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## ECOSOURCE

*Growing a Green Community*

### Why Community Food?

Our organic garden and agriculture projects are shared spaces where people of all ages, cultural, religious and spiritual backgrounds can come together to grow food. Through these projects we are working with community partners to increase access to affordable, healthy food and sustainable food growing skills!

### Visit a local garden today!

- The Garden of the Valley**  
1274 Mississauga Valley Blvd
- Generation Garden**  
4215 Central Pkwy. E
- Malton Community Garden**  
3540 Morningstar Drive
- Hillside Park Garden**  
1311 Kelly Road
- Iceland Teaching Garden**  
705 Matheson Blvd. E

## Habitats for Learning

We are proud to announce that new Habitat Gardens are now installed at each of our four Mississauga Community Gardens! These spaces were planted with flowers, grasses and shrubs that are native to the Credit Valley and Mimico Creek watersheds. We received input from students at nearby schools who helped to plant the gardens in May and June. Community members, local students and campers from the City of Mississauga summer camps contributed their time throughout the summer to help with additional planting, watering and weeding.



Turtlehead wildflower at the Garden of the Valley Habitat Space

As a result of all this hard work, our Black Eyed Susans and White Heath Asters are blooming! Our Canada Wild Rye has also produced some beautiful seed heads, which will be an excellent source of food for birds. We look forward to seeing the rest of our plants begin to bloom and produce in their second season. As they mature, the plants will fill in the spaces in the habitat gardens, and form a diverse miniature ecosystem. This will benefit local insects and wildlife, as well as our community garden and demonstration plots!

One of our major goals with our Habitat Gardens is to give information about the benefits of native plants and purpose of our community (contd' page 2)

## HABITATS FOR LEARNING (contd' from page 1)

Habitat Gardens to as many community members as possible. With this in mind, we hosted three workshops at each of our garden sites:

### Native Plant Gardening

At this workshop, we talked about what native plants are, and the features that make them great additions to garden spaces.

Low maintenance: Native plants do not require watering after their first season (except in extreme droughts). They are also perennial or readily self seeding, which decreases the need for extensive replanting every spring. These species are well adapted to local climate conditions, and tolerant of extreme weather!

Helpful to Food Gardens: Many varieties of native plants attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies. These creatures are crucial to successful fruiting and reproduction of many garden crops.

*Special thanks to project partners at CVC and TRCA, and to Sobeys Inc and the Earth Day Canada Community Environment Fund for financial support for the Habitat Garden Education Project*



*(Photos: Above- students planting native plants at the Parkway Green Habitat Garden. Native Plants, clockwise from top left – Black-Eyed Susan, Butterfly Weed, Fireweed, Canada Wild Oats and centre – Heath Asters)*



Environmentally Friendly: Native plants provide ideal food and shelter conditions to wildlife and beneficial insect populations. This promotes biodiversity by assisting native plant and animal populations, which in turn helps combat invasive species incursions!

For more information about native plants and where to get them, please visit Credit Valley Conservation at [www.creditvalleyca.ca](http://www.creditvalleyca.ca) and search within the site for “native plants” in the search bar on the upper right hand side of the page.



## Water Conservation

Native Ground Covers: Native plants can be a great alternative to grass in a yard space that is not stepped on frequently. They do not require watering after their first year, and are therefore a lot more eco-friendly than conventional bluegrass lawns. A few useful species include Wild Strawberry, Bunchberry and Wild Ginger. The Credit Valley Conservation website listed above also contains information about where to purchase native plants and seeds.

Rain and Sprinkler Monitoring: Lawns and most garden plants and crops require only 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water per week. To ensure that plants stay healthy and that you are not overwatering, position a few rain gauges (available at Lee Valley) or clean, empty tin cans around your yard and monitor the amount of rain that has fallen each week. Turn on your sprinkler for only long enough to make up the full 2.5 cm, when necessary.

