

Down to Earth

Editor's Corner

Autumn has arrived. It's been a long, hot summer, and even the most fervent heat lovers are looking forward to cooler weather. In addition to the fall harvest, organic enthusiasts have a wide range of activities to look forward to, including COG's Organic Master Gardener course and the many events that make up national Organic Week!

Organic Week (September 17th to 25th) is a great time to think about what living an organic lifestyle means for ourselves, our communities, and the planet. Part of reflecting is staying informed. You can start by perusing this edition of *Down to Earth*! In these pages, you'll find an update on COG OSOS's thriving Senior Organic Gardening program, a message from our farmer outreach coordinator, and more.

Read on, and enjoy the season!

Your *Down to Earth* editor,

Molly Davidson

mollycogoso@gmail.com

Senior Organic Gardeners SPONSOR



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Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa-St. Lawrence-Outaouais chapter and Carefor Health & Community Services are pleased to announce our new partnership to reintroduce Feast of Fields to the National Capital Region.

For 118 years, Carefor Health & Community Services, a registered charity, has been keeping families together at home for longer by providing local home health care and community support services to the communities we serve throughout Eastern Ontario. We believe that COG's philosophy to promote organic growing and Carefor's belief in the connection between good food and good health is a recipe for collaborative success!

As you are aware, Feast of Fields is a culinary event, highlighting some of our region's most talented chefs paired with local organic producers.

Some of our confirmed notable chefs include:

Patrick Garland	Absinthe
Jesse Brett Bell	Albion Rooms
Stephen La Salle	Andaz feast + revel
Georges Laurier	C'est Bon Cooking
Jason Laurin	Essence Catering
Walid El-Tawel	Fairouz
Kyle Mortimer-Proulx	La Maison Conroy
Rene Rodriguez	Navarra
Eric Patenaude	Todric's Catering
Jeff Stoveld	Top of the Hill Bakery

This event will take place on **Wednesday, October 5** in Jean Pigott Hall (at Ottawa City Hall) from 5:30 – 8:30 pm. This year, Feast of Fields will include 10-12 chefs, 4-6 organics producers, and up to 300 guests.

All funds raised at Feast of Fields support Carefor's dementia care programs and services.

Join us on October 5 to celebrate the bounty of fall and make a difference in the lives of caregivers and their loved ones who are living with dementia in our community.

For tickets, please call 613 749 0239 x 2180 or visit www.feastoffields.ca



Organic Master Gardener Course: This Fall In Ottawa

Gaia College and Canadian Organic Growers are partnering to offer a condensed in-class Organic Master Gardener course. The course will include discussion, practical hands-on learning, and a blend of material containing up-to-date information on organic practices. Colin Lundy and Monica Chappell will be leading in-class sessions on the following dates:

October 22 – December 3, 2016

9:30 am to 4:30 pm on Saturdays

Location: Rideau High School (815 St Laurent Blvd)

In a blended learning environment that will include online lectures, readings, and classroom discussion, students will develop an understanding of the connection between the health of soil, plants, human beings, and the environment. This course provides a framework for observing landscapes and considering the implications of nutrient, water, and habitat requirements for healthy ecosystems in both rural and urban environments. This course is designed for urban and community gardeners, farmers, market gardeners, landscapers, municipal parks personnel, naturalists, and conservationists. All skill levels are welcome. Attendees will leave with the tools to create vibrant

food and ornamental gardens as well as sustainable landscapes. Topics covered in class include the following:

- compost making and microbial inoculants;
- foundational elements for landscape health;
- practicing organic gardening and horticultural methods;
- soil food web;
- soil-testing analysis;
- water management; and
- turf management.

Preparations for writing the SOUL Organic Accreditation exam for land care professionals is optional, as is earning continuing education credits to maintain industry certifications (ISA, CNLA, BCSLA, SOUL).

To find more information or register, visit <http://www.cog.ca/our-services/OMG/> or contact the COG office.

