

EcoSource Community Gardens

ISSUE 05 YEAR 10

THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Generation Garden	01
Summer Bounty	02
CYC Youth Corps	03
Malton Garden Update	04
Gardening and Health	06
A Garden Tour	07
Thank You to:	08



ECOSOURCE

Growing a Green Community

What is a community garden?

Our community gardens are shared spaces where people of all ages, cultural, religious and spiritual backgrounds can come together to grow food. Our gardens program hosts workshops and harvest festivals, donates fresh organic produce to local food banks, and participates in community events.

Where can I garden?

EcoSource, in partnership with the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel and the City of Mississauga, currently facilitates four community gardens in Mississauga – The Garden of the Valley, the Hillside Park Garden, Malton Community Garden and Generation Garden at Parkway Green. Visit us online to get involved!

Hello Generation Garden at Parkway Green:

The newest community garden in Mississauga!

Central Mississauga's Parkway Green, located off of Central Parkway between Burnhamthorpe and Rathburn, is now home to our newest community garden! Conveniently located just 5 minutes from the Mississauga Valley Garden, we hope the garden will be able to serve the many individuals in Central Mississauga looking for places to grow healthy, organic food!

Although Parkway Green did not officially open its gates this season, the garden has been a busy place throughout the fall of 2010! On September 23rd, future garden members, interested volunteers and Team Depot, worked to lay out the garden plots, getting it ready for a grand opening next spring! We are grateful to the Home Depot Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Program for their support of this project.

The H.E.L.P. Program student participants from Archbishop Romero Catholic School, who planted the community orchard this spring, also returned to the garden this fall for two days of mulching pathways and garlic planting. Their amazing work is always appreciated.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Parkway Green Generation Garden, or if you would like more information, please contact Monika at mkokoszka@ecosource.ca



Above (left to right) the Community orchard, Team Depot out to lend a hand, and H.E.L.P. students planting garlic

MSURA (Mississauga Sustainable Urban Agriculture) Garden Plot Installation Days

On Sat. October 2, and Wed. October 13th, the MSURA Demonstration Plots were officially opened as part of our fall harvest celebrations at the Garden of the Valley and Hillside .



Summer Bounty!

Nothing says summer like picking and eating ripe tomatoes, juicy cucumbers and hot peppers! Enjoy these photos taken of our gardens by our gardeners!



Visit the garden for a self guided tour and let us know what you think!

Photos contributed by gardeners Julia Dragomirescu and Nikki Guy as well as Monika Kokoszka.

Garden Rain Barrels



When using the rain barrels to fill your watering can...



Always make sure to close the valve....



Before reattaching it to the barrel...



To make sure the water does not drip out!

Credit Valley Conservation Youth Corps

The summer of 2010 saw the involvement of a group of dedicated youth from the Credit Valley Conservation Youth Corps (CYC). They came out in July to give the sheds at the Mississauga Valley and Hillside Gardens some much needed tender loving care and help out with overall maintenance of the gardens. This included painting the sheds, turning compost and everyone's favourite task – weeding!

The CYC Program, part of Credit Valley Conservation, is a youth oriented volunteer program conducting environmental stewardship activities with high school classes and individuals in the Credit River watershed and surrounding areas. Each CYC youth spends a week participating in different stewardship initiatives in Peel Region. Helping out in the Community Gardens was a natural fit as being good stewards of our local ecosystems is a critical component to successful organic food growing!



Helping complete the circle of life by turning and harvesting compost created from the garden for gardeners to use to feed their plants!

Getting down & dirty while weeding the native plant pollinator garden and pathways



The CYC youth and leader stand proudly with the freshly painted shed!

To learn more about CYC or other programs of Credit Valley Conservation, please visit www.creditvalleyca.ca

LATE SEASON VEGETABLES

Contrary to popular belief, spring is not the only time to get plants started in the garden.

A number of cold tolerant vegetables actually prefer to grow in cooler temperatures and even become tastier after a light frost.

Broccoli and Cauliflower

Kale

Cabbage

Kohlorabi

Bok Choi

Swiss Chard

Lettuce

Arugula

Spinach

Mustard Greens

Peas

Carrots

Beets

Turnips

Parsnips

Lettuce: although it is not frost tolerant, it prefers to grow in cooler temperatures. Lettuce tends to bolt and become bitter in summer heat.

Bush Beans – a warm season crop that is quick to mature – these are not frost tolerant, so make sure to check the number of days left in the season before planting.

Estimated first frost date in Mississauga:

October 15

Broccoli + Cauliflower form better heads when grown in cool weather and later in the season when the day length becomes shorter – they must also be started in doors in mid June before transplanting outdoors in mid August.

Kale, turnips, parsnips and arugula: a few of the vegetables that are said to become sweeter after a frost.

Community Gardening in Malton!

Since the garden opening on June 12th, the Malton Community Garden has been a busy place! In mid July, the garden hosted a two day long Mid-Summer Celebration. We worked together to tackle some garden maintenance tasks –we planted carrots and zucchini, and worked to maintain our cover crops, establish a small pollinator garden and expand the children’s bean garden. We also discussed how to grow great tomatoes and late season vegetables – take a look at the side panel to see what we learned! More importantly, we celebrated the harvest of our first summer squash!