Making the Most of Rain Water: Using rain water can be an excellent way to irrigate your garden! The Region of Peel offers food grade plastic rain barrels for \$50. They are easy to install at the end of your downspout, and help make your yard more water wise. For more information, please visit [www.peelregion.ca](http://www.peelregion.ca)

## Garden Insects

We had a lot of fun with our Bee Free Barbecue, which we held with children from the community, summer camps and child care centres. We set up a picnic buffet of pretend food, including sandwiches, hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips and a variety of beverages. One volunteer got to take a plate and fill it with his or her favourite foods from our pretend menu. Then we went through each item on the plate and talked about whether it would be available in a world without bees. In many cases, after we had removed the bee-needy foods, we ended up with a meal of nothing but a plain bun! We hope that this helped children understand how important bees are in our lives. After the Bee Free Barbecue, we discussed the Habitat Garden and its benefits to pollinators. The kids helped us water the native plants, and then got to enjoy a bee-pollinated nectarine or peach. Afterwards, we all remembered to say, "Thank you, bees!"

*Photos from top: Learning about the importance of Bees and Garden insects in Malton, watering the garden in August at Parkway Green, watering the garden in Malton in September, examining a bumble bee visiting the Malton Garden, and learning about native plant gardening during a "Your Green Yard" workshop at Hillside Public School on garden opening day with Melanie Kramer of Credit Valley Conservation Authority.*



## Outdoor Learning at the Malton Community Garden

### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Garden!

This summer, children from the Malton community learned about environmental issues and food growing during the **EcoSource Children's Summer Program** in partnership with the Malton Public Library. Through storybook readings, craft projects using recycled materials, and organic gardening, children discovered the importance of the 3 Rs, composting, water conservation, insects, local food, and healthy soil.

Whether it was getting our hands dirty while making seed balls or planting, holding red wiggler worms, making homes for pollinators, or making a "dirt" dip snack, we all had fun this summer exploring the ways we can create a healthier planet.

### Growing Food for Health

Through the **Malton Food for Health Project** in partnership with the Bramalea Community Health Centre, EcoSource has begun delivering educational workshops about organic food growing and healthy eating. Thus far, our "**Grow and Learn**" sessions at the Malton Community Garden have taught members of the Malton community key gardening skills which can be used to grow food outdoors, indoors, and/or on their balcony.

Eating well and being physically active are among the best ways to maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and certain types of cancers. Growing fruits and vegetables in the garden is a great way to eat well, be physically active, and improve mental health. Container gardening indoors and/or on the balcony is a good opportunity for increasing or creating garden space, and growing fresh food all year round.

**Thank you to everyone who helped plant and cultivate food at the Malton Community Garden! We will be harvesting beets, leeks, onions, beans, carrots, amaranth, and Swiss chard this fall for donation to the local food bank.**

# Conservation Youth Corps Helps Out!

What grows tall and curves, needs papery skin removed, can make your fingers stinky for hours and is best finished with an ice cream cone?

Harvesting over 500 bulbs of garlic with EcoSource on a hot summer day!! Credit Valley Conservation Youth Corps members learned this and much more while contributing countless volunteer hours this summer to supporting organic food production through the Mississauga Sustainable Urban Agriculture (MSURA) Project.

CYC students helpers came out weekly to learn about soil structure, water conservation, weeds, habitat gardens and especially how to seed, cultivate and harvest many delicious organic vegetables!

Together we harvested over 200 lbs of garlic, radishes, spinach and carrots and cultivated hundreds of onions, carrots, leeks and greens that continue to grow and will be delivered to clients of the Eden Community Food Bank in the fall.

Stop by the Iceland Teaching Garden (705 Matheson Road) to see some of our handiwork in action!





### GROWING GREAT THINGS!

On Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> community gardeners gathered to visit many different community gardening and farming projects for inspiration. Participants visited the Albion Hills Community Farm, the Palgrave Community Kitchen, the Sahara Seniors Community Garden as well as the Malton Community Garden and the Garden of the Valley in Mississauga. A special thank-you to the Sahara Seniors for sharing a delicious snack of green pepper pakoras fresh from their garden!



