

Down to Earth

Editor's Corner

Hello fellow organic enthusiasts! My name is Andrea Gartley and I am the new editor of *Down to Earth*. I am excited to be part of the team at COG OSO. I am a Registered Nurse, and I have a passion for healthy eating, protecting the environment, and feeding the soul with knowledge and community. My earliest memories of gardening are with my grandparents and their vegetable and flower gardens plus fruit trees. They respected the earth and reaped the delicious goods that the earth rewarded them with. In *Down to Earth*, I will share with you news from organic leaders and all the accomplishments of COG OSO.

Spring is indeed near and our members and volunteers are busy preparing for the new season. In this edition, we hear from Bryson Farms and their innovations with organic produce. We learn from Plot of Earth about the early beginnings of a farm. We are also privileged to receive gardening insights from Rob Danforth. And lots more! If you have any ideas for future articles or any comments for the *Down to Earth* team, we would love to hear from you.

Warm greetings and happy spring!

Andrea Gartley

editordowntoearth@gmail.com

IN THIS ISSUE

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

– Page 3

THE DTE NOTEBOOK – Page 4

INNOVATIONS TO PRESERVE

THE SEASON'S BEST – Page 10



Demonstration Garden – Spring 2017

Will this year's buckwheat green-fertilizer, planted in the late fall, emerge successfully? Will the cherry trees with bark damaged by rodents recover? Will it be a quick spring? A dry spring? Will there be lots of garden visitors? Will photographers from the Canadian Camera Conference 2017 being held in Ottawa just before Canada Day descend upon the COG Demonstration Garden with photographic equipment in hand? Will your well-laid plans for the future, including indoor seed planting, yield the right seedlings at the right time? We shall have some answers to some of these questions in the next couple of weeks... or maybe that is rushing the season a bit. Still, given the weather we've had, we will kick off in the garden within a day of last year's date.



We invite those interested in being part of a COG Demonstration Garden major work party to join us on the 30th of April, (and if inclement weather the 7th of May) for a couple of hours from 9 AM to Noon.

We will continue to offer opportunities for volunteers to work 2 hours during a 9 AM to noon period each Sunday. A varying second day of the

week will be available if there is sufficient interest.

In addition, this year, there is a little bit of raking of gravel off the lawn to be done in early March, and some sorting of the gardening tools we share with Friends of the Farm, this to be done at a time they will announce in Early Spring.

A call to those thinking of getting involved – you will be most welcomed, and this year... as Stan Roger's wrote 'Put another season's promise in the ground'.

Please feel free to contact:

Jim Davidson, Demonstration Garden Coordinator, Email: dr241@nfc.ca

URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS

APRIL 18 TO MAY 9, 2017

SÉMINAIRES SUR LE JARDINAGE BIO URBAIN

18 AVRIL AU 9 MAI 2017



DESIGN: PENTAFOLIO



Canadian Organic Growers
Cultivons Biologique Canada

Ottawa – St. Lawrence – Outaouais Chapter
Section d'Ottawa – Saint-Laurent – Outaouais

Emplacement central
Nouveaux sujets d'actualités
Rabais et forfaits disponibles

Information/inscription
www.cog.ca/ottawa

Central location
Hot new topics
Package and discount fees available

Information/Registration
www.cog.ca/ottawa

Steering Committee Report March 2017

WHAT'S ON THE MENU FOR COG OSO IN 2017?

Communications is the hot topic at COG OSO these days. The renewal of our website is in process with a working group looking at strategies to draw people to www.cog.ca/ottawa/

We welcome Marika Atfield to the Steering Committee as Communications Lead. She is deeply involved in the renewal of both our website and our e-newsletter, *Down to Earth* (DTE). Molly Davidson, former editor of DTE has had to move for employment. We want to thank Molly for carrying the torch for DTE so skillfully for several years. We welcome Andrea Gartley on board as editor of the newsletter.

Eco Farm Day took place on February 25 and was a great success. More information to come in the next edition of DTE!

Looking ahead to spring, the Urban Organic Gardening Seminars are coming up on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 pm from April 19 to May 9. Joanne Cairns has joined the volunteer team organizing these seminars.

