

Dig This!

Summer 2019



Growing Food and Community

DIG Garden Project Tour & Poker Run goes north

When: Saturday July 27, 2019 (rain or shine)

Sign in: 8:45am

Start: 9:00am

Starting location: TBA

Ticket price: \$20.00 online at www.durhamdigs.ca

For other options contact info@durhamdigs.ca

Ticket price includes chef created bagged lunch as well as a contribution to DIG special projects such as *You Grow Durham Fund* supporting new garden start-ups.

Deadline for bagged lunch ticket is July 19, 2019. Tour may be joined 'day of'.

Feature Garden: Lavender-Blu

Hobby farm, lavender garden and artisan studio shop where products may be purchased. Learn to propagate lavender.

Other Gardens

Whitby Ajax Community Garden Project - Preserves sale; art installation presentation

Tycoed Restorative Farm - Ecovillage

U-Help Foundation Garden - 2019 DIG *You Grow Durham* recipient; event day

Nourish Hub & Maple Tree CG - Lunch; interact with gardeners.

Care & Share Permaculture CG - Small garden with a big heart & wide reach

At day's end, locally donated **prizes** for the best poker hand!

Optional stop at day's end at Ocala Winery - meet the new owner

DIG encourages carpooling with friends for this event.

A **free DIG membership** will be provided to all attendees of this year's tour.

Come! Explore, Learn, & Have Fun!
DIG Garden Project Poker Run/Tour Goes North

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Nourish Hub & Maple Tree CG
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more
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Prizes: Locally donated prizes for the best poker hand at day's end!!!

Free: A complimentary DIG membership will be provided to all attendees of this year's tour.

DIG encourages carpooling with friends for this event.

DIG Durham Integrated Growers FOR A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

To Plant a Garden is to Plant the Future

Special August excursion ~ Smylie Food Forest Permaculture Tour

Host Keith St. John

Cobourg, Saturday, August 24. 9am - 12pm

\$10.00 per person at www.durhamdigs.ca August 1, 2019

Light refreshments

DIG encourages carpooling for this event.

Canadian Permaculture Legacy – www.youtube.com/watch?v=U79bqI-JSg

“What’s a single action that if everyone in the world took, the world would be a better place?”

Answer - “Plant a single fruit tree where you have otherwise useless sod grass lawn.”

A look back on DIG's first-ever Symposium

On Saturday, March 30th, 2019, DIG hosted its first-ever Urban Agriculture Symposium: Resilient Communities, Regenerative Landscapes at The Centre for Food, Durham College. With 72 attendees (well above DIG's 65 participant goal, and with 85 tickets sold), the day went off without a hitch.

The day-long event consisted of a video interview with Dr. Joe Nasr from the Centre for Studies in Food Security, Ryerson; an urban agriculture policy scan with DIG's own, Mary Anne Martin; two panels, consisting of speakers representing urban agriculture from around Durham Region; a speech from Ryan Turnbull called "Urban Agriculture as Social Enterprises – Eco-ethnomics"; and a keynote from Ron Berezan, who came all the way from



Powell River, British Columbia, to regale his audience on the concept of revitalization of communities through urban agriculture.

Some personal highlights involved learning more about permaculture, as well as watching the TED Talk from Ron Finley, AKA "The Gangsta Gardener". This inspirational gentleman transformed one of Los Angeles' poorest, most crime-riddled neighbourhoods (South-Central) from a food desert of drive-thrus and drive-bys, into a thriving food forest. Ron's work is applicable to much of Durham Region, and his stirring work is a call-to-arms for all of us to transform our built-up landscapes into self-sufficient, interconnected urban food jungles! Follow Ron on Twitter @RonFinleyHQ!

Based on feedback from 76% of symposium participants, the majority of people rated each presentation very highly (4 or 5 out of 5). In

general, the day was well-received. Here is a sampling of comments we received post-symposium:

"Lots of great projects happening in Durham Region!"

"Growing your own food is like printing your own money."

"Speakers were incredible and encouraging."

"[There were] great topics to explore further & local opportunities..."

"[I loved seeing] everyone coming together [to] make a difference in urban agriculture."

"We don't need to find our way back to the land, we are already in it".

To find more great events from DIG and around Durham Region, follow us on Twitter @durhamdigs.