## Sustain Ontario Launches VOTEONFOOD.CA

Sustain Ontario is excited to be launching the Vote ON Food and Farming campaign. We've put together a lot of great resources to help people across Ontario engage with their candidates on food and farming issues this election. There are a lot of people taking part in this campaign and we'd love for you to join us! There are a lot of tools for you to use (coming soon) on our new website:

[www.voteonfood.ca](http://www.voteonfood.ca) including: a pledge to show candidates how many people care about food and farming, a food quiz to help people and candidates understand the issues, better statistics on food and farming in Ontario to help you make a great case, a set of questions for candidates, a list of policy asks and Good Food Idea Briefs, sample press releases and public announcement.

If you are interested in getting involved as a local Food Champion, please contact Kendal Donahue at Sustain Ontario – [kdonahue@sustainontario.ca](mailto:kdonahue@sustainontario.ca)



### Farewell to Gurleen!

During the summer of 2011, we were joined by Gurleen Chaggar, graduate from Sheridan College's Social Service Work program pursuing her BA studies in Public Policy in the fall at York University.

August 24/2011

Dear Community Gardeners:

Summer is done, from the beautiful gardens in Mississauga back to writing essays and studying for exams. It does not mean I will forget all of the wonderful experiences I shared with the gardeners of Mississauga Valley, Malton, Parkway Green, Hillside and the new garden Iceland. Especially the Conservation Youth Corps who worked with EcoSource at the Iceland Teaching Garden developing it from a plot of land into rows of carrots, tomatoes, peppers and many other crops. Currently a graduate with a Social Service Worker Diploma the Ecosource summer position was different from my field. While working at EcoSource I made the connection that gardening can help people develop positive relationship with themselves as well as with the environment. I am glad that I received this opportunity to work with such an amazing organization that is helping the Peel community as well as becoming environmentally conscious. Not only will I take this experience into my professional life but into my personal life by having a beautiful garden next season! Lastly I want to say a sincere thank you to all of the staff at Ecosource for making this experience a positive one. I wish EcoSource best of luck for the future as well as all of the volunteers and staff.

Sincerely

Gurleen Chaggar



## Fall Cider Celebrations

Join us to celebrate the end of a great growing season!

We will work to tackle a number of general garden tasks, discuss how to best prepare our gardens for winter, prepare the community beds for a fall garlic planting, and learn more about our habitat garden spaces.

Join us for a community potluck and a cup of hot cider at 6:00pm. If you can please bring a dish to share, as well as your own plate, cutlery and cup to help reduce the waste made at the garden. This is a family friendly event and everyone is welcome! All participating children must be accompanied by an adult, parent or guardian

Hillside Park – September 22, 5 – 7pm

Garden of the Valley – September 27, 5 – 7pm

Parkway Green – September 29, 5 – 7pm

Malton – October 5, 5 – 7pm

Iceland Teaching Garden – October 12, 3 – 7pm

Please RSVP to Monika Kokoszka – [mkokoszka@ecosource.ca](mailto:mkokoszka@ecosource.ca) if you are interested in attending!

EcoSource is an innovative environmental organization that empowers the community to become more environmentally responsible through creative public education.

The Community Gardens and School Learning Gardens Program is led by EcoSource in partnership with the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel (MIAG) and the City of Mississauga, and is generously funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This program supports EcoSource Elementary Green Schools to design and plant outdoor teaching spaces, and connects communities with neighbourhood spaces to grow fresh organic food.

The Mississauga Sustainable Urban Agriculture (MSURA) Project is led by EcoSource in collaboration with the Eden Community Food Bank, supported by the City of Mississauga and the University of Toronto Mississauga. Together we are working to increase access to fresh healthy food in our community and to connect students and community members with meaningful opportunities to learn about sustainable food and food production in Mississauga. This project is generously supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



**ECOSOURCE**  
*Growing a Green Community*

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eden community food bank

