Dig this!

Spring 2019

Saturday, March 30th

Save the date for DIG's Urban Agriculture Symposium

Resilient Communities, Regenerative Landscapes: An Urban Agriculture Symposium

A gathering of all those interested and involved in urban agriculture and its future in Durham.

DON'T MISS IT!

This is an event that will bring together policy makers, food producers, students, entrepreneurs, organizations, and influencers. The day will celebrate existing and new projects while raising awareness and the potential of urban agriculture projects, both for-profit and voluntary (eg. community gardens, urban farms, and urban orchards), in Durham Region.

We are pleased to be partnering with Durham College Horticulture students and students in the Event Management Program at the W. Galen Weston Centre for Food.

Join us for panel discussions, informative speaker sessions, networking and Durham College greenhouse tours!

Keynote: *Revitalizing Communities through Urban Agriculture*. Ron Berezan - Permaculture teacher and consultant in Community Food Security, Powell River, B.C.

Lunch and refreshments included.

Saturday, March 30, 2019
9:00 am 3:15 pm
1604 Champlain Avenue Whitby ON L1N 6A7

Buy tickets online

urbanagriculturesymposium.eventbrite.ca

Comming Up

Durham Region residents are invited to attend the Farm Connections Open House on Wednesday, **April 3**, 2019 starting at 4:30 pm until 8:00 pm at the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena located at 67 Winchester Rd. E., Brooklin, Ontario.

This interactive event provides attendees with an opportunity to learn about agriculture through various stations, including meeting with farmers and livestock; as well as learning about dairy, beef, poultry, sheep, maple syrup, vegetables, apples and crops.

Bring the whole family and learn about agriculture in Durham Region. Meet local farmers and their animals, learn about how crops are grown, how to make maple syrup and where your food comes from.

DURHAM FARM CONNECTIONS

Live demonstrations will take place throughout the evening including cow milking, sheep shearing, cheese making, wool spinning, cooking and meet a large animal veterinarian.

Admission is free but donations of non-perishable food items will be gratefully accepted on behalf of the local food bank.

For more information visit:

www.durhamfarmconnections.ca

www.facebook.com/durhamfarmconnections

Email: info@durhamfarmconnections.ca

Agri-Hero ~ "R"-Farm

Some people may remember "R" Farm as the wonderful and welcoming final destination on DIG's garden tour last year. "R" Farm is a self-defined "vibrant arts-based community farm where visitors and members come for whatever "R" they need… relaxation, rejuvenation, reflection, resolution, renewal..." The farm, operated by Berty Gibson and her son Jaison, boasts the Black Lab Studio, picnic shelter, walking trails, picnic areas, ponds (and skating!), rustic outdoor stages, and pumpkin and sunflower fields. Frequent events mark the season including the Blossom Tour and Teddy Bears Picnic, Solstice Camp-out and Summer Screen Family Movie Night, Harvest Festival, and Halloween Party. Pop by to pick up heirloom garden produce, pick-your-own veggies, fresh brown eggs, honey, homemade jams, pickles, and breads- or select from the Food Locker full of free-range meat chickens, freezer meals, and desserts. Want to get more involved in the "R" Farm community? Become a member or sponsor one of the farm's bee hives. You can find "R" Farm at 3388 Concession 3, Newcastle or at www.rfarmfresh.ca

Wagon ride at R-Farm during the DIG Garden Tour, Summer 2018

Layouts for a school garden

Our Winter season's article focused on the early planning stages of a school garden. This month, we will explore how to plan a school-based community garden, following a simple, structured, and time-honoured method. Interestingly, this technique, called The Square Foot Garden, is suitable for all garden types!

Pioneered by Mel Bartholomew, square foot gardening is a technique that became popular for those who seek order and control. It may seem like you'd be going against the grain by implementing this technique with children, however, square foot gardening reinforces a child's innate desire for rules and routines; once you apply the formula, kids can follow the "recipe" and are almost guaranteed success.

According to Don't Waste The Crumbs.com, "You divide your space into square feet and plant a certain amount of plants (depending on the size of the plant) within each square foot." As an example, since bell peppers grow up and out, you would plant 1 per square; meanwhile, carrots grow up and down, therefore you can plant 16 per square (https://dontwastethecrumbs.com/).

You may be asking yourself, "we're in Canada, so why on Earth would we measure in square feet?" We leave it to our friends, the Aussies, to help us out with the conversions. Your raised planter would therefore be 1.2 metres by 1.2 metres, and your square foot plot within the garden would measure 30 centimetres by 30 centimetres.