Malton gardeners at work!



Eric, Jacki, Justyna & gang and EcoSource’s Matt on the far right



Jacki with the first Zucchini!

Following the mid-summer celebration, with the help of the very talented local community artist, Anna Claudette-Ferguson, the Malton gardeners put their heads together to develop a mural art design. Once the design was finalized, we worked to paint the beautiful art on the garden shed for two days.



A first coat



Painting the shed



Meet the artist!



Hard to reach places



On August 10th, a very hot, and sunny Tuesday afternoon, the Malton Garden hosted over 60 children, at its first annual Children’s Gardening Day! Special guests included MPP Dr. Kuldip Kular and Sabrina Greco from Sobeys, just to name a few. The day’s event included 6 stations:



EcoSource’s School Environmental Activities Coordinators, Sierra Frank and Jessica Kukac, introduced participants to the world of composting – the traditional backyard, and not so traditional worm bin!



The Bean Keeper Story,

Planting peas

The Bean Garden

Harvesting beans

Inspired by Evergreen's Bean Keeper Project, a Children's Bean Garden was started earlier this season. By planting the seeds, watching them grow and waiting for the seeds to ripen, the children are not only experiencing the life cycle of a bean first-hand but also effectively preserve many heritage and heirloom bean varieties like the Painted Pony, Ireland Creek, Blue Jay, Dutch Bullets, and Orca just to name a few. Saleha, a garden member, customized the bean story for the event while Eric, a garden member, and EcoSource's Matt helped the kids harvest beans from the bean garden and to plant late season peas.



An educational relay race

Building a homes for our pollinator friends!

Participant young and old learned all about our very important garden friends: pollinators. Through a fun and interactive relay race, and a visit to an informative booth hosted by the TRCA kids learned about beneficial insects and even got to built nesting 'boxes' for various species of solitary bees.



A pile of clothing, a bale of hay and a little bit of creativity = scarecrows!

Each team worked together to create a beautiful scarecrow in just 15 minutes! The winning scarecrow found a permanent home in the garden!

Although September is in our midst, the garden fun is not over yet. The Malton garden will host a final garden clean up will take place on October 1st and a Fall Harvest Celebration on October 16th. Stay tuned for details!



Above: Smiling faces and cool treats at Malton's Children's Gardening Day!

A special thanks goes out to our regular community volunteers: Justyna & Co, Jacki, Eric, Indra, Geeta, Komal, Sahhiti, the entire Vanamala family, UPS's Stephan, Lina and Jin for all your work in the garden this summer, as well as the Malton Community Center and Parks Department staff for your ongoing support.

The Malton Community Garden is located at 3540 Morning Star Drive, in Elmcreek Park. It is generously funded by Sobey's Inc. and the Earth Day Canada (EDC) Community Environment Fund. Sobey's Inc and EDC provide financial grants to support local environmental initiatives and projects in Ontario which create and inspire sustainable environmental action in communities across the province. For more information, please visit <http://www.earthday.ca/envirofund/>.

Community Gardening Does a Body (and Mind) Good!

There are so many benefits to community gardening, especially the positive impact on physical and mental health. Not only does fresh, organic food often have more nutrients, but the physical activity of gardening can improve fitness, nurturing plants from seed to harvest can provide a sense of purpose, and building networks with other community gardeners can help reduce social isolation and improve mental health.

Women's Health and Well Being Hub

In January 2010, the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel (MIAG) one of EcoSource's partners in the Community Gardens Program, embarked on a new project striving to improve the leadership and vision in health promotion and chronic disease prevention across women from different ethno-cultural communities health and well-being of women in Peel. The Women's Health and Well Being Hub is a ten week program involving aerobic exercise, important topics around health promotion and food demonstrations of healthy culturally appropriate recipes. Thus it was a natural fit for participants to come to the Mississauga Valley Garden in August for a garden tour and prepare dishes with ingredients straight from the garden. The women (and their children) enjoyed the bruschetta and carrot & beet salad very much! (See recipes to the right).



Malton Food for Health

The Bramalea Community Health Centre in Malton has recently received funding from the Ontario Healthy Communities Fund for the Malton Food for Health Project. The goal of this new initiative is to engage ethnic and low-income communities in Malton in activities that promote healthy eating, physical activity and improved mental health.

The project will involve regular 'Dine and Learn' Dinners involving the purchase and preparation of local food in conjunction with education on topics such as how to buy and access healthy food, urban food growing, healthy cultural foods and the relationship between physical activity and mental health.

Participants in this project will also be involved in 'Grow and Learn' sessions at the Malton Community Garden, which will include hands on experience in the garden as well as education sessions on growing food in small spaces; foods to grow for good health; physical exercises for gardeners and visits to local farmers' markets.

Stay tuned for more information as the project gets growing!

Straight from the Garden Summer Recipes!