Right: Keynote speaker Ron Berezan at the podium. Above: Ron addresses the engrossed audience.

Below: The Symposium gang. DIG board members, committee members, speakers, student organizers.

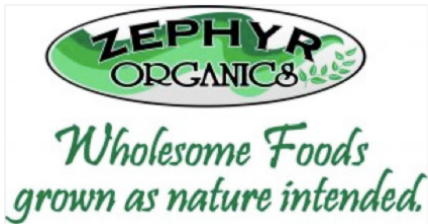
Before the Symposium

Resilient Communities Regenerative Landscapes: Continuing the Conversation on Urban Agriculture in Durham

The day before the symposium, DIG hosted, with support from Durham Region Agriculture and Rural Affairs Economic Development and Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, a half-day workshop for municipal staff. The session drew representatives from Durham Region, Pickering, Ajax, Oshawa, Whitby, Clarington, and Uxbridge as well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Participants were treated to a morning of presentations about - and time to discuss - ways that urban agriculture can revitalize communities and regenerate landscapes. The report from the day will be posted on the DIG website in June.



Agri - Hero



In honour of our 2019 North Durham Tour focus, our Agri-Hero is Zephyr Organics. Located at 10900 Concession 4 in Zephyr, Uxbridge Township, this third generation, family-owned, certified organic farm has been growing a variety vegetables, fruit, and herbs for 26 years. Zephyr Organics encompasses over 100 acres of fields and greenhouses.

Zephyr Organics' philosophy centres on building healthy soil as the basis for the development of healthy plants and thereby nutritious produce for its customers. This dedication to health, safety and ethics is an assurance to customers of the quality of the produce they purchase.

The organic produce from Zephyr Organics is available to individual and commercial buyers. The farm offers a variety of pre-purchased Farm Share plans delivered weekly or bi-weekly to your door in North Toronto, Durham and York Regions. Farm Share provides an opportunity for you to share a part of the farm. If this is not for you, the weekend Farm Store may be a better option. Zephyr Organics' produce can be found in restaurants, at retailers and with wholesalers.

Check them out online at www.zephyrorganics.com or better yet visit the Farm Store.

Caring for a school garden over the summertime

Our Spring season's article focused on how to plan a school-based community garden, following the Square Foot Garden (Bartholomew, 2013). For our Summer edition, we focus on how to keep the school garden alive during July and August, no easy feat.

First thing's first is to recruit heavily. Early in June, send a letter home with all of the children who are involved in the garden club at your school. In order to have support all summer long, you need to make sure the parents are informed. As always, don't forget to loop in the administration and custodians. In this case, definitely ask permission first, instead of begging for forgiveness later, since there may be insurance liabilities at stake.

Once you have a small army of volunteers, create a sign-up sheet that covers one week at a time, all summer long. If you are planning on vacationing, ask another teacher to monitor the garden for you. One 7-day drought could jeopardize the entire school garden project, along with all of your blood, sweat, and tears.

Keep the to-do list simple, and the tools handy. If you do not have storage under lock & key, make sure your volunteers bring their own shovels, yard waste bags, and watering cans (and water!!!). Our school is adjacent to a local creek, and so we can fill-up there, but if you are not so lucky, consider buying a rain barrel from Vessna at the U-Help Foundation in Uxbridge, Uhelpfoundation@outlook.com or 416-419-5109 or info@RainBarrelFundraising.com



As any gardener knows, weeds can quickly get out of hand, so make sure you add a thick layer of mulch just before school lets out. An added benefit of mulching is that, when applied 5 to 10 centimeters, it will reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation by shading the soil, and will act as an insulator keeping roots of the plants at a constant temperature (eXtension.org).

If all goes well, when the school doors burst open on September 3rd, you can greet your students with freshly grown carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, zucchinis, you name it! Nothing says "happy first day of school" like a handful of fresh fruit and veg!

Coming up in Autumn's newsletter, we invite you to share your schoolyard garden stories with us! Email adrian_778@hotmail.com with your own foray into garden with school children!

References:

Bartholomew, Mel (2013). All New Square Foot Gardening, Second Edition: The Revolutionary Way to Grow More In Less Space. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.ca/Square-Foot-Gardening-Second-Revolutionary/dp/1591865484>

Congratulations!

