

Down to Earth

Editor's Corner

The big thaw has arrived! It's time to ditch some of those warm winter layers and reconnect with nature. Whether you'll be out in the garden or strolling around to see your neighbourhood in bloom, we hope you'll enjoy the sights, smells, and tastes of spring!

This year's Eco Farm Day was a huge success, and this issue of *Down to Earth* will delve into the day's festivities! You'll also find updates on various COG OSO programs, along with big shout outs to the wonderful volunteers, sponsors, donors and supporters who make them possible. We hope you'll join us in appreciating these individuals for their dedication.

As many of you probably noticed, we didn't publish a winter edition of *Down to Earth*. We apologize for any inconvenience skipping the issue may have caused; unfortunately, it was unavoidable. The good news is, we've included all of our year-end content in this issue, so there's plenty to enjoy!

Your *Down to Earth* editor,

Molly Davidson

mollycogoso@gmail.com

And here in our small corner we plant a tiny seed,
And it will grow in beauty to shame the face of greed.

– Pete Seeger

Dear supporters

of Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa-St. Lawrence-Outaouais,

We may be in the early months of 2016, but we have already been busy. The Steering Committee has had to make some difficult decisions about some of our programs.

It is with sadness that we have decided to cancel our very popular Growing Up Organic school garden and farm-based education programming in Ottawa. This decision is related solely to funding; there has been a great deal of passion and support for the program from the community. This recent blow has demonstrated the challenges of relying on grant-based funding. Over the past 9 years, GUO grew to become a leader in environmental and food education in schools across Ottawa. Support provided by GUO allowed 42 schools to create educational organic vegetable gardens in their schoolyards. GUO's hands-on workshops inspired and educated hundreds of students about the importance of their food choices and the value of sustainable food production, instilling them with values of stewardship as well as healthy eating habits. Last year, in a transition away from grant funding, we implemented a fee-for-service model that was well-received by schools. Unfortunately, without other supporting funds, this model was not sustainable.

Grant funding for GUO's breakfast program partnership as well as its school garden and farm-based education programming in rural counties will come to a close at the end of this school year. As a result, more difficult decisions lie ahead. To meet upcoming challenges, we have put together a superb team of dedicated individuals to form an engaged Growing Up Organic Advisory Committee. We are heartened by the hard work and vision of the committee, which is dedicated to ensuring a future for GUO.

Growing Up Organic's sister program, Senior Organic Growers (SOG), also relies on grant funding to run its programming. We are currently applying for several grants in order help us move forward with a growing season program in 2016.

Despite the setbacks facing two of our core programs, we will not give up! We have some exciting events and fundraisers planned for this year, and we will be renewing our efforts to find corporate sponsors and individual donations for our work.

- Eco Farm Day 2016 was extremely successful, and we have many other events and activities planned for the year.
- Live the Smart Way Expo – follow link for [free tickets](#) and to support the chapter
- Urban Organic Gardening Seminars are coming in April and May – [sign up now!](#)

URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS
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CONTINUED



- Rain Barrel sale to support the chapter – [purchase yours](#) in support of the chapter!
- Summer Farm Tours
- Organic Week in September
- Fall Reflections in November
- Public outreach via COG OSO On the Road information booth
- Senior Organic Gardeners (SOG) expects to continue to work in seniors residences, long term care homes and Ottawa community housing (in Ottawa and in the Outaouais, pending sufficient funding).

Given all of these activities and programs, you might think COG OSO is a big organization. In fact, we are small (but we are mighty). We have a committed group of volunteers and a small part-time staff. Our programming would not be possible without the generous support of donors and volunteers like you. Please consider volunteering or [providing a tax-deductible contribution](#) to COG OSO's charitable work this season. Consider making your donation monthly to make it go even further.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Lane
Written on behalf of the Chapter's Steering Committee
www.cog.ca/ottawa/



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

To register your Gift in your Will please contact:
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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

Steering Committee 2016

COG OSO's activities are made possible by the hard work of our Steering Committee, volunteers, and (of course) our supporters! Our Steering Committee generally meets one evening per month. Members are very "hands-on" – with the help of other volunteers, they are directly involved in delivering services to the community. We follow a "working board" and "shared leadership" model.