No Cook Bruschetta

- ❖ 6 or 7 roma (plum) tomatoes
- ❖ 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- ❖ 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ 6-8 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- ❖ Salt
- ❖ Toasted bread slices (French baguette)

Chop the tomatoes into small pieces and place in a bowl; make sure to remove the seeds and juice. Chop the garlic and basil; mix in with tomatoes. Drizzle the olive oil and add the salt. Toss and spoon onto the bread slices and serve. Tastes like summer!

Carrot & Beet Salad

- ❖ 1 cup carrots
- ❖ 1 cup beets
- ❖ ½ teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- ❖ 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- ❖ 2 tablespoons orange juice
- ❖ 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ❖ 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- ❖ ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Shred the carrots and beets and mix together in a bowl. Whisk the orange juice, lemon juice, olive oil, ginger and salt. Drizzle over the carrots and beets, and mix well. Top with the chopped mint and serve. Colourful & good for you!



2010 Community Garden Tour

As part of EcoSource and MIAG's support of independent community gardening projects, a tour of all many of the great things growing in Peel Region was organized.



On August 17th, EcoSource staff led a group that included the Sahara Seniors Group of Punjabi Community Health Services in Brampton, the Village Keepers Child & Family Centre in Caledon and the Palgrave Environment Committee in Caledon. Together the bus took us to the McVean Incubator Farm in Brampton, a project of FarmStart which aims to assist budding farmers in establishing ecologically and economically sound farming ventures. (www.farmstart.ca)



We then visited the three community gardens on city parkland established by EcoSource in partnership with MIAG and the City of Mississauga. These included the Malton Community Garden at Elmcreek Park, the Hillside Park Community Garden and Garden of the Valley at Mississauga Valley Park. Tour participants were able to see gardens in different stages and how each community garden is unique.



The last stop before the end of the tour was to the Erin Mills United Church Community Garden. This was the very first community garden established in Mississauga (started in 2002) and continues to be a space for church & community members to come together for growing food and sharing with the community.



One of the great bonuses of a tour such as this is that it fosters the connection between groups and helps to build relationships. For example, as a result of the tour, Erin Mills United Church will be hosting Sri from FarmStart to give a talk entitled "What is an Incubator Farm?" as part of EMUC's environmental education sessions this fall. Sri's talk will be on October 6, 7:30-9:30pm at EMUC, located at 3030 The Collegeway, southwest corner of Winston Churchill Blvd and The Collegeway in Mississauga. Anyone is welcome to attend, but please contact Dorothy at ah_wilson@symptico.ca to register or for more information.

A Reflection on the Garden Tour

By Sukhdev Singh, a Sahara Seniors participant:

The tour started at the Sahara Seniors Garden where about 25 people from different groups gathered. Rupinder welcomed all the members and gave a tour of the community garden. People were very surprised to see how okra and lockey (two crops traditionally grown in India) were grown in this garden. They requested to know where they could find these plants to grow next year.

Our next stop was the McVean farm where Sri from FarmStart greeted everyone and showed us around the farm and talked about how to start farming.

We then had a tour of Malton Community Garden at Elmcreek Park. After so much walking around, everyone was hungry so we decided to eat and had our lunches under some shady trees. While the seniors were resting, people exchanged recipes with each other.

After visiting the Mississauga Valley Garden and the Hillside Park Community Garden, we went to Erin Mills United Church, where Dorothy talked about the garden and showed us around.

At 3:30 pm we reached back to the Sahara Seniors Garden. After having a cup of tea Sahara seniors went back home tired, fulfilled and happy.

Enjoying a garden Tour!
Photos by Rupinder Singh, PCHS

Thank you:

To Matt, Our 2010 Urban Agriculture & Gardens Program Assistant

Greetings Community Gardeners,

Summer's end marks my return to the classroom and my departure from the lush and fruitful gardens this year. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the amazing gardeners of the Valleys, Hillside and Malton for imparting on me their insightful gardening knowledge, their enduring patience and finally their confidence in me and my endeavors over the last ten weeks. I felt an acceptance into your garden community, and only hope that the feeling was mutual. You have all shown me what can be accomplished with a little piece of fertile land and a relatively short (but productive!) growing season. You all are AMAZING!

Secondly, the volunteers did an amazing job this year. Not only did you make my life easier, but you contributed to something much greater than just hours on a time-sheet. Lastly, I would like to thank EcoSource for providing me with this unique and incredible opportunity. During my undergraduate studies, the idea of urban gardens always interested me, but this job gave me a much deeper appreciation of them. I learned, laughed and grew as a person in the garden, along with all of the fruits and vegetables.

During my Masters studies, I will be shifting my title to "volunteer" as I feel invested in the gardens and want to continue the relationships I have started in them. I look forward to seeing everyone again and I am anxious to see what you guys grow next!

Truly,

Matt Guinness



To Sima

We would also like to thank Sima Patel, this season's Community Gardens and School Learning Gardens Program Coordinator, for all her hard work during the 2010 garden season. Sima brought us a memorable community garden tour, creative garden games and lots of organic gardening enthusiasm! We wish her all the best as she moves on to undertake new opportunities.

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.



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