U-Help Foundation Community Garden Project Is the 2019 Recipient of the DIG

You Grow Durham Award

initiated to encourage new garden start-up.

For the second year in a row U-Help Foundation has partnered with Ontario Summer Jobs to provide summer employment to local students and at the same time create a connection between the new generation and those that have come before.



Some of the happy seniors helped by the U-Help Foundation

GardenStory

Submitted by Neville White with input from Sandra Brown, Saint Andrew's Community Garden, Ajax

Norman Lambe

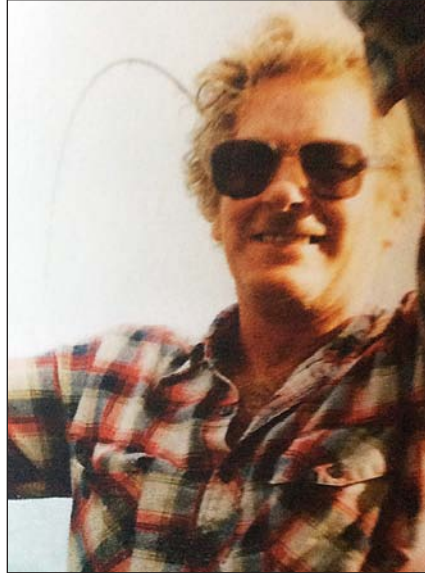
Norman joined our garden when it first opened in 2010. Over the years, his red scooter became part of the garden landscape. Norman quickly became one of the most beloved members of our community and was an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact.

Norman never let his disability slow him down. Although he couldn't walk or stand for long periods of time, he managed to keep his garden plot clean and brimming with vegetables. On maintenance days, which he seldom missed, he always contributed what he could. His scooter roamed over the garden as he greeted and chatted with neighbours and fellow gardeners, usually with a story to tell. Language was no barrier to Norman; he had no trouble making himself understood, regardless of who he was speaking with. He never left a conversation without putting a smile on someone's face.

Norman's plot produced more than he could ever use himself, but nothing was ever wasted.

What he couldn't use was given away to other gardeners or donated to the garden's Food Bank Program.

There was one feature in Norman's garden for which he was best known: his rhubarb patch. Norman's rhubarb originated at Audley Stables, where he had worked as a young man. The homestead and garden on that property date



back to 1860 and rhubarb could be found in abundance. When it came to his rhubarb, his generosity excelled and many rhubarb patches in other gardens originated from Norman's plot. When asked if he might share some of his bounty, his answer was pretty much the same, "Take what you need but don't take it all."

On June 2nd 2017, Norman suffered a heart attack and sadly passed away. His death was a blow to our gardening community and to his many friends in the building where he lived. Normally, under such circumstances, his plot would have been cleared and rented to another gardener. However, his friends and the gardening community were adamant that his garden be kept alive as a tribute and a reminder of this man who touched so many lives.

To this day, his plot continues to thrive and stands as a testament to Norman and his love of gardening. There is also a small plaque in another garden that was cared for by Norman, this one at the apartment building where he lived. It's dedicated to Norman recognizing a life well lived.

GardenTip

Mint

Who would have thought...

Sometimes the simplest solutions are right beneath our noses, and peppermint, which grows abundantly in our community gardens is a perfect example of this.

Truly a marvel of the botanical world, this herb aids digestion, enhances memory, eases nausea, assists with sleeplessness, and reduces tension, while simultaneously increasing energy and strength. A hot cup of peppermint tea can quickly ease congestion, expand bronchioles and sinuses, and soothe away a trying headache.

The diverse properties of this plant further extend to our gardens where it offers protection from the potentially dangerous effects of mice in our sheds and compost bins. Besides possibly damaging tools, supplies, and the shed itself, the urine, feces, and saliva of mice can cause allergic reactions such as

sinus pain, coughs, congestion, sore throat, and headache. They can exacerbate existing asthmatic conditions and COPD, and in the worst case scenario, can cause Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), a rare respiratory disease which can be fatal one to five (1 - 5) weeks after airborne exposure to fresh droppings. For this reason, the shed should not be swept until all signs of rodents have been wiped clean with a mixture of bleach and water in a ratio of 6:1, while wearing gloves and a mask.