The Organic Demonstration Garden is acquiring a Virtual Demo Guide for smart phones by Telsing Andrews. This is a most welcome addition and we thank Telsing for this initiative.

Organic Seed Sale 2017

FUNDRAISER FOR SENIOR ORGANIC GARDENERS!

- Rainbow Foods, 1487 Richmond Road, March 24, 11-5 pm
- Pantry Plus, 2433 St. Joseph Blvd, Orleans, March 28, 10-5 pm
- Scotiabank- 3888 Innes Road, Orleans, March 31, 10-5 pm

For more information, visit:

www.cog.ca/ottawa/senior-organic-gardeners/



Tribute to former chair of COG OSO

Siegfried Neumann



Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter would like to pay tribute to a former chair, Siegfried Neumann, who recently passed away.

He was born in 1933 and moved to Canada in 1950. He was known for his involvement with COG and as a professional beekeeper.

Siegfried was in on the ground floor when the Ottawa Chapter of COG was first established. He was present when a number of people gathered in kitchens to sketch out a plan for this new organization. He was one of the pioneers of COG OSO!

He was also part of the first Organic Standards Committee to establish voluntary organic standards in Canada. He became chair of the local Ottawa chapter of COG in the early 1990's and took his chairman's role very seriously.

Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Ingrid, at this sad time.

Senior Organic Gardeners SPONSOR



The Cottage Gardener
Heirloom Seedhouse & Nursery

COG OSO SPONSOR

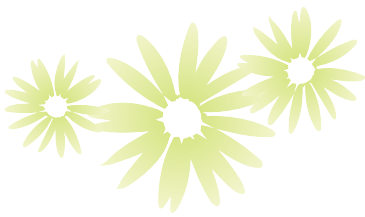


GRETA'S
ORGANIC
GARDENS

COG OSO SPONSOR

debbie holzman

Take your website on the
road...
go mobile



The DTE Notebook for the Urban Organic Vegetable and Herb Gardener March 2017

ROB DANFORTH



Daylight is increasing and the sun lingers longer. In a few weeks, it will be time to start seeds indoors for those plants that need a head start on our Ottawa growing season so they will mature in time outdoors – or perhaps we just can't wait to start some fresh, organic greens!

Our usual start dates are as follows:

3rd wk. March – onions, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes & perennial herbs . . .

Last wk. March – lettuce if you wish an early crop

1st wk. April – broccoli, cabbage . . .

4th wk. April – most vines: cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash, zucchini . . .

INDOOR GROW LIGHTS

While sunlight is the very best option, often this is not practical for homes and apartments with space and sunlight access issues. To take advantage of the spring sunlight, one would need a solarium or a heated greenhouse. Grow lights are a lot cheaper and the next best option. My wife and I have used

grow lights with great success for the past 20+ years. When we grew vegetables for the food bank, we had 14 feet of lights covering 7 trays of seedlings at 24 to 36 seed pots per tray.

Grow lights usually come in two lengths, 2 ft. or 4 ft. and there is a choice of full spectrum florescent tubes, T8 florescent tubes, T5 florescent tubes, and LED's (combination of blue and red LED's). All work very well, however the most expensive are the LED's (see image below from SunTech Ottawa). There are smaller desktop, single bulb, grow lamps which also serve well, but they will cover only a very limited number of seedlings. They are best suited to a potted herb or a pot of greens that will get to your table long before we can safely plant outside.

Depending on the size of your in-ground garden or your containers, calculate your needs based on one tray of 24 to 36 seed pots covered by a 2 ft. grow light. There are some elaborate lights and stands available but be sure the lights can be raised and lowered and plants can be uncovered (some T5's are fixed to the domes of one foot covered trays and the light without the dome cover is unsupported).



2 foot T8's – T8 fits old florescent fixtures



2 foot standard grow lights + tin foil



Paper, coir, cow, peat



Plastic, starch (light brown and grey)



Disposable 9-plug

We have both 2 foot full spectrum florescent tubes and 4 foot T8 tubes. The 4 foot tubes (in pairs) hang from the basement joists over top tables, and they are raised and lowered by means of chain (simple hook and eye system with storm door chain). The 2 foot tubes are in stands with 3 fixed heights for the tubes, so we raise and lower the plants instead.