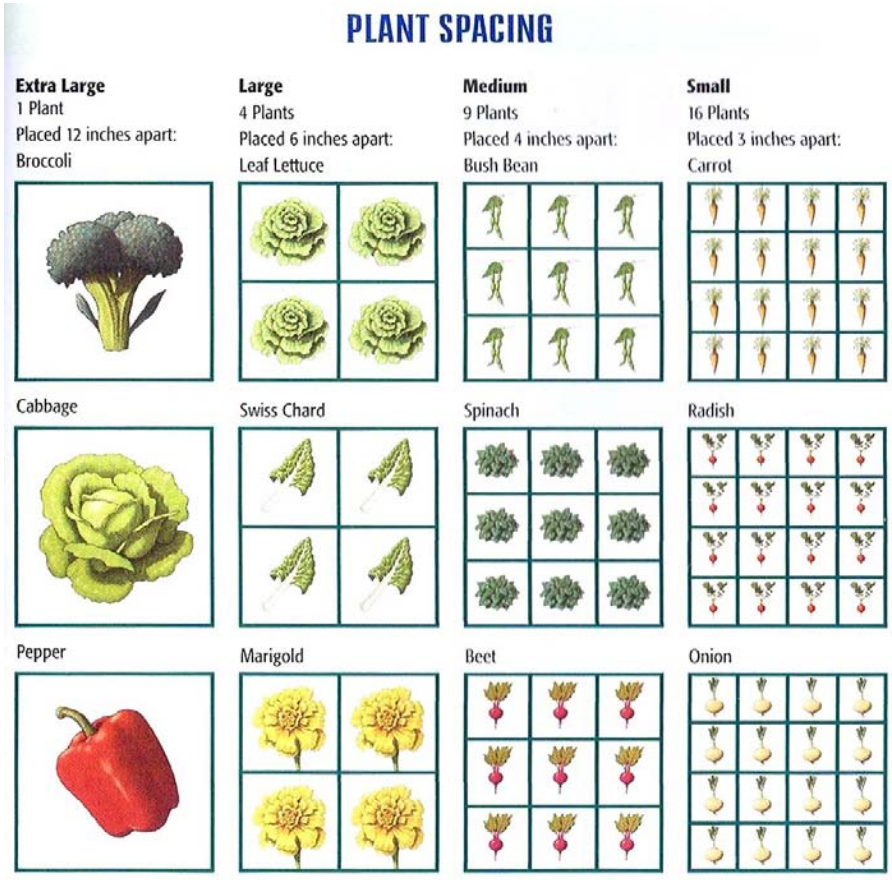
Once your planter is prepped with the best soil you can get your hands on, pull out the measuring tape, start at one end, and mark off 11 inches. Hammer a nail in, and repeat, until you reach the end. Continue measuring along all sides until you reach the beginning. Finally, tie your twine to the nail and pull it across to the opposite nail, tying it there, to create a line. Repeat until you are left with a grid system resembling this:

As you begin planting, you will need to know how many plants fit in each square.

See chart below.

As we always say here at DIG, start small, and see where life takes you! If you find success with one raised planter, expand gradually, as it's easier to scale up. To conclude, here is an important resource to help inform your practice:

http://www.melbartholomew.com/all-the-basics-of-square-foot-gardening/



Great news ~ Grant for school garden

It is with delight that we announce that Walter E. Harris Public School in Oshawa, with backing from DIG, is the recipient of the Whole Kids Foundation Grant to the tune of $2000. Coupled with another grant from Farm to School Month Canada, big plans are underway to transform the school yard into a sustainable, food-producing location. There's a buzz in the air as the winter snows begins to melt, revealing fallow garden space ready to be transformed by eager students.

The most exciting plan, according to one grade 6 student, is the opportunity to harvest and process foods grown on-site for the school's newest extra-curricular, "le club de cuisine" (cooking). The ultimate goal is to funnel fresh foods into the school's afternoon snack program, and to create a culture where local foods take centre stage, in support of the Ontario Health curriculum.

For more information on applying for your own school garden project grant, please visit www.wholekidsfoundation.org & www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/resources/funding/

GardenTip

Veggies BFF ~ Companion planting

Companion planting is the practice of planting two or more plants together for mutual benefit.

- Shelter - larger plants protect others from wind or too much sun.
- Support - Some vegetables can be used as physical supports for others. For example, pole beans with corn use the corn as a trellis.
- Beneficial Insects - attracting beneficial insects such as bees help spread pollen.
- Soil Improvement - some vegetables improve soil conditions for other plants. Members of the legume family (beans etc.) draw nitrogen from the atmosphere and add it to the soil around them.
- Decoy Plants - these are plants that emit odors that aid in masking the odors of insect-desirable vegetable plants.

Use this chart as a guide, and modify it as you find what works (or doesn't work) in your own garden.

asparagus basil, cilantro, dill, marigold, nasturtium, oregano, parsley, tomato, thyme
NO – broccoli, garlic, onion, potato

bean (bush) beet, nasturtium, pea, potato, rosemary, squash
NO – chives, garlic, marigold, onion, shallot

bean (pole) carrot, celery, chard, corn, cucumber, eggplant, pea, potato, radish
NO – beet, broccoli, marigold

beet bean (bush), corn, garlic, lettuce, kohlrabi, mint, onion
NO – bean (pole), tomato

broccoli celery, onion, potato, rosemary, sage
NO – bean (pole), asparagus, pepper, potato, pumpkin, corn, melon, strawberry, tomato

cabbage celery, cucumber, dill, garlic, kale, lettuce, nasturtium, onion, rosemary, tomato
NO – marigold

carrot bean, leek, lettuce, pea, onion, pepper, rosemary, sage, tomato
NO – potato, parsnip, anise, dill

corn bean, beet, cucumber, pea, potato, squash, sunflower
NO – broccoli, tomato, wheat-straw mulch

cucumber bean, cabbage, corn, lettuce, nasturtium, pea, radish
NO – aromatic herb, potato

garlic beet, cabbage, eggplant, tomato
NO – bean, pea

lettuce beet, cabbage, carrot, onion, strawberry
NO – parsley

marigold asparagus, pepper, potato, tomato
NO – bean

nasturtium asparagus, bean, cabbage, cucumber, squash

onion beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, lettuce, pepper, potato, rosemary, strawberry, tomato
NO – asparagus, bean, pea, sage

pea bean, carrot, corn, cucumber, potato, tomato, radish, turnip
NO – garlic, onion

pepper carrot, onion, marigold
NO – bean, kohlrabi, potato

potato bean, broccoli, cabbage, corn, horse-radish, marigold, onion, pea
NO – asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, cucumber, eggplant, melon, pepper, squash, tomato, sunflower

squash bean, corn, mint, nasturtium, radish, sunflower
NO – potato

sunflower bean, corn, squash
NO – potato

tomato asparagus, basil, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, dill, garlic, marigold, onion, pea
NO – beet, potato

GardenTip

Perennial vegetables and fruit

There are many perennials crops that are loved by gardeners everywhere, Here are a few that may interest you:

- asparagus
- berry bushes - honey berries, raspberries, blueberries,
- horseradish
- rhubarb
- strawberries

Imagine growing vegetables that require no annual tilling and planting. They thrive and produce abundant, nutritious crops throughout the season. Once established in the proper site and climate, perennial vegetable plants can be virtually indestructible despite neglect. They are often more resistant to pests, diseases, drought and weeds, too.

Perennial vegetables usually have different seasons of availability from annuals providing more food throughout the year. While you are transplanting tiny annual seedlings into your vegetable garden or waiting out the mid-summer heat, many perennials are already growing strong or ready to harvest.

Some perennial veggies provide fertilizer to themselves and their neighboring plants by fixing nitrogen in the soil. Some provide habitat for beneficial insects and pollinators, while others can climb trellises and give shade to other crops.

When well mulched, perennials improve the soil's structure, organic matter, porosity and water-holding capacity.

There are a few drawbacks. Some perennials are slow to establish and may take several years to grow before they begin to yield well. Asparagus is a good example. Others are so low-maintenance that they can quickly become weeds and overtake your garden.

They must be carefully placed into a permanent location and will have to be maintained separately from your annual crops.

GardenART

You know those pesky branches and sticks that hinder garden cultivation? Well don't toss them away! Instead, have some creative fun; paint them and stand them upright in your garden. Here are some examples:

In the garden, my soul is sunshine.

Easy roasted asparagus

1 bunch thin asparagus spears, trimmed

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 1/2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

1 clove garlic, minced (optional)

1 teaspoon sea salt

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional)

Preheat an oven to 425 degrees F.

Place the asparagus into a mixing bowl, and drizzle with the olive oil. Toss to coat the spears, then sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, garlic, salt, and pepper. Arrange the asparagus onto a baking sheet in a single layer.

Bake in the preheated oven until just tender, 12 to 15 minutes depending on thickness. Sprinkle with lemon juice just before serving.

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