Fortunately for us, the refreshing scent of mint that most of us are revitalized by, overpowers



and repels mice. Bundles of fresh peppermint stalks may be hung from the rafters or the walls, and handfuls of the loose herb may be strewn around the periphery of the shed, and tossed on the compost bin. A large pot, or several pots of it, may be grown outside the shed for easy access to the herb, and for further protection from these unwanted visitors.

To further strengthen this olfactory barrier, peppermint essential oil may be purchased from health stores for under \$10, and 10 - 15 drops of it applied to cotton pads or cotton balls, where it can be placed in corners, or in areas where signs of mice are evident.

While we bask in the scent of the healing properties of this herbal helpmate, mice are most often sent running, reminding us that nature has solutions for all that ails us, and that it is indeed a great ally for the creation and preservation of our health and that of our garden.

GardenTip

Edible flowers

Only eat flowers that have been organically grown. Do not eat nursery stock plants, cut flowers or roadside finds, as they may have been treated with chemicals or pesticides.

Pick your edible flowers in the morning, when they have the highest water content. Keep them on dampened paper towel inside a sealed container in the refrigerator for as long as a week. You can revive wilted flowers by floating them in some ice water for a few minutes just before serving.



For a light onion flavour, pick the tiny flowers of an **allium** and use as a topping on potatoes, creamy cheeses or deviled eggs.



Calendula (also called pot marigold) adds both colour and peppery flavour to a wide range of dishes. Try it in a salad or mixed with herbed butter in a light stir-fry.



Plant **chamomile** seeds to harvest flowers for a soothing and relaxing tea. To preserve the flowers for tea, place the flowers on a screen in a well-ventilated, shaded place. Turn them every few days until they are dry then store them in a punctured paper bag.



Corn flower petals look spectacular sprinkled on salads or in fancy drinks.



Pull the clustered flowers of **lavender** apart and sprinkle a few pieces onto chocolate cake.

Submerge one or two pieces in a glass of chilled champagne.

The sweet, intensely floral flavour of lavender should be used with restraint, but adds an incredible pop to savory dishes as well as desserts.



All garden **nasturtiums** produce edible flowers and leaves. All parts of the nasturtium have a pleasant, sweet, peppery flavor. The flowers can be used whole to decorate salads and a variety of other foods. Remove the long spur at the back of the flower, as this is the nectary and may harbor small insects.



The flower petals of the familiar garden **pansy** are edible and highly decorative. The petals have little flavor, but the whole flower can also be used. It has a grassy, wintergreen undertone that works well in a fruit salad.

GardenART

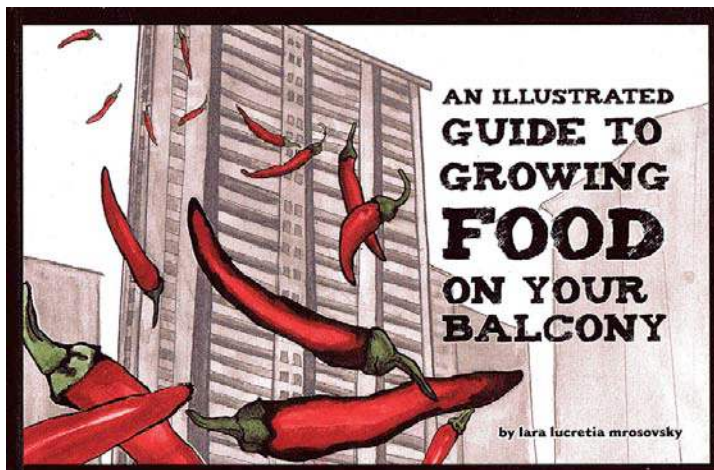
1 DIY veggie markers are easy to make. Most gardeners dig up rocks any way, so why not put them to use with a bit of paint. Finish with a UV varnish, usually available at art supply stores, to protect your masterpieces.



2 You may think that a community garden is an unlikely place for an art installation... but why not? At the Whitby Ajax Garden Project there is just such a creative undertaking. The **Encouragement Path** will be completed in 2020, and will feature a brick walkway through a plot of painted rocks, portraits, a mini CG, painted branch sculptures and more. It may not be high art as in the Rembrandt sense, but an interesting endeavour none the less. Watch for updates in this newsletter.

No back yard?

There are a few copies of this fabulous, informative booklet available for a small fee. Contact DIG via the website.



DigThis!

A quarterly publication of Durham Integrated Growers

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