Grow lights are much weaker than sunlight. To compensate, use tin foil to contain the light and reflect it onto the plants, and leave the lights on for 14 to 16 hours per day. The tubes/bulbs should be within 2 inches of the soil and always 2 inches above the plants – the leaves must not touch the lights!

SEED POTS

Starter pots are available in various materials, all of which work well but some are more ecological than others. We recommend 3 inch plastic pots (re-use-able), or cow manure pots (no smell), or do-it-yourself newsprint pots. Peat pots are the most common, however the supply of peat is dwindling every year and it takes many years to replenish – more than my lifetime. Coir, made from coconut husks, comes from away – we don't grow them so the energy used to ship them has to be factored into the ecological cost. Starch pots are an option as well as bamboo but I have only ever found round ones, and their larger sizes are not practical for our seed trays.

Seed Trays are 1 foot 9 inches (54cm) x 11 inches (28cm), light plastic

(easily punctured!) containers, and will hold twenty-four 4 inch seed pots or thirty-six 2.5 inch seed pots or three, 9-plug plastic seed containers.

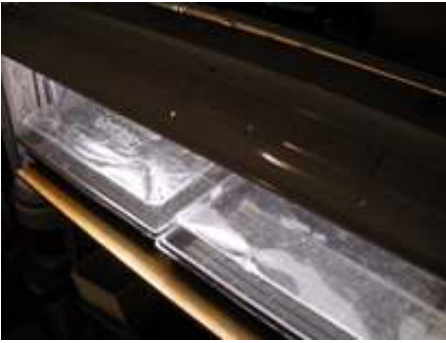
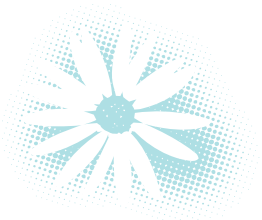
GROWING MEDIUM

There are seed starting mixes, soil less potting mixes, and soil mixes available. Seeds germinate very well on their own, regardless of the growing medium. If I am in doubt about the viability of old seed, I start the seed on top of my fridge in the warmth and darkness between two sheets of moist paper towel. A domed container from a grocery store hot cooked chicken makes a great incubator.

I keep the towel continually moist, and in about 10 days I can see which seeds are viable and which are not. I transplant these in seed pots and put them under the grow lights.

Potting mixes (soil less) do not have much nourishment for seedlings – 4 weeks is a good rule of thumb – then fertilize. However, I have had great success with the same soil I use in containers, a combination of 2 thirds organic soil mix and 1 third sheep manure (no smell). Note: I prefer my compost over sheep manure, but my compost is still frozen, and besides, when I bring the outside inside, I bring in more than just the compost (compost + bugs + microbes + fungus + bacteria + seeds in the compost). With the added sheep manure, plants thrive without extra fertilizer. This saves storing various bags of soil and mixes – especially if storage space is an issue.





TEMPERATURE

The ideal indoor temperature should replicate nature – warm days and cool nights. Lowering the thermostat at night will help. Another temperature consideration is extra warmth for those seedlings that thrive in warmer climates (e.g. peppers). We use an electric heating mat under our tray of both hot and sweet peppers. The heat is very low and barely noticeable to the touch – it would not harm a child. However, protect the electric mat from water and do not let pets chew on it – the results would be hair-raising!

MISCELLANEOUS

Consider a timer to activate the lights and the optional heating mat. Then you can be sure the sixteen hours are consistent even if you are sleeping in or you are out late.

A fan is also a help. No hurricanes please, but a gentle breeze from time to time across the seedlings will toughen the stems – replicate nature.



Unfortunately, the usual dry atmosphere in our homes and the drying effect of a fan may deprive the seedlings of the moisture they need. Be sure to check the seedlings often and water them whenever they are approaching dryness – do not let them dry out completely. After watering and after the pots have taken up the water, keep a little water in the trays but just enough to wet the bottoms of the pots – no wading! This will add moisture to the atmosphere. If you have a dehumidifier, you may want to keep it away from the seedlings.

