

I AM STEM

Cherise Kent

Cherise Kent is the Green Corps Coordinator at [Holden Forest and Gardens](#), and is passionate about introducing students to environmental science and urban farming in northeast Ohio. Cherise loves helping the students who visit Holden to discover their passions while exploring the natural world.

How do you view agriculture as a STEM pathway in northeast Ohio?

One of the things that I've been amazed by since joining Holden Forest & Gardens is all of the urban farms that are here, and all of the innovations that go along with them. And I think that like some of the ventures I'm seeing, they very well integrate all components of STEM. They not only are growing things which connect the natural sciences, but they're creating innovation. I know people who are building shipping containers that have lights and aquaponics, so that we in Cleveland can be more food secure. If you're somebody who wants to become a research scientist, there are opportunities in Cleveland so that you can be a plant physiologist or a soil ecologist. If you're somebody who is not in love with the idea of being at school forever, there's a two year program at Tri-C, and you can become a landscape technologist, an entrepreneur, and own your own business. There are not only a lot of opportunities in Cleveland, but there are supports to get people there so that they can explore their passions.

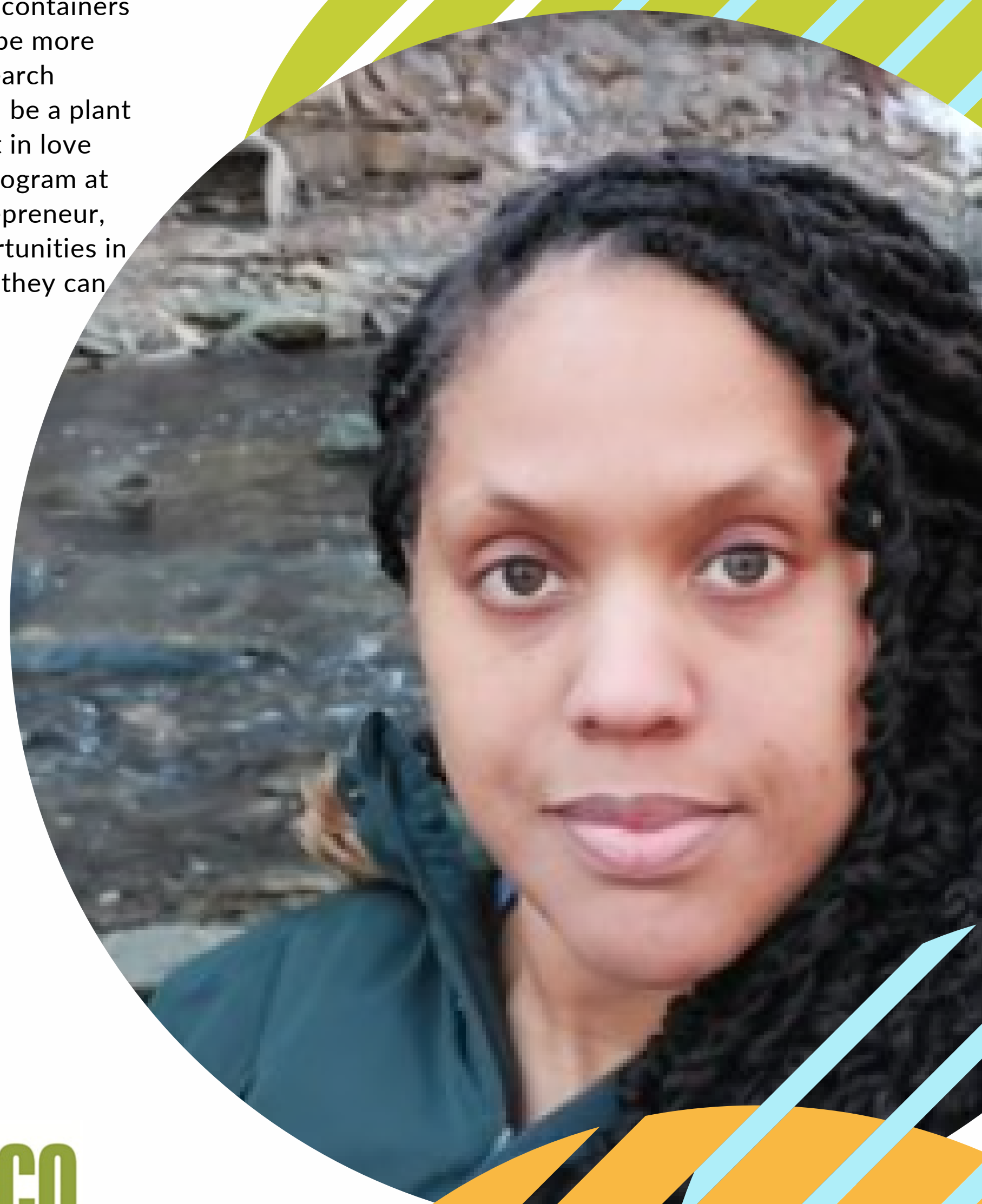
How does technology intersect with agriculture?

You can contribute your skills no matter what they are to this field. There are definitely connections, whether you're tinkering and you're an engineer creating these systems, or whether you're somebody who is creating the software and equipment.

What advice do you have for kids exploring their interests today?

We provide lots of tools so that students can explore who they are, and how they want to contribute to the world, and what their interests are. We ask them to reflect on the experiences they've had, and they delve into different departments to think about what really sparked their interest, and what made them feel enlivened. And we ask what they did not like. Because that's really important. I think it's really important to be keen on who you are and what opportunities are around you.

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The NeoSTEM Ecosystem is a collaboration of organizations throughout Northeast Ohio who partner to improve STEM educational opportunities for all students. Formed in 2014, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem's goals are to improve meaningful STEM learning opportunities for all students in the Northeast Ohio region. As one of 94 ecosystems operating as a part of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem holds regular virtual and in-person meetings to learn about what community educational needs are and to develop solutions for those needs. For more information, please contact us at info@neostem.org.

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