

EcoSource Community Gardens

ISSUE 02 YEAR 09



THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Many Hands...	01
Sahara Seniors Garden	02
Vermi-composting	05
Team Depot in Action	07
Autumn Recipe	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 InterAgency Group of Peel and the City of Mississauga, currently facilitates two community gardens in Mississauga – The Garden of the Valley in central Mississauga, and the Hillside Park Garden in Clarkson. Visit us online to get involved!

Many Hands Make Light Work

UPS Volunteer Team lends many helping hands at the Garden of the Valley

On August 18th and October 15th volunteers from UPS were out in full force at the Garden of the Valley to lend a helping hand. Together we managed to clear some space for a late season planting of Bok Choi in the community plot, re-mulch the entire perimeter fence line of the garden, weed and mulch the garden entrance, fix the garden gate, and harvested a LOT of fresh beets, onions, kale, basil and of course tomatoes for the Compass food bank! In the fall, volunteers helped to clear community plots, plant garlic, fix composters, and harvest Bok Choi for the food bank! Special thanks to Amy Wright who helped in organizing both events. To all volunteers - we really appreciated your help and look forward to more volunteer events with the UPS team in future!



UPS Volunteers at the Garden of the Valley

Volunteering at a local community garden is a great way for locally based companies to give back to the community, learn more about organic food gardening, and spend some rewarding time together outside of the office!

When possible, our gardens are happy to accommodate corporate or other volunteer groups. Please contact us for more information!

Upcoming Events!

CELEBRATE WITH US

This fall we will be hosting **TWO** exciting community garden celebrations and planning sessions to review the 2009 growing season!

Join us for a celebration of our achievements and a **SEED SAVING** workshop with child-friendly activities. Learn about new garden projects, reserve a garden plot for the upcoming season and learn more about workshops upcoming in 2010! Free seasonal refreshments will be served.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Hillside Park Garden

7:00pm – 8:30pm

EcoSource (Clarke Hall)

161 Lakeshore Rd West

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

Garden of the Valley

7:00pm – 8:30pm

Mississauga Valley Community Centre

Program Room #2

Please RSVP to communitygardens@ecosource.ca if you are able to attend!



Tomato and pepper seedlings started by the Sahara Women's Group

Sahara Seniors Garden Opens in Brampton

The 2009 garden season marks the launch of the first independent community garden project supported by the EcoSource – MIAG Community Gardens Program. In September 2008, staff, seniors and community members at Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) began planning this exciting endeavor. Over the fall and winter months, the Sahara Mens and Womens groups actively participated in many events.



Sahara Men's Group visit the Garden of the Valley while planning for the Sahara Seniors Garden in fall 2008

These included gardening workshops, field trips and lots of time spent carefully planning for the garden!

In March seniors started seedlings for the garden, and after several weeks of tender care, our seedlings made their way into the garden. The space contains several raised bed gardens and many larger ground level plots now under cultivation by seniors and community members at PCHS.

Food grown in the Sahara Seniors Garden is donated to the community kitchen at the adjacent Sikh Heritage Centre.



Our new garden sign!

And so a garden started... highlights of the 2009 Sahara Seniors Garden season



Freshly tilled soil... planning and measuring



Starting tomato and pepper seedlings indoors in early spring



Planting seedlings in newly- built raised beds!



Making and installing garden signs



Giving a garden tour at the opening celebration, PCHS Community Health Fair in June



Raised bed garden area

Garlic Planting Tips & Tricks

Fall is the time of year to get garlic seeds into the ground for harvest in the following season.

A garlic 'seed' is in fact one clove – so in a bulb of garlic, you will find 5 – 10 cloves that can be planted. Choose the largest, firmest and best looking bulbs of garlic for seed – garlic will clone itself, so your harvest will resemble the cloves you plant in the fall.

When searching for seed garlic, you can re-plant from your own garden or purchase Ontario grown garlic at the farmers market, grocery store etc. This garlic will be best suited to the Canadian growing season.

Separate cloves without removing their papery covers – discard any damaged or exposed cloves.

Plant cloves approximately 8" apart at a depth of 1" with the flat (root) part facing down and pointy side facing upright. Cover the soil with straw mulch and wait for those first leaves in the spring!



Planting Garlic

Hands-On Learning at Hillside Park Garden

On Friday, October 16th, students from the Archbishop Romero Catholic School's Leadership Program celebrated **World Food Day** with a visit to the Hillside Park Community Garden.



Students from Archbishop Romero Catholic School's Leadership Program plant garlic at the Hillside Park Community Garden



Students gathered to learn about soil structure, composting and preparing garden beds for winter. By the end of our morning work project, we were surprised to see how much had been accomplished!

All of the community plots had been cleared, turned and had compost spread, the composters had been turned and new materials added, food was harvested for the Compass food bank and the front garden pathways were re-weeded!

Our last project was to plant an entire garden bed with garlic. After much conversation, almost 100 garlic cloves (saved from our crop this season at the Garden of the Valley) were planted in one of the community plot beds. We can't wait to see it come up in the spring!

Global Garlic Project

Those who are true garlic connoisseurs will be interested to learn about the **Global Garlic Project**. Organic farmer Daniel Hoffman, who runs **The Cutting Veg** project at FarmStart's McVean farm site in Brampton, grows over a dozen varieties of garlic from around the world! Each type has a different flavor and unique characteristics. Try the Persian and you might notice that each clove has a red stripe, while the Ukrainian has a hot and spicy flavor!

For Hoffman, growing garlic is rewarding on many fronts. Most importantly, he believes that it "gets people excited about cooking and eating, which is really important for a healthy community." Garlic is also a crop that is increasingly difficult to find locally. Keeping different varieties alive and growing them in the Canadian climate is another important part of the Global Garlic Project. According to Hoffman, "maintaining genetic and biological diversity promotes short and long term food security."

For more information about The Cutting Veg, and about the McVean incubator farm project, check out www.thecuttingveg.com and www.farmstart.ca/farm-facilities/mcvean-incubator-farm/

Where the worms are...



Our office/workshop vermi bin is a clear Rubbermaid bin with an open top that is covered with remay cloth for ventilation (and to keep fruit flies out) and burlap coffee sacks for darkness when we're not peeking at the worms!

Indoor Composting

As the weather turns cooler and avid gardeners are looking for a fascinating indoor garden project, why not try vermi composting? Vermi composting is the practice of composting food scraps using some friendly 'pets' – red wiggler worms. Worm castings (poop) created through a vermi compost bin are great garden fertilizer – some refer to them as the 'black gold' of organic gardening! How do you do it?



Red Wiggler worms close up.

STEP THREE: Feeding – worms like to eat sweet fruits and vegetables (apples, carrots, mangoes etc), plain moldy bread, coffee grinds, and tea bags. Citrus fruits/peels, cabbage family vegetables and onion/garlic family vegetables are not so popular – we recommend feeding them what they like as this will keep the speed of composting high!

This is just the tip of the iceberg! More detailed information about how to set up a vermi compost bin, how to troubleshoot your vermi bin, and where to find/buy worms etc. is available online at: www.vermiculture.ca, www.cathyscomposters.com, www.wormcomposting.ca

STEP ONE: Set up a vermi-bin – the bin should be large enough for your worms to move around (a large rubbermaid or recycle bin is a good size) and should be well ventilated – either with screened ventilation holes or with a fabric lid that allows a lot of air to pass through.

STEP TWO: Bedding -- your worms will need some peat moss and finished compost to live in when they arrive – about 1 inch on the bottom of the bin should be enough. Several inches of damp shredded newspaper to cover them will keep them moist, feed them and will keep odours and fruit flies at bay.

So...where DO those woodchips come from?

Every season at our community garden sites in Mississauga, piles and piles of woodchips 'miraculously' appear. Woodchips for mulch are useful in the garden for many reasons! They are a pleasant smelling and looking ground cover and also help to prevent weeds from growing, keep moisture in the soil, and prevent erosion of soil from wind and rain. Where would we be without those woodchips?

We'd like to take this opportunity to say a very big THANK YOU! to the City of Mississauga Parks staff at Hillside Park and at Mississauga Valley Park for helping us out each season. To Mark and John and teams: your timely deliveries of woodchips, miscellaneous shed and fence fixes and much needed wasp eradication help have been very much appreciated ☺



Anonymous woodchips waiting to mulch the garden at the Valleys

Home Depot Helps Out!

One issue facing every gardener is how to keep human and animal traffic outside of the garden beds! A fence of some kind is often the solution, and at the Sahara Seniors Community Garden (see pages 2-3), **Home Depot** and the **Team Depot Volunteers** stepped in to help! On **Tuesday, September 27th** and **Friday, October 2nd** volunteers from two Brampton stores came out to lend a hand and fence in the Seniors' garden space. Over the course of two days of work, we enjoyed lots of hot chai tea, samosas, a gourmet meal from the community kitchen at the Sikh Heritage Centre, and a local specialty – punjabi pizza!



"Home Depot has a strong commitment to helping and to giving back to our community" said **Vishan Gunness**, Assistant Store Manager at Home Depot on Airport Road. Gunness' Airport Road store teamed up with Assistant Store Manager **Shahn Skanes** of Home Depot on Great Lakes Drive to make this the largest Team Depot project of the year in Brampton! "Supporting innovative projects and encouraging employees to volunteer in the community is an important part of our work," said Shahn.

Home Depot understands the impact of hard work and sweat equity. Behind Team Depot lies a belief in the power of hands-on service and of rolling up sleeves and getting dirty while working beside neighbors to improve the community. More importantly, Team Depot understands that volunteering to improve the physical health of neighborhoods by planting trees, developing green spaces and updating school facilities and community centers creates healthier, more stable communities where families can thrive. Team Depot recognizes that committed and motivated neighbors accomplish an enormous amount of important work in communities across the country.

We are so grateful for Team Depot's help – especially to Vishan, Shahn and Caroline, as well as Angelique, David, Don, Mario, Brock and Mark from Home Depot on Great Lakes Drive and to Nive, Monique, Kirk, Debbie, Kevin, Lucio and Carlos from Home Depot on Airport Road who gave their time and expertise (in spite of the chilly and wet weather!) to this important project.

Team Depot in Action





Over the course of two days of work, more than 15 staff volunteers from both Home Depot stores came out with equipment and fencing supplies to complete the installation of a low fence around the community garden site.



In appreciation of volunteers...

Volunteers play such an important role in our community – not just because they get things done (they do!) but even more because they inspire and support positive community development.

So, to all of our garden volunteers – THANK YOU!!

If you've ever wondered why people volunteer, here is an interesting reflection on how we impact those around us.

You Never Know By Helen L. Marshall

You never know when someone

May catch a dream from you

You never know when a little word

Or something you may do

May open up the windows

Of a mind that seals a light

The way you love, may not matter at all

But you never know it might.

And just in case it could be

That another's life, through you

Might possibly change for the better

With a broader and brighter view

It seems it might be worth a try

At pointing the way to the right

Of course it may not matter at all,

But then again...it might

Online at www.academic.regis.edu/volunteer/

Notable Quote:

"Nothing is waste until it is wasted."

...from a book called [DIRT - The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth](#) by William Bryant Logan.

Submitted by Cindy McDonald, Hillside Park Community Garden



Special thanks to the [Region of Peel](#) for donating rain barrels to the Hillside Garden, and to Diane and Martha from the [Mississauga Master Gardeners](#) for helping Monika and I figure out how to set them up and link them together!

Parting Thoughts

Local food and community gardening are in the news a lot these days as thoughts turn to the impact that our food system has on our lives.

In your neighbourhood, a community garden can...

- Improve gardeners' quality of life
- Provide a catalyst for neighbourhood and community development and stimulate social interaction
- Encourage self reliance
- Beautify neighbourhoods
- Produce nutritious food
- Reduce family food budgets
- Preserve green spaces and conserve resources
- Create opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education
- Reduce crime
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections.

Autumn



Fall is the season of abundance! With local farmers bringing in the bounty from their fields, there is no time to feast like autumn. Now is the perfect time to spend the weekend with friends and family, doing any final preserving of the season's harvest for the winter months ahead. Root vegetables, squashes, apples and hearty greens are all in season and at their peak in flavour.

Give thanks for another delicious year and celebrate the harvest!

Look for more seasonal recipe cards courtesy of EcoSource



Ontario's Greenbelt is an area of permanently protected green space, farmland, vibrant communities, forests, wetlands, and watersheds. It surrounds the province's Golden Horseshoe – the most populated area of Canada, and is vital to the quality of life in southern Ontario. It's our protected countryside.

Autumn means...apples, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, celery, radishes, potatoes, squash, onions, grapes, plums, pumpkin, leeks...

Fall Fruit Crisp

Taste all the flavours of fall in this delicious dessert, full of local fruits!

INGREDIENTS

FILLING

- 4-5 local apples, cored and diced
- 2 local pears, cored and diced
- 1/2 cup Ontario cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 1/4 cup raisins or Ontario blueberries
- 1-3 tablespoons Ontario maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice or cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon flour

TOPPING

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup cold butter cut into pieces
- 1/4 cup Ontario maple syrup (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°
2. Combine the Filling ingredients in an 8 x 8-inch baking dish.
3. Mix together flour, oats, sugar, cinnamon/allspice and salt. Mix in butter with a fork until it looks like crumbs. Stir in optional syrup.
4. Spread over fruit filling and bake 30-40 minutes until topping is brown and fruit soft. Serves 4-6.



Try this delicious autumn recipe for a warm and sweet treat this season. Seasonal local food recipe cards are available free of charge at EcoSource. For copies of this card and others, please contact us!

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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