WATERING

Water as needed, not as scheduled. Water from the bottom if possible (pour water into the seed tray) but if not, use a mister to wet the seed pots from the top so as not to dig holes and re-arrange the seeds with poured water. Depending on evaporation, the pots may stay moist for a day or two. If the pots are too moist for too long, be on the lookout for grey mould or green moss which you may scrape off or cultivate in after the seedlings have shown themselves. A fan helps with the drying.

If the pots have unfortunately dried out completely, then water from the top to re-start the



siphoning process. Water evaporating from the soil surface will draw the water up from the bottom the next time you add water to the tray.

PLANTING

The size of the seed suggests the depth of planting. If unsure, it is best to plant too shallow than too deep.

Plant more than you need as insurance against dead seed. We plant 2 large seeds (e.g. Zucchini) or 3 small seeds (e.g. Tomatoes & Peppers) per 2.5 inch seed pot.

Cover the seed trays to preserve moisture until the seed leaves appear – first small set of leaves – then remove the covers and store them. Too long under the tray covers leads to fungus and to “damping off” whereby the seedlings fall over and die.

As the plants grow, take a pot of 3 seedlings and scissor out at soil level the two weakest plants – pulling them could harm all the plants in the seed pot as roots tend to tangle. Note: for some gardeners, scissoring is hard to do – why cut a thriving plant?? – they look so good!! Be strong! If you leave all three, there may not be enough food or root room and all three may suffer.



To prevent leggy plants (tall and skinny) and encourage healthy, more low and bushy plants (e.g. tomatoes), you might scissor off the leaders which will encourage more branching and side growth.

FERTILIZING

Fish emulsions and seaweed liquids (unpleasant smells) work well for green growth (high nitrogen content) if the need arises. However, if the soil you use is a mixture with compost, manure, or sea products, the seedlings should be fine for the limited time they are in doors. If you need to fertilize, best to put the fertilizer in the water and water from the bottom so as not to burn the seedlings. Also, add a little fertilizer to the water every time you water rather than fertilizing with a massive dose once a month.



HARDENING OFF

As the time to transplant outside approaches remember to allow for the “hardening off” period (Trays outside in the sun but protected from the wind. Increase the amounts of time slowly from one hour to full outside). We use a plant tower with three shelves and a plastic cover to protect the plants from the wind or a cold draft. The tower is on a 4-wheeled dolly so we can pull it about into the spring sun or into shelter as the need arises. We also use an old chaise lounge as a sun bus. In cold weather or high wind we shelter the chaise and the tower in the garage – on two occasions, high winds have had disastrous effects on our tower. Imagine a tower full of 6 seed trays tipped on its side – we were not amused!

Greenery is healthy for the mind as well as the body! Keep calm and green up this spring!

Rob Danforth has over 30 years of experience as a gardener and gardening instructor, at Gloucester Allotment Gardens, Arrowsmith Thymeless Community Gardens, Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard Garden and with COG OSO and Just Food.

COG's New Organic Success Program Launched at ECO Farm Day!

23 regional farmers joined us at ECO Farm Day in Cornwall on Sunday, February 26th to learn more about how to transition their farms to certified organic production. COG offered a full-day workshop, Introduction to Organic Certification, to provide farmers with the information they need to consider and begin the various processes of becoming certified in organic production. The workshop was attended by a wide range of farmers, including cash crop farmers, market gardeners, dairy farmers, and beef farmers, to name a few. The workshop covered the basic principles of organic farming, the business case for organics, an introduction to the Canadian Organic Standards, and the who, what and how of organic certification.

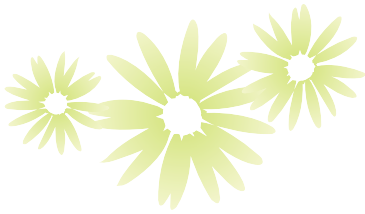
The workshop was delivered by Delia Elkin, an educator and experienced organic inspector in the region. Delia's extensive knowledge of the Canadian Organic Standards and their application allowed almost any question from participants to be answered in plain language. Her laid back presentation style gave the workshop the feeling of a free-flowing discussion and participants felt comfortable to ask specific questions and engage in discussion. Participants left the workshop feeling better equipped to begin the process of certifying their operations.