Email: office@cog.ca

Phone: 613-216-0741 or toll free at 1-888-375-7383



ORGANIC MASTER GARDENER COURSE
October to December 2016
Ottawa, ON

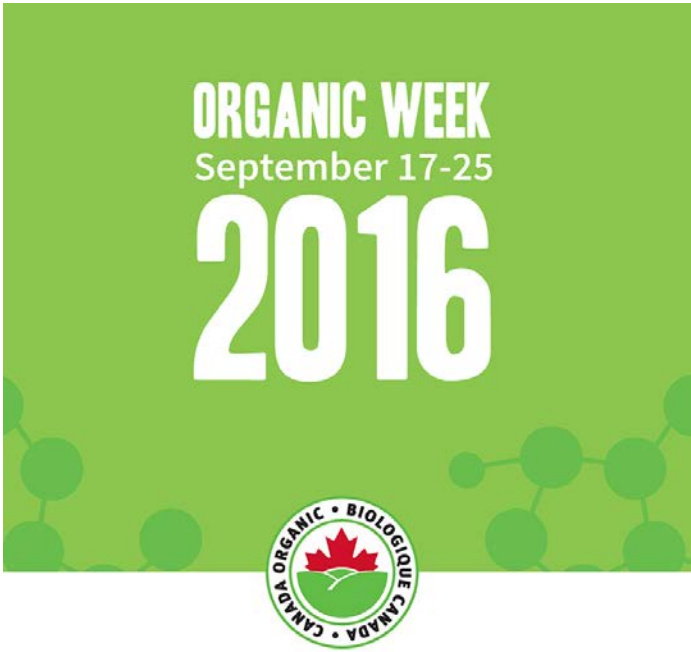
Learn to create healthy food and ornamental gardens without pesticides and harmful chemicals

October 22nd to December 3rd
Saturdays, 9:30am to 4:30pm

Location
Rideau High School
815 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON

\$670+HST Early Bird Price (until September 23rd)
\$720+HST Regular Price

For more info and to register:
1-888-375-7383 or visit
www.cog.ca/news_events/OMG/



COG AND CANADA CELEBRATE SEVENTH ANNUAL ORGANIC WEEK SEPT. 17-25, 2016

Coast-to-Coast Events Highlight the Best of Canada's Organic Industry

September 17 to 25 marks this year's National Organic Week, the largest annual celebration of organic food, farming, and products across the country. With hundreds of events and thousands of retail promotions taking place across Canada, Organic Week showcases the benefits of organic agriculture and its positive impact on the environment, animal welfare, and our well-being. Supported by regional partners and coordinated by the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA), Canadian Organic Growers (COG), and the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA), Organic Week highlights all of the reasons Canadians should choose to think before they eat.

"With the number of organic products on the market continuously growing, it's easier than ever to go organic", says Rochelle Eisen, president of COG. Many of Canada's top organic farms, wineries, retailers and restaurants take part in Organic Week, offering Canadians the perfect opportunity to experience the bounty of Canada's organic harvest firsthand. There are many different ways to celebrate. Eisen encapsulates COG's attitude towards upcoming events and organic living in general, stating, "whether it's hosting a potluck picnic for friends or sampling organic wine and beer, we encourage Canadians to help spread the word about how choosing organic means supporting sustainability and promoting animal welfare."

For more information and to find events near you visit www.organicweek.ca

FARMS FOR SALE

Two certified organic farms in beautiful Renfrew county.

First farm is 250 acres with a river running through it. It has 110 tillable acres of highly productive clay loam soil and is presently growing organic corn. Priced at \$550,000.

Second farm is 100 cleared, tile drained acres presently growing organic soybeans. This farm is a former dairy; cows and quota are sold, but the infrastructure will accommodate cattle or horses, sheep or swine. Priced at \$850,000. Farms are in close proximity to each other. So many possibilities!

Contact Ron McCoy at (613) 633-6473 for more info or e-mail maureen.mccoy@hotmail.com for info/pictures.



COG OSO thanks Little Stream Bakery for the generous Silver Star Sponsorship of \$1000



SENIOR ORGANIC GARDENERS PROGRAM

Growing Season 2016

The month of May started off with the good news that SOG has received a grant from the Community Foundation of Ottawa. As a result, we will be carrying on with the program for the 2016 growing season.

Planning of the organic gardens was in full swing by mid-May, with our program reaching out to three Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) residences, two Aboriginal centres, and Hope Living (of the Shepherds of Good Hope). We also offered some support to 280 Montfort and 300 Lacasse, both OCH communities, on a much smaller introductory scale. We also continued the program in the Outaouais, carrying out visits on a volunteer basis at Le Manoir de Wakefeld.