This model makes every member of our board responsible for helping with different areas of our chapter and its services.

We are always looking for community members to join us on the Steering Committee. In particular, we are looking for community members who have expertise in communications, marketing, youth and adult education and farming. If you are interested, please get in touch!

COG OSO Steering Committee meetings are open to COG members and the public. We would love to have you attend!

Please check the website a few days before each meeting in case of date or time changes. Our scheduled meeting time is 7:00-9:00 pm. If you'd like to attend, please contact us and we'll let you know where we're meeting. Email us at cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca.

Dates for 2016 Steering Committee meetings are:

January 26	May 24	September 27
February 23	June 21	October 25
March 22	July 26	November 22
April 26	August 23	December TBA

Meet the Steering Committee members for 2016:
www.cog.ca/ottawa/governance/

The Story of Senior Organic Gardeners



Senior Organic Gardeners (SOG) was first discussed at Fall Reflections in 2010 by then chair Margaret Tourond-Townson. For a very short time, SOG was known as Growing Older Organic. GOO would have been the program's acronym. After a few chuckles, Senior Organic Gardeners was suggested as a replacement.

Launched in 2012, SOG cut its baby teeth in two locations: Longfields Manor in Barrhaven, and Unitarian House in Westboro.

We learned a lot, and had a great deal of fun gardening with seniors. When the lunch bell sounded, one senior told me he preferred to finish his gardening because it was like a "feast" for him.

In 2014, Adele McKay became SOG's manager; under her watch, the program has flourished. Her organic gardening knowledge and horticultural therapy experience quickly formed the heart and soul of SOG.

SOG has expanded to five locations, including several Ottawa Community Housing locations. We have attended two harvest festivals at Regina Towers. Regina Towers continues to expand its gardens and make use of a greenhouse and grow lights. Their enthusiasm for the garden is catching!

In all of these locations, we introduced the idea of organic vegetable and herb gardening to interested seniors in an informal circle with photographs and plants. We identified seniors who wished to participate and did

short hands-on workshops on planning, purchasing, planting, maintaining, harvesting, and winterizing. We visited periodically to check on progress and to help resolve issues. We also offered advice and assistance when requested. We really enjoyed closing get-togethers, where we sampled some of the organic food that had been produced! We helped make plans for gardening the following year and collected feedback from participants.

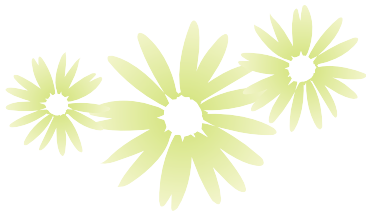
The finale at one seniors residence consisted of a garden party that was held in the garden with music and goodies! Everyone was talking about The Gardens. They had become the joy of the seniors lives.

Several of the SOG gardens have helped improve the diets of seniors by providing garden-fresh food!

Senior Organic Gardeners is facing huge financial challenges. We put a lot of effort into fundraising; for example, we offer annual organic seed sales

in various community locations such as at Rainbow Foods. We work hard at fundraising, but we need your help with donations, sponsorships and in-kind gifts. SOG's future depends as much on small, local donations and small business sponsorships as grants from foundations. If you would like to see SOG stay alive and continue thriving, please contact us at sog@cog.ca and check out our website www.cog.ca/ottawa/senior-organic-gardeners/ or www.cog.ca/ottawa/sponsors/





ECO FARM DAY FEBRUARY 20, 2016

Reaching Another High Watermark

BY LLOYD STRACHAN



Soil is the first priority for all organic producers. It was most appropriate, then, that the keynote speaker at Eco Farm Day 2016 was John Montague, a farmer and soil specialist from Woodville, Ontario. His presentation, *How Nature Feeds Plants*, was about the essentials of soil biology. It set the tone for the day. The thirteen workshops that followed – most of which were led by farmers and other organic industry reps from the COG OSO region – explored a variety of topics of interest to participants coming from east of Montreal, west of Peterborough, and far up the Ottawa Valley.

The event extended beyond workshops. The 37 exhibitors in the trade show area attracted large crowds during breaks; a live beehive demonstration and ample quantities of healthy snack food provided added attractions. The organic lunch, which was prepared largely with ingredients sourced from local farmers, proved once again to be a hit with the 300+ persons that patiently lined up at the buffet tables.

The crowd consisted of an interesting mix of farm families, other rural residents, and some urban farmers and gardeners. When asked why they come to EFD, a frequent reply was “to meet up with friends we haven’t seen all year” and “to

get new ideas to try out.”

Eco Farm Day has changed significantly since its modest beginnings 33 years ago, when it consisted of 2-3 organic talks in an afternoon at Kemptville College. What has stayed the same? The event is still presented by COG OSO (formerly COG Ottawa) and continues to be organized by a committee of volunteers. For more than a decade, EFD has been held at the Ramada Inn in Cornwall on the last Saturday in February (this year being an exception that arose due to a date conflict). Feedback from participants and exhibitors suggests that this continues to be the favoured locale for the event.

This year, the workshops were divided into four topics, or streams: Soils, Animals, Plants and Management.

SOILS

The presentation on the importance of soil in food production (presented by the keynote speaker) was followed by a workshop entitled *The Geology of Life*. Geologist and farmer John Slack emphasized the importance of understanding the complex, interdependent relationship between soil organisms and soil minerals. By keeping these

characteristics in balance, farmers are able to grow delicious, nutrient-dense food.

In the next soils workshop, *You Took A Soil Test – What Do You Do With The Results*, Rob Wallbridge, a farmer and organic inspector from the Outaouais, addressed the very practical issue of interpreting soil test results to balance nutrients – a key to ensuring a living, productive soil. John Montague completed the soil stream with an *Intensive Soil Workshop*, a hands-on approach to understanding soil structure and how it relates to water retention and quality growing conditions. Adding compost to soil ensures abundant friendly bacteria and fungi growth.

ANIMALS

Two of the event’s three animal workshops focused on techniques for summer feeding of livestock. In *Grazing: Copying What Nature Has Already Perfected*, Brian Maloney (from Thurso, Que.) described his ‘cheap and lazy’ concept of grazing based on a 35-day rotation schedule and careful observation to ensure top nutrient quality of pasture. In his intriguingly-titled *Farming Without a Tractor*, Luke Swale drew on his background in dairy farming in New Zealand and the UK as well as his experience on his off-the-grid farm in Oxford Mills. He described the role of animals (chickens, cows, pigs, sheep, llamas and turkeys) in ‘cultivating’ the soil.

Given the growing concern for pollinators, *Towards Treatment-Free Beekeeping* – a workshop by Gabriel Petrut of Hastings, Ontario – created

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quite a buzz. There is more to chemical-free, self-sustaining beekeeping than ceasing the use of conventional treatments. Gabriel emphasized the need to continuously monitor predators and disease levels, and to act proactively to prevent their buildup.

PLANTS

The initial workshop in this stream, *Hops: from Farmer to Brewer*, included hops producers (Ron Brennan and Stefanie Jaworski of Old 4th Hop Yard) and a hops buyer (Jeff McCauley of Beau's All Natural Brewing Co.). The workshop was moderated by Bruce Enloe of Two Rivers Food Hub. The challenges of growing, processing and marketing hops were emphasized, as well as the necessity of a close relationship between grower and brewer.

In *Cooperative Seed Production*, Aabir Dey of the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security emphasized the importance of careful planning when considering seed saving. The presentation focused on building a farmer-led commercial seed supply network to sell and purchase seed.

Henry Ellenberger of Maynooth, Ont. is one of the few certified organic seed potato growers in Canada. In his workshop, *Quality Seed Potato Production*, Ellenberger described the labour-intensive steps involved in certified seed production that meets the requirements of both the organic certifier and the CFIA.

The concluding plants workshop included a panel on *Increasing the Grain Value Chain in Eastern Ontario*. Tom Manley from Homestead Organics, Shelley Spruit of Against the Grain Farm, Paul Gorman from North House Foods and Moe Garahan of Just Food emphasized the growing markets for local grains and the need for close coordination with buyers before planting and after harvest.

MANAGEMENT

The *Record Keeping for Organic Certification* workshop was presented by Maureen Bostock, a certified organic farmer and a certification inspector. Bostock outlined the records certified organic farmers must keep, including those that indicate the source and treatment of each animal. She provided pointers on avoiding contamination by GMO and pesticide use on neighbouring farms.

The *Holistic Management and Farm Innovation* panel was designed to explore the practical application of a holistic farming approach (the topic presented by the theme speaker of EFD2015). A three-farmer panel – which consisted of Paul Slomp, Leela Ramachandran and Kyle White, and was moderated by farmer Erin Krekoski – described the decision-making process that guides investments in energy and money, the definition of success for these operations, and much more.

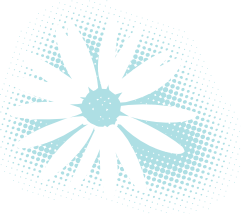
The issue that faces many producers as they expand farming operations – labour management – was addressed by Robin Turner of Roots and Shoots Farm in *Labour Management: Retaining a Perennial Workforce*. The presentation went beyond offering valuable insight into how to manage employees efficiently; it provided an overview of how to take operations to the next level.

There was standing room only for a number of the event's workshops, and there was never enough time for presenters to answer all of the audience's questions. Clearly, interest levels were high. Animated discussion continued in the halls and around lunch tables. Over 80% of exhibitors and participants expressed a desire to return next year to continue the learning circle.

A special thanks to the generous EFD sponsors, the exhibitors (some of whom travelled over 600 kms to attend), the staff at the Ramada Inn (for



preparing the organic food), the participants (some of whom also travelled long distances to attend), and to the EFD2016 volunteer organizing committee. More information on EFD2016 can be found at www.ecofarmday.ca. Check back for details on EFD2017.



Update from Dobson Farm

Happy 2016! Winter means more indoor time at the farm. We thought we would use some of this time to update you on our comings and goings.

THE CATTLE – THE MAIN EVENT

Our steers and heifers came in from the pasture fields to their wintering grounds in early January. The mild winter allowed for some late-season grazing along with hay feeding.

Happily munching on hay and haylage harvested on the farm, our cattle love to take in the morning sun; they will usually have a grooming session after breakfast, a nap after lunch, and some play time before dinner.

THE CATTLE GUARDIAN – THE FOX

Our resident fox has taken up lodging near a treed shelterbelt alongside the cattle. He (or she) takes his (or her) duties very seriously and can be seen patrolling the grounds or standing guard in the hay barn. We hope the fox will not extend the scope of duties to chickens come summertime.

The dogs, Tabush and Little Bear, are equally dedicated and promptly chase the fox away when it taunts them near the farmhouse.

We have been eating well at the farm and so have the cats; they had good stores for the winter. Some would say too good! They tag along for the morning cattle check (perhaps they don't have faith in the fox).

THE HUMANS – BOB ET AL

The farm maintains its tradition of multinationalism. We had a vibrant Woofer from Greece last summer, Ada. The farm grounds never looked

better, and we still have some stuffed peppers – Greek style – in the freezer. Eri is our winter farm stay exchange student from Japan. She is learning English and enjoying the winter scene in the country.

Eva is the new apprentice, and a more permanent addition to the farm. She is a customer turned farmer from Ottawa, Israel, and Slovakia (in reverse chronological order). She has a BSc in Animal Science but had never really driven a tractor before coming to the farm. She lived on a Kibbutz and picked avocados, apples, pears, and other produce.

capacity to supply bulk orders before the Carp Farmer's Market starts in May. We will also attend the "Seedy Saturday" event in Almonte on February 20th (9AM-3PM) as well as the Easter Market at Carp on Saturday, March 26.

Elderberries – 2015 was not a high-yield year for elderberries on the farm, but we are hoping to have some pressed and bottled fairly soon. As soon as Bob figures out how to fix his 100-year old seed cleaner, we'll be good to go!

Chickens – we still have some chickens available. They have grown well – we call them "Feast



THE BUSINESS

Grass-fed beef – we are in the midst of the bulk-order season, which will taper as the farmer's market season ramps up (around May or June). We can usually supply bulk orders within one month of receiving an order. We are still making home deliveries of bulk and small custom orders to Ottawa twice monthly, and we have the

Chickens", as they weigh an average of 10 lbs each.

Future endeavours – Eva would like to try her hand at a few other animal husbandry projects. Duck eggs and chicken eggs (free range and organic) are on the list. Other ideas might sprout in the spring. She is also interested in hearing what you might like to see in addition to our current farm offerings, so any comments welcome!

FEEDBACK

We would love to know if you would like to receive seasonal farm updates (a newsletter, of sorts) and/or notifications of upcoming events, deliveries to Ottawa, farm tours etc. Please feel free to get in touch.

Wishing you a wonderful season,

Bob and Eva

613-646-2488

613-818-8232 (Eva's cell)

dobsonfarm@nrtco.net

<http://www.dobsonfarm.com/>



Regenerative Orchard Workshop Follows Eco Farm Day

DAVID & MARGARET TOWNSON

The Regenerative Orchard Workshop followed hard on the heels of Eco Farm Day on February 21. A new partnership between EFAO (Ecological Farmers of Ontario) and COG OSO (Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter) brought this well-attended workshop to Cornwall in 2016.

Stefan Sobkowiak of Miracle Farm (www.miracle.farm) led the information-packed workshop about his novel method for designing and producing from a permaculture orchard for about 60 existing and aspiring orchardists.

Stefan started with a brief history of his experiences on the farm, describing some of his successes and biggest mistakes (including the managing of a certified organic orchard without permaculture principles).

Some snippets from the workshop offer the flavor of the day:

- Stefan pointed out that in nature you do not see the modern orchard with rows and rows of the same type of fruit tree. Variety is the key. He has devised a system whereby an apple tree is planted next to a plum tree, which is next to a nitrogen-fixing tree (e.g. honey locust), followed by another apple tree, then maybe a pear tree, then a nitrogen-fixing tree, and so on. This prevents the spread of pests and ensures that each fruit tree has access to nitrogen stored by the nitrogen-fixing trees. Between the trees there are shrubs (e.g. gooseberry, blackberry bushes, perennial herbs and vegetables, and in the early stages even annual vegetables). The row is covered with black plastic to suppress weeds. Trees and shrubs grow through the holes in the plastic. He recommends mulching under the plastic and mowing between the rows, but advises that you do not mow too often. Restricting mowing allows wild flowers to grow, which attracts beneficial insects and/or distracts pest insects. Stefan also suggests setting up bird feeders, as well as places that encourage frogs that eat insects and bees to pollinate trees.
- The essentials of propagation were discussed and demonstrated, and there were plenty of opportunities for questions.
- Permaculture orchard design was opened to attendees with group work; groups made simple models from recycled materials to help identify all of the options and figure out the pros and cons of each decision. It was like trying to look into the future and foresee issues before investing in expensive developments.
- Healthy, living soil is the objective; suggestions for achieving this objective included mulching with hay, grass clippings, ramial chipped wood, etc., as well as inoculating biology into the soil with aerated compost tea.
- Farmers and growers were advised to be aware of their actions. Stop killing and start preserving and enhancing the soil. Habitat diversity is enhanced by leaving plant residue for wintering and nesting habitat for insects.
- A number of excellent resources were recommended; *Essence of Permaculture* by David Holmgren was one of these resources. With an introduction to permaculture, thoughts about the future of the movement, and the values of permaculture principles, Holmgren's work is a great way to expand your knowledge on the subject.

Stefan encourages groups to come and visit his orchard. Some workshop participants expressed an interest in these visits and asked COG OSO and EFAO to begin exploring related possibilities. Interested parties who did not make it to the workshop but are interested in a tour of Miracle Farm (southwest of Montreal), should contact colin@cog.ca or katie@efao.ca

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and handbills for our Urban Organic
Gardening Seminars, and posters for
Organic Week!



Organic Seed Sales

This fundraiser for Senior Organic Gardeners (SOG) is in its third year.

For the first time, the Organic Seed Sale will be hosted by Scotiabank-Innes Road on March 24th from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

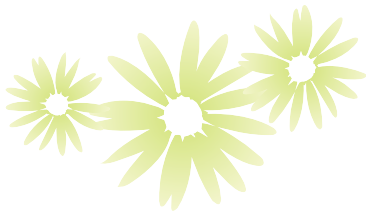
The seeds have been generously donated by Greta's Organic Seeds, The Cottage Gardener and Tournesol. We will have a larger quantity and greater variety of organic seeds on sale than ever before.

The Organic Seed Sales are enormously important to the survival of SOG. This year the Scotiabank Innes Road Branch Manager has offered to match the total proceeds from the Seed Sales!

We hope to see many people there!

COG OSO SPONSOR





Congratulations to our 2015 Volunteer Award Winners!

Lyne Matthieu

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER – TRANSLATION

Lyne Matthieu is a professional translator from English to French. Lyne has done the translation of the Senior Organic Gardeners' website as well as some documents for Growing Up Organic. She has done awesome work and continues to support COG OSO with translations... This is very much appreciated! *Merci beaucoup, Lyne!*



Michael Matthews

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER
SENIOR ORGANIC GARDENERS

Michael has assisted SOG as a volunteer with multiple trips picking up supplies, building garden boxes for seniors, assisting planting sessions, assisting Alzheimer's patients with gardening, organizing Appreciation events for funders, doing emergency plumbing to water the gardens and presenting an illustrated seminar about the Gardens of India to a group of seniors. Thank you, Michael!



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Special thanks to **Oxfam Canada**
for hosting COG OSO Steering
Committee meetings in their
board room.

Tribute to our 2015 Volunteers

ECO FARM DAY 2015

Gary Weinhold
Lloyd Strachan
Colin Lundy
Bill Barkley
Debbie Holzman
Adele McKay
Connie Horbas
Pauline Gagnon
Rob Walbridge
Wentsi Yeung
Kristine Swaren
Marley Lewington
Delia Barkley
Erin Krekoski
Doug Scott

COG BOOTH VOLUNTEERS 2015

Lloyd Strachan – Booth Leader
Alain D'Aoust
Amanda Wilson
Barbara Koch
Diana McLean
Elisa Lane
Fred McFarland
Gary Weinhold
Joanne Tipler
Leonard Helferty
Linda Harvey
Lynne Epss
Margaret Townson
Marie-Thérèse Voutsinos
Mat Paterson
Michael Ilgert
Pat Lucey
Pedro Escudero
Suzanne Yap
Telsing Andrews
Wentsi Yeung

COMMUNICATIONS 2015

Marley Lewington – Communications Leader
Alissa Campbell – Manager of COG OSO E-mail

DOWN TO EARTH

Molly Davidson – Editor
Stephanie Pelot
Megan McLeod

COG OSO E-NEWS

Sara Holