

Get to Know Your Local Farmer: Connecting Schools to Farms

Welcome to the first collection of farmer focused articles to help your Farm to School program build connections with local farmers. The Farm to School Greater Vancouver (F2SGV) Steering Committee is trialing this newsletter in response to schools letting us know about their challenges trying to connect with local farmers. The articles were submitted by F2SGV Steering Committee members who have connections with local farmers.

We want to hear from you

Please send an email to the Chair of F2SGV Kathy.Romses@vch.ca with your comments including – if the newsletter is useful, frequency for newsletter, e.g. once or twice per year and any other comments you want to share.

Self-watering reservoir planters

Kelly Paddock, Principal from Alex Hope Elementary, purchased planters from this local company: Sybertech Waste Reduction
www.swrl.com 1-888-888-7975

Farm to School Resources

Find more resources related to Farm to School online including how to start, school equipment, food safety tips, recipes and much more at:
www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Farmtoschool

Get Local BC

FarmFolk CityFolk website with seasonal chart
www.getlocalbc.org

Stay Connected with the Vancouver School Food Network Online!

If you want to start a discussion or receive updates about upcoming workshops or school food related grants, you can sign up to receive notifications from the [Vancouver School Food Forum Google Group](#). Refer to sign up instructions [here](#).

The Vancouver School Network (VSFN) is a network of school, community and health agencies and programs who are working towards healthier and sustainable school food systems in Vancouver. This work includes education about, modeling of, and support for growing, preparing, eating and appreciating healthy, sustainable foods, and managing waste. Check out inspiring school stories at the [Vancouver School Food Network website](#).



Farm to School Greater Vancouver Steering Committee

Farm to Cafeteria Canada, FarmFolk CityFolk
Fraser Health, Fresh Roots Urban Farm, Langley Environmental
Partners Society, Public Health Association of BC - Farm to School,
Richmond Food Security Society, Think&EatGreen@School,
Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver School District, Edible Garden
Project

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Vancity

In Langley ...

David Catzel, Glorious Organics Co-Operative, is one of the farmers behind the Farm to School program at Aldergrove Community Secondary School (ACSS). David has been teaching and mentoring students, teachers and the cafeteria at ACSS since the program started in 2012. Everything from grafting apple trees, seeding flats to create transplants, learning to operate their school greenhouse and growing unique vegetables such as purple sprouting broccoli, have been on the agenda. A highlight for the grade 12 Sustainable Resource class was a chance to turn dried corn grown by Glorious Organics Co-Op into flour using nothing but bike power. The resulting corn flour was baked into corn bread in the cafeteria giving students a chance to experience local and sustainable food first hand.



Located in Aldergrove, BC, Glorious Organics Co-Operative is situated on Fraser Common Farm Co-Operative – a collective of individuals with the shared vision of stewarding their biodiverse farm for future generations and providing social, educational and other farm experiences.



Glorious Organics Co-Op grows more than 30 varieties of certified organic salad greens as well as peas, beans, leeks, potatoes, carrots, beets, onions, garlic, fennel, herbs, flowers, some fruit, and more! They sell directly to restaurants, at farmers markets (as the Organic Farm Connection), and through their CSA program. They also run a successful Kids Farm Camp during the summer and offer farm tours for interested groups. New in 2014 they are co-hosting a Permaculture Design Certificate Course that will be held on Fraser Common Farm Co-Op.

Visit www.gloriousorganics.com, follow them on Facebook or check out this video <http://youtu.be/hnpYsyUWbDE> for more information about the great things happening at Glorious Organics Co-Operative. info@gloriousorganics.com or 604-857-1400



In North Vancouver ...

Loutet Farm There is growing interest and participation in Farm2School programs on the North Shore, but many schools find connecting with farmers challenging. We may not have any agricultural land or large-scale commercial farms operating on the North Shore, but if we work together we can develop a collaborative network to strengthen Farm2School across the North Shore.



Compared to other school districts, the North Shore is far away from local farmers. That means that it is costly and inconvenient for farmers to deliver produce to our schools and for our classes to visit their farms. However, there are farmers that come to the weekly farmers' markets in North Vancouver that are interested in combining Farm2School delivery with their market days. If North Shore schools collaborate and submit a combined order for produce during the season when the farmers' markets are not operating (Nov-April), we would have an order large enough for a farmer to plan for planting and deliver to. Depending on how much produce we are ordering, local organizations may also have cold storage available to share. Sharing responsibilities for pick up from the Farmers' Market between participating schools could also

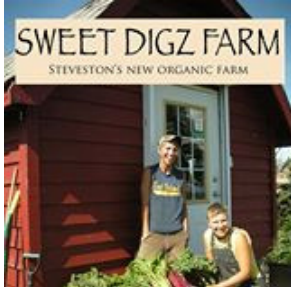
reduce weekly workload and coordination.

Getting fresh local food on to plates is only half the joy of the Farm2School program. Providing opportunities for students to explore hands-on farm experiences is vital. The Edible Garden Project, a program of the North Shore Neighbourhood House, operates a half-acre urban farm in Loutet Park (City of North Vancouver). You can book educational farm tours and activities at Loutet Farm for your class throughout the seasons. If your school is looking for ways to streamline farm-direct orders, is interested in collaborating with other North Shore schools, or wants to visit Loutet Farm.

Contact Emily@ediblegardenproject.com



In Richmond ...



Sweet Digz Farm is a new organic farm in Steveston, BC. They grow organic veggies for local Richmond and Vancouver markets, as well as organic seed and herbal medicinals. Produce is sold through a CSA Box Program at the Steveston Summer Farmer's Market. Contact: Kareno or Kimi at 778.883.DIGZ (3449) or email eatlocal@sweetdigzfarm.ca

The Richmond Urban Farmers grow food in backyards throughout Richmond. They grow a full range of food and hope that their experiences are useful to others. Contact: Susan at 604-319-1223; view website <http://www.richmondurbanfarms.blogspot.ca>



The Sharing Farm is run by a small dedicated staff and committed volunteers to provide fresh, healthy, local produce to low-income families in Richmond. Annually we donate thousands of pounds of our produce to the Richmond Food Bank and community meals programs. The Sharing Farm is an outdoor classroom where students can learn how to grow food and about issues of food security. Contact: Gates at email James@sharingfarm.ca view website <http://www.sharingfarm.ca>

In Vancouver ...

Fresh Roots is a non-profit society growing healthy communities through urban agriculture. We do that through our schoolyard market garden programs: 14,000 square foot commercially producing spaces that are used as outdoor learning classrooms by the school community. In these gardens we host Professional Development days for teachers, community workshops and celebrations, and farm tours and field trips for elementary, secondary, and university classes. Produce from our Schoolyard Market gardens is distributed through our weekly veggie box program, sold to local school cafeterias, and our Good Food Markets.

For Farm2School Greater Vancouver, we encourage teachers to align their salad bar programs with our Good Food Markets, and purchase their vegetables fresh from us! Good Food Markets have become community hubs where students, teachers and neighbours come together in a bustling marketplace atmosphere. Stop by the market and you may hear a memory of food from an elder's past or learn about a delicious recipe culinary arts students have created from the fresh vegetables at the market; neighbours may even teach you how to say your favourite vegetable in a different language! While shopping, market goers have the opportunity to grow their food literacy as they chat with our farmer or wander through the market garden. *Sharing food is a timeless, universal act of community; everybody eats.* With food as the foundation of our work, we believe that healthy produce should be accessible to everyone - that's why we grow and sell vegetables in the heart of urban neighbourhoods. We host two markets weekly, both are during the school week open just after school, designed for teachers schedules.

A big part of our vision is connecting youth with the food they are eating while at school. To reach this goal we partner with a number of school cafeterias to bring fresh schoolyard grown produce onto the plates of students for the entire school year. Through consultation with our cafeteria partners we've identified vegetables that best suit each school's menu and plan our plantings and harvest to ensure we can consistently provide these crops. Through this unique relationship students can create a link between the food they see growing in the garden and menu items featuring Fresh Roots produce available to them at lunch.

To learn more about Fresh Roots, our Schoolyard Market Gardens, teacher professional development opportunities, and how to purchase school grown produce from us, visit www.freshroots.ca and Facebook at www.facebook.com/freshrootsurbanfarm



Van Tech Secondary Schoolyard Market Garden—transformed from a vacant field to a thriving outdoor classroom & urban farm.



Students participating in harvesting pea shoots for their monthly Farm2School Greater Vancouver Salad Bar Program.



Students, staff & community members helping establish the David Thompson Schoolyard Market Garden



David Thompson students creating multilingual signs for the Schoolyard Market Garden