This introductory workshop was the first of several in the larger Organic Success Program being led by COG. This program will help Ontario farmers navigate the road to transition over the next 10 months. In addition to workshops and webinars, farmers will receive personalized on-site coaching, mock farm inspections, farm tours, on-farm learning opportunities, mentoring, and a bursary to help offset certification costs.

For more information about this program go to <http://www.cog.ca/our-services/success/>



COG's Rachael Muller discusses their exciting, new Organic Success Program with attendees of ECO Farm Day. The new program will help farmers navigate their way to organic certification.



From Fire Fighter to Farmer

Hi! I'm Leah Fawcett from Plot of Earth Farm. Here's my journey to farming. I grew up on a small dairy farm in Eastern Ontario, near the town of Winchester (just south of Ottawa). Having developed a connection to the land and a passion for the outdoors, I completed a forestry diploma and then an environmental studies degree at college and university respectively. After completing my schooling and my employment as a forest fire fighter, I decided to explore small scale farming. Combining my love for travel and farming, I worked on several farms across Canada as well as in New Zealand and Ireland. These farms were diverse in many ways and varied in their



Leah at Permaculture Farm, Ireland

approach (conventional, permaculture, organic) and what they produced (livestock, fruit, vegetables, grain, eggs, maple syrup). It was an amazing experience that left me yearning to manage my own venture. My partner, Abe is originally from western Canada and his background includes working as a commercial fisherman as well as a tradesman. After meeting up on Vancouver Island, we started considering our options for land access.

In the spring of 2016, Abe and I returned to my family farm where we are fortunate to rent land. Land access is a real barrier for many farmers starting

out, and we feel very grateful for the opportunity to work on our small acre. We endeavour to improve our soil, grow organic vegetables and raise meat chickens. Farming ecologically feels natural and that is how we intend to manage this land: with the use of green manures and cover crops, crop rotation, composting, etc. We don't use GMO's or synthetic fertilizers/sprays. We hold a deep respect for the land and want to be the best stewards we can be.

When we arrived in the spring, Abe and I had a big job of preparing our 0.8 acres. We decided that for this season, we would condition the soil and plan the gardens for 2017. Time was also needed to acquire equipment and plan irrigation among other things. The previous crop had been corn, and there was a thick layer of corn stalks and many full ears of corn which had fallen to the ground during the harvest. We chose to remove as much of this as we could by hand. We raked for days and eventually, most of the "trash" was removed. After doing some research and talking with an agronomist, we decided to seed cover crops: red clover (spring), followed by fall rye. The red clover is intended to provide nitrogen that was used up by the corn. With the use of his tractor and implements, my dad helped with discing and seeding. Discs are a tractor implement used to chop up plant material in order to help prepare a seedbed. They can also help break up dirt clods and till the soil. During the summer, we managed weeds (and there were many) by scything them back at our discretion. It would take a solid 8 hours to scythe the acre each time. We chose to scythe because we felt it was easier on the land than driving the tractor back and forth that could cause more compaction. With soil compaction, the soil loses available pore space to hold air and water. Plant roots prefer to grow in looser soil. The benefit of taking care of our soil means healthier more productive plants. Come fall, we disced down the clover into the soil and seeded fall rye to overwinter. When everything begins to grow again in the spring, the rye should outcompete many of the weeds. When incorporated back into the soil, the rye will also provide organic matter. At this point, we'll begin creating our vegetable beds using a two-wheel walk behind tractor. Walk-behind tractors are similar to the more familiar 4-wheel tractors in that they are designed to run several different farm implements using a single power source. The PTO (Power Take Off) is the part attached to the tractor that runs the implements via the tractor engine. For example, if I needed to mow grass, I'd attach the mower implement and if I needed to prepare a garden bed, I'd attach a power harrow. The two-wheel tractor is an ideal choice for a market garden because





Leah and Abe with scythe on acre, Ontario

it is smaller than a 4-wheel tractor, designed to manoeuvre in small spaces, and it is easy to use. It's built for tough work and offers more diverse applications than a single purpose run-of-the-mill garden rototiller. I've used these tractors in the past, so for me I felt it was the right choice.