SOG's program manager, Adèle McKay, reached out to the Aboriginal seniors' community in Ottawa. The resulting activity is adding an exciting new dimension to the program this year. On board for this year were Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and Odawa Native Friendship Centre; joining our multicultural seniors' OCH residences were Wellington Towers, Russell Manor, and 800 St. Laurent. Hope Living in Kanata was also a new component of the 2016 program.

Organic community gardens flourished throughout the OCH residences; 800 St. Laurent had 19 thriving garden beds, Russell Manor had 7 raised garden beds, and Wellington Towers starting out with a new community garden. Wellington Towers residents also began tending to small gardens on their private balconies. The gardens at Hope Living were also bountiful. They were developed as a new program for the senior residents.



Margaret Tourond-Townson, SOG Lead Volunteer, and Adèle McKay, SOG Program Manager, after the Recognition Event at 800 St. Laurent.

Horticultural workshops were carried out at Wabano and Odawa with great success. We covered topics such as plant medicines, therapeutic and culinary herbs representing the mint family, roses (and the fascinating history of the medicinal uses of rose essential oil), baking with herbs, and plant breeding and the evolution of plant cultivars. SOG also provided many plants to the seniors for their own personal gardens. The seniors' circles gathered with such enthusiasm at both Wabano and Odawa; in many ways, the plant kingdom is connected to Aboriginal cultures and ways of life.



Aboriginal seniors and Team Lead, at Wabano, enjoying a workshop on herbs.



Organic fruit, veggies, and canapés were enjoyed by all at the Recognition Event on August 19th, 2016.



Eggplants growing in gardens at 800 St. Laurent OCH, almost ready for harvest.

The success of the summer SOG program culminated in our recognition event, which was held on August 19th, 2016. The event was a garden party, held on a beautiful summers' day, at the 800 St. Laurent OCH gardens. Our purpose was to acknowledge and thank our generous grantors – the Community Foundation of Ottawa – as well as our other donors, and to celebrate the gardening program with its participants – the seniors.

About 40 people gathered for the garden party; attendees included Rebecca Aird and Tais McNeil from the Community Foundation of Ottawa; two staff members from David Chernushenko's office; team leads from OCH and Wabano; Wayne Adams from COG National; Margaret Tourond-Townson, lead volunteer of SOG; COG OSO steering committee member David Townson; Adèle McKay, program manager; Zema Ndali from Aging in Place; an Arabic language interpreter; and of course, the seniors.

The highlight of the event was the drumming and beautiful singing of the Wabano seniors, who joined us for the party, much to our delight. While the Aboriginal seniors were drumming and singing, the seniors from the Arabic



Gardening participants at 800 St. Laurent, with Adèle McKay, Program manager, in their bountiful gardens.

CANADIAN ORGANIC GROWERS OTTAWA ST LAWRENCE OUTAOUAIS CHAPTER

Volunteer Editor Needed for Down to Earth

Down to Earth is our Quarterly E-Newsletter that reports on chapter events and programs and Steering Committee business, local organic upcoming events, annual recognition of volunteers, Interviews with local organic farmers, growers, gardeners, a Recipe Corner and Book Reports on relevant books plus including and tracking advertisements from our sponsors and from local organic producers. There is scope for creative development of *Down to Earth* in content and in technical presentation.

The Editor is responsible to send a Call for News and Reports, invite articles from local organic experts, coordinate with the Assistant and Layout and Mailing Editors to production phases of *Down to Earth*. The Editor tracks ads in *Down to Earth* from our sponsors. The Editor has creative scope for writing articles, reporting on interviews in consultation with the Communications Lead.

The *Down to Earth* Editor will work closely with the Steering Committee through the Lead Communications Volunteer to ensure complete and accurate coverage and efficient production.

This is an excellent opportunity to get to know and explore the community of organic growers and to become known by them as well.

Please visit our website to get to know us a bit: www.cog.ca/ottawa/down-to-earth/. COG is a national charity with HQ in Ottawa. www.cog.ca

Please send a letter of interest and a resume including your education and experience relevant to the role of Editor of *Down to Earth* to cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca

COG OSO is seeking a Communications Lead Volunteer

Our Lead Communications Volunteer would ideally have experience with a variety of communication tools and be able to offer leadership to our E-News, our Website Manager and our Social Media Volunteer as well as all facets of our organization.

The Lead Communications role would involve attending monthly Steering Committee meetings to build stronger communications at the chapter level and liaison with our E-News teams (*Down to Earth* and COG OSO E-News), our e-mail volunteer manager (cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca), our Website Manager (www.cog.ca/ottawa/), our Social Media Leader (Facebook and Twitter) and our fundraising planning and execution.

This is an opportunity to make a real difference in a small charity with a big mission. Learn more about COG OSO chapter at www.cog.ca/ottawa and COG National – a national charity at www.cog.ca

This is an excellent opportunity to get to know and explore the community of organic growers and to become known by them as well.

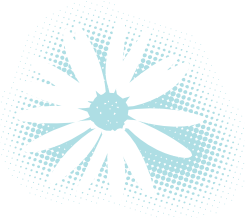
Please send a letter of interest and a resume including your education and experience in communications to Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa St Lawrence Outaouais Chapter at cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca

community at 800 St. Laurent accompanied them with seed rattles. There was an atmosphere of camaraderie, acceptance, and joy.

Nathaniel Parant, Wabano's seniors' circle team lead, offered an opening prayer for the event. He also carried out a smudging ceremony with cedar and sage. The garden party was a true success; we celebrated not only organic gardens and the program, but the beautiful blending of cultures and the social inclusion efforts of the seniors involved.

This summer's program was developed on the theme of therapeutic organic community gardening for seniors. There was a strong element of multiculturalism that highlighted the rich diversity found among the seniors of Ottawa.





A Message From COGOSO's Farmer Outreach Coordinator, Colin Lundy

Over COG's long history, organic agriculture was largely a fringe activity. Organic farmers had their own motivations for growing organically, and many would contact COG for resources and support. Then, in the early 2000s, organic food became more mainstream. The Canadian public wanted organic food and to support organic farmers. As it turned out, there weren't enough organic farms to meet the public's demand. So in 2008, COG hired me as the first farmer outreach coordinator. The goal was to help expand the organic sector within the OSO chapter by supporting both existing organic farmers and conventional farmers interested in transitioning to organic.

Over the years, progress was slow. There was no windfall of new organic acres, and to this day the market for organic food still far outstrips the supply. There was progress. But the demand continues to grow faster than the supply; organic farmers could be in far worse positions! As part of our efforts, we held farm tours, workshops, conferences, and webinars. I worked on developing an organic farmers cooperative, which never materialized (though it was a useful exercise). Most recently, we have associated ourselves closely with the Growing Up Organic project to bring organic farmers and students closer together. One of our major goals has been to introduce local organic food into student nutrition programs.

Through all of these events, I got to know and enjoy the company of so many local farmers. Without a doubt I have learned more from them than they have learned from me! In fact, we are blessed with very knowledgeable organic farmers in the COG OSO chapter. It became clear early on that my role would be to coordinate so that these farmers could share their expertise with others. The result was great learning opportunities for everyone – including me.

More recently, funding for farmer outreach activities has become scarce, which has made it hard for me to keep the program running. My own farming operation has quadrupled in size since I started with COG, and I have found it difficult to keep up with new developments, training opportunities, and a wave of new and innovative organic farmers. And so I am writing to thank you all for your friendship, knowledge, time and energy. But it's time for me to leave the farmer outreach position before I become a liability that holds COG and the farmers it represents back.

Without a doubt, I will continue to have some involvement with COG. I continue to volunteer to help organize Eco Farm Day (visit ecofarmday.ca to get updates for the next conference), and I will be co-instructing the Organic Master Gardener course this fall, which is a partnership between COG and Gaia College (visit <http://www.cog.ca/our-services/OMG/>). But beyond these activities, I hope to maintain contact with all of the other farmer friends I have made through my work at COG OSO. You can please contact me via my personal email address, clindy@yahoo.ca.

Once again, thank you all, and farm on!

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

Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter

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Deadline for next *Down to Earth*: **December 1, 2016**. Submit articles to the Editor.

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