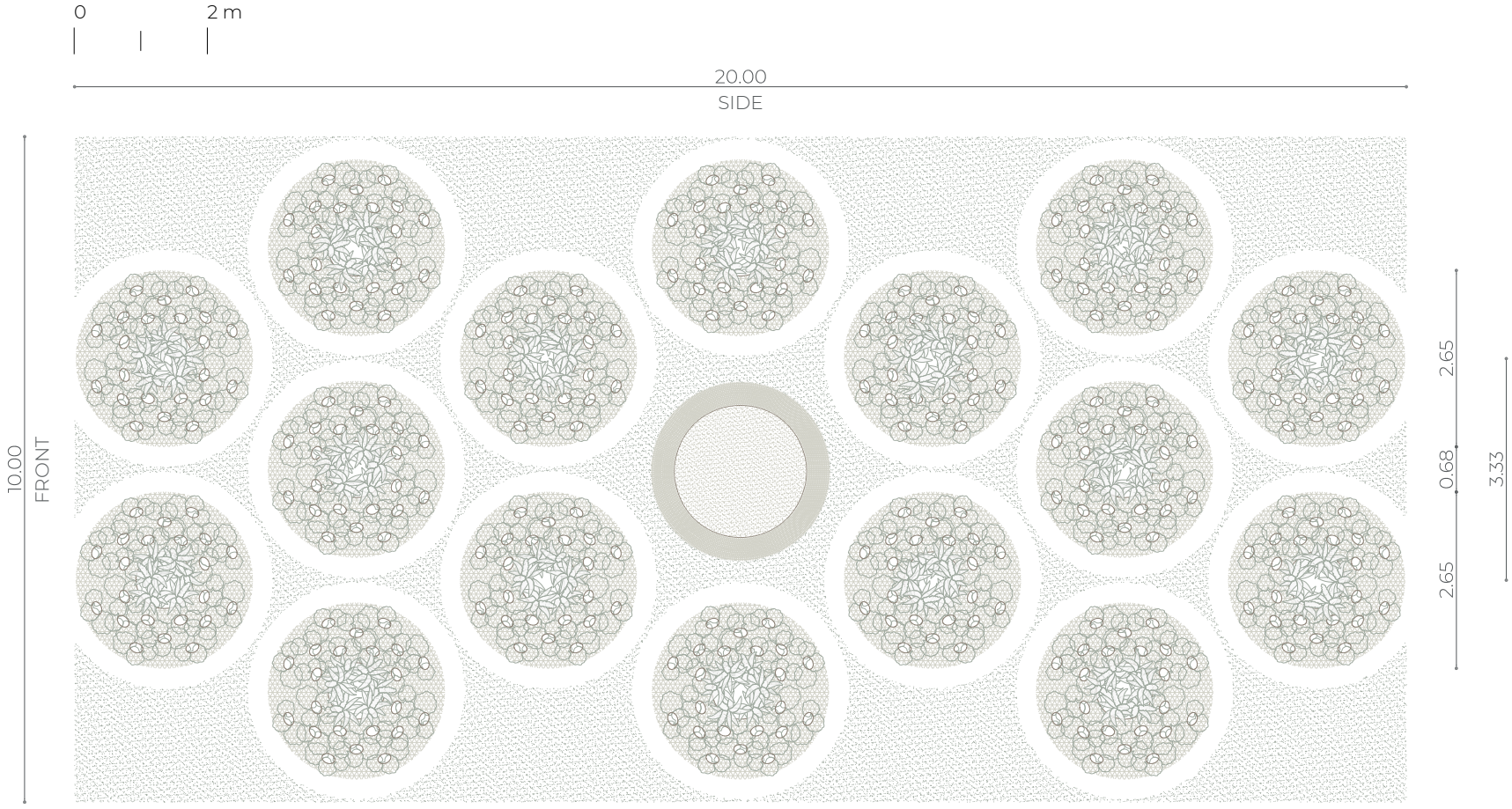
Originary Corn
Zea mays
var. Iroquois White Corn, etc.

Pole Climbing Beans
Phaseolus sp.
var. Flagg, Tuskarora, etc.

Winter Squash
Cucurbita moschata
var. Algonquin Crookneck, etc.

Illustration by Garlan Miles for the NC State Extension Gardener Handbook

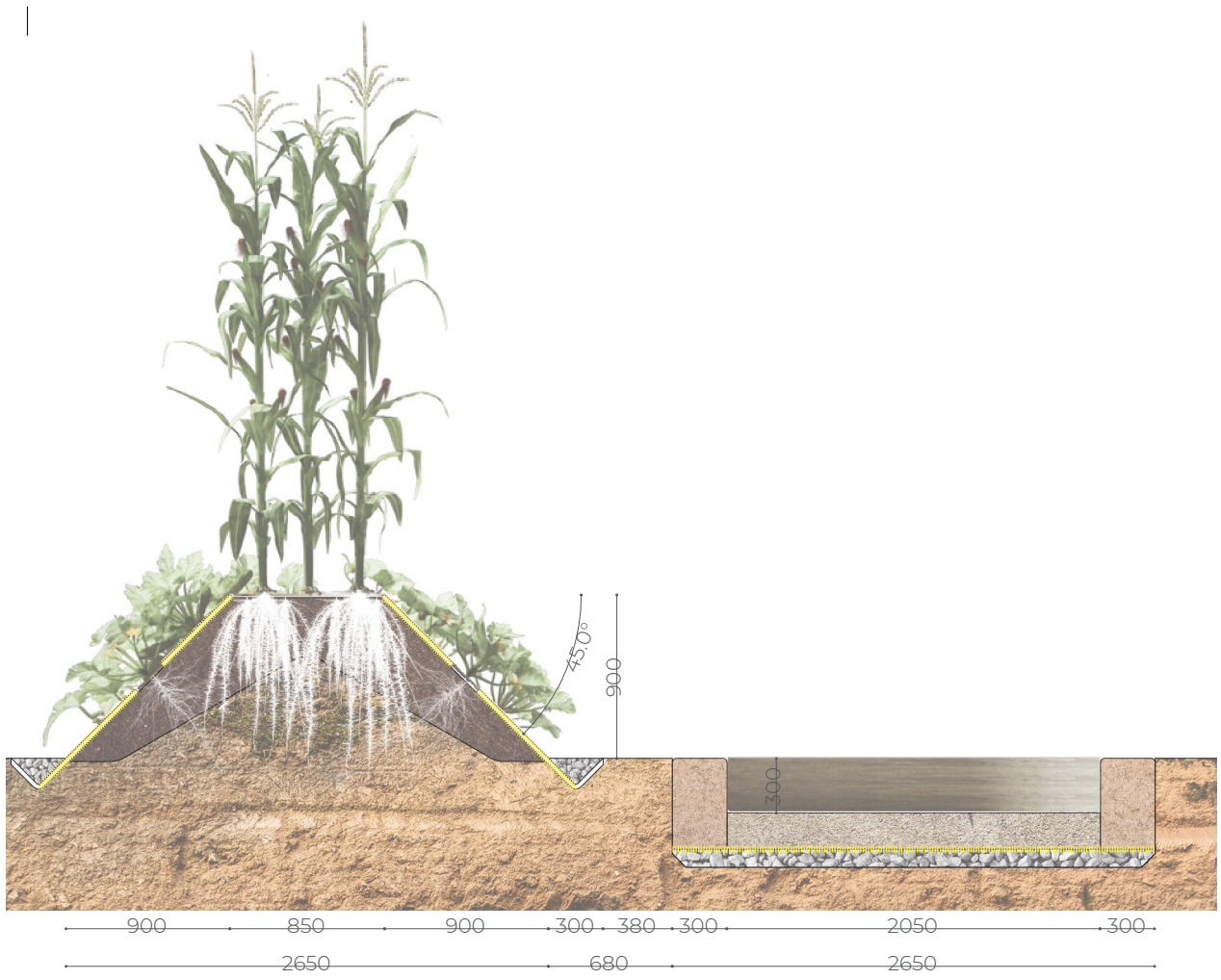
Layout plan
1:100



Front View
1:100

Side View
1:100

0 2 m



Each of the mounds is first prepared excavating a circular drain, and using that soil to form the first layer of the mound; atop of which a humus-rich soil cone is shaped. A custom-designed cover made of natural burlap fabric (e. g. jute) protects it from erosion, keeping the conic shape of the structure. It includes prepared planting holes and provides structure for the squash to vine on the slope. Maize and beans are seeded on the tapped crown. Finally, the gravel in the drain keeps the fabric in place.

At the center of the project there is a small arena sunk in the terrain. Its circular bench is shaped with a clay and hay mixture, and it is finished with earth plastering. The river sand bed in the center is intended as a bare feet place. It is further protected from erosion with a yute mat before the gravel bed beneath.

Detail Section
1:40

0 800 mm