What have I learned since last spring? There is a lot to learn about farming. It is interesting, it is surprising, it is demanding. The learning curve is steep and I continue to learn more about land management, planning, marketing, financial management and sourcing resources (row cover, hand tools, compost, etc.). The learning is infinite and that is exciting and overwhelming all at the same time. For help, I've talked with farm mentors, attended conferences, participated in webinars and read books. COG's Crop Planning for Organic Vegetable Growers has been extremely useful to me while I plan how much food to grow for my CSA and market. I also love the COG lending library which has allowed me to loan out books to research and then decide to purchase them later if I find them worthy.

My challenge to anyone interested in small-scale farming is to educate yourself! Ask yourself "what areas excite me?" Find farms that are doing that and try to get involved. Interning and volunteering are a great way to fully immerse oneself in several aspects of farming. The more intense the time spent on the farm the better because the experience provides a real-life picture of what to expect. When researching farms you want to become involved with,



Leah with goslings, Saskatchewan

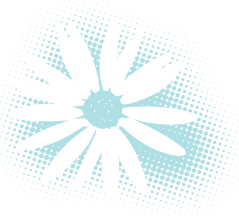
be sure they align with your farm philosophy. If you're serious about committing time to this exploration, here are some things to consider. If you like to travel, try WWOOFING (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), talk to farmers at Farmer's Markets, or check out farming opportunities with CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) or SOIL (Stewards of Irreplaceable Lands). I can't speak from personal experience about CRAFT or SOIL but I've spoken with people who've enjoyed their experiences with these organizations.

Moving forward, my partner and I are starting small this season – growing a few vegetable CSA shares for friends and family as well as attending a Farmer's Market. Raising some pastured meat chickens is also on the horizon. I'll be working full time on the farm while my partner will work part time and continue his full time off-farm job. The year ahead will help us determine what we can manage in both scope and scale. We're both excited about the possibilities and challenges that lie ahead. We are Plot of Earth Farm and we'd love for you to follow us along during our first growing season. You can follow the farm's progress on Facebook and also find out where we'll be selling our vegetables. Please e-mail us if you have any questions.

Email: plot.of.earth.farm@gmail.com

Facebook: Plot of Earth



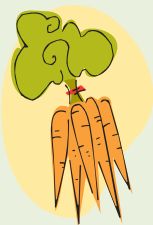


The InnovSeries: How Our Organic Food System Is Changing

Organic growing and eating is undergoing a revolution. This InnovSeries shines a light on the organic food innovations and innovators in the Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais region. Our first piece looks at the creative collaboration between Bryson Farms and Chef Richard Nigro.

Unlike yesterday's farmers, organic producers of today manage a more complex world of soil carbon, biological pest control, buffer zones and genetic ID kits. Consumers of local organic products are offered more choice than ever with produce such as purple carrots, spelt flour and winter CSAs. Food hubs and new markets for organic farmers also make organic produce more available.

Do you have a story about innovation to share – or know of someone who does? If yes, we want to hear from you! We are particularly interested in hearing from certified organic farmers, but if you are a producer using organic methods, or a food processor, distributor or eater of organic food we want to hear from you too. Send your story idea or suggestions to the DTE editor: editordown-toearth@gmail.com



Innovations to Preserve the Season's Best

Terry Stewart and Stuart Collins have been running Bryson Farms for almost 20 years on land that has been in the Stewart family for generations. The farm is an hour west of Ottawa, in Shawville, Québec. We focus on growing heirloom organic vegetables and raising organic grass-fed beef that taste like they are supposed to – delicious! We also offer prepared foods cooked in-house by Chef Richard Nigro, including our famous Curried Sweet Corn Soup and Mushroom-Lentil Tourtière. Our customers look forward to fresh produce all year, thanks to our flash-frozen products, greenhouse operations and our dedicated, local staff.

Bryson Farms believes in organic farming since it is better for the earth and is healthier for all of us. We are committed to offering food from farm to table that is sustainable, delicious, and wholesome.



CERTIFICATION

Our vegetables, beef, and many of our prepared foods are certified organic. We strongly believe in certified organic raw foods, since the practice not only perpetuates sustainable farming, but it also maintains standards across the industry.

The process to certify our prepared foods is arduous and takes many months. Because of the large number of new prepared foods that we are developing, we would rather make them available to the public as soon as possible, than to wait to have them certified organic.

A CHEF AT THE FARM

One of the best things we have done at Bryson Farms was to hire Chef Richard Nigro, who continues to develop and test new prepared foods in our kitchen. Chef Nigro joined our team in the spring of 2015 and is the founder of Juniper Kitchen and Wine Bar. He is well known in the food community and has a large following in Ottawa. Among customer favourites are Chef Nigro's Chickpea Veggie Burger, as well as his Beef and Mushroom Pie. This is where Chef Nigro excels: he knows precisely what can be frozen and still taste amazing. His cooking instructions make every dish perfect – true culinary genius that directly impacts our business!

FLASH-FROZEN: PRESERVING TASTE

In fact, it was Chef Nigro who suggested flash-freezing our heirloom tomatoes. This innovation allows customers to experience the taste and quality of our heirloom tomatoes in the middle of winter, without any additives or preservatives. The stems and cores of the tomatoes are removed, and then the tomatoes are placed on baking sheets and flash-frozen in our walk-in flash-freezer. The frozen heirloom tomatoes are subsequently vacuum sealed and can be stored in the freezer for up to a year. We can freeze a lot at once and the preservation quality is substantially better than freezing the produce in a regular freezer. In comparison to canning, the tomatoes taste better, they still



have pulp, and they can be carved, peeled, or sliced when partially thawed.

Our corn is flash-frozen in a similar manner. Bryson Farms freezes about half of the corn we grow. In fact, we have chosen varieties that freeze the best and maintain sweetness.

We also flash-freeze our prepared foods. The dishes go through a rigorous process of being tested and fine-tuned by Chef Nigro before being made available to our customers. Our product line has expanded from approximately 80 to over 200 prepared foods – entrees, desserts, and appetizers – due to Chef Nigro’s expertise. Our customers not only love the taste of our frozen prepared foods, they also appreciate that we do not include additives or preservatives.

ONLINE PRESENCE

At Bryson Farms, we continue to innovate in organic farming in all aspects of our business, including social media and our online store. We are excited to launch our new website which includes detailed online cooking instructions for our prepared foods, as well as nutritional facts and more.

We find that the key to our successful online business is to provide convenience in the form of prepared foods and plenty of options for our produce baskets. This includes our popular Children’s Basket, which focuses on cucumbers, tomatoes, sweet peppers, and sweet corn, and our well-loved Empty Nester’s Basket, which caters to small households who still want to eat healthy!



Bryson Farms provides a year-round home-delivery service to the Ottawa-Gatineau region. We can also be found at the Ottawa Farmers’ Market at Lansdowne Park every Sunday and we sell through a couple of local co-ops. If you would like more information about our business or our products, please visit our website at www.brysonfarms.com or come see us on Sundays at Lansdowne Park. We would be happy to chat and exchange ideas!



Senior Gardeners at SOG Gardens at Ottawa Community Housing, 800 St. Laurent with Adele (SOG Manager) and Margaret (SOG Lead Volunteer).

Breaking News from Senior Organic Gardeners!

Senior Organic Gardeners has received a Trillium Foundation Grant of \$162,700. This is truly an amazing development and we are celebrating!

Adele Mackay our SOG Manager is back in the saddle, organizing the various locations for this coming spring. The new focus is starting Gardening Committees in each SOG location where the seniors come together and plan their gardens.

The other focus this year is on multicultural facilitation which involves using language interpreters to help seniors to understand and speak in their own language.

SOG has a couple of interesting initiatives in mind. One involves the possibility of doing a research project to investigate the value of horticultural therapy for dementia and Alzheimer sufferers.

The other involves the production of a video about SOG for use on our website and to better demonstrate the depth of this program. Locations, sponsors and volunteers will be featured.

Towards the end of March, SOG will be sponsoring Organic Seed Sales in Orleans at Pantry Plus, at Rainbow Foods in Britannia and at Scotiabank on Innes Road in Orleans. See the ad in this edition of *Down to Earth*.



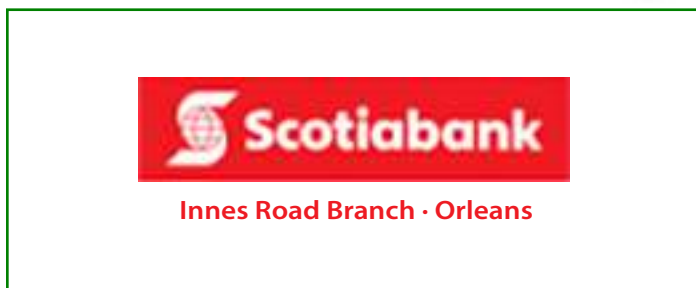
Senior Gardeners admiring the fruits of their labours



SOG seeks to fundraise for two projects that are not included in the Trillium Grant:

- To create a video promoting the SOG program.
- To design and carry out a research project on the impact of organic gardening and horticultural therapy on people with Alzheimer's or Dementia.

If you know of a sponsor or donor that would be interested in these projects, please contact Margaret at: sog.margaret@gmail.com



Organic success

NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO CERTIFICATION

Are you thinking about certifying your farm operations? Do you need help navigating the process, or simply want to learn more about what it takes? COG can help!

Canadian Organic Growers is currently recruiting participants for their new Organic Success Program. Over the course of several months, this pilot program will walk Ontario farmers through the transition to organic production and certification. Farmer-participants will be able to go through a mock inspection on their own farm and receive follow-up coaching. In addition, workshops on subjects like record keeping and interpreting the organic standards will be held. We will also focus on tailoring the program to the needs and interests of the participants.

To find out more about this new, exciting program and what it could mean for your farm, click here or get in touch with: rachael@cog.ca or sarah@cog.ca

Funding for this program was generously provided by:

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
de l'Ontario

OFFER A GIFT IN MEMORY

COG OSO's New Legacy Program

Leaving a gift to COG in your will is a tax-smart strategy. It could reduce the taxes your estate would otherwise pay. We will notify the family of your memorial gift by sending a beautiful sympathy card, and you'll receive an income tax receipt for the full amount of your gift.

Find more information on possible gift quantities on our website. Discuss these options with your financial and/or legal advisors as part of your plan to leave a lasting legacy in your will.

Please visit our website for more information www.cog.ca/ottawa/legacies/

To register your Gift in your Will please contact:
Executive Director, Canadian Organic Growers
1145 Carling Avenue, Suite 7519, Ottawa ON Canada K1Z 7K4
in favour of COG OSO Chapter
National Charitable Number: 13014 0494 RR0001
office@cog.ca
Tel: 613-216-0741, Toll-free: 1-888-375-7383

Down to Earth, COG OSO's Quarterly E-Newsletter

Canadian Organic Growers
Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter

Editor-in-Chief	Andrea Gartley
Assistant Editor	Allison Gibson
Contributors	Rob Danforth Lloyd Strachan
Layout	Stephanie Pelot, Pentafolio
Mailing Editor	Megan McLeod
Mailing List Coordinator	Dick Coote
Communications Lead	Marika Atfield

Deadline for next Down to Earth: **June 1, 2017**. Submit articles to the editor: editordowntoearth@gmail.com

Down to Earth is a non-profit publishing project of Canadian Organic Growers, Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter. Statements, opinions or views taken by the writers and advertisers do not necessarily reflect those of the editor and publisher.

© Copyright 2017 Canadian Organic Growers, Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without permission of COG OSO.

Canadian Organic Growers is a non-profit national charity.

www.cog.ca/Ottawa/ Email: cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca

Senior Organic Gardeners SPONSOR

Pantry  plus

FERME COOPÉRATIVE
Tourne  SOL
CO-OPERATIVE FARM

Les Cèdres, Québec · Phone (450) 452-4271 · info@fermetournesol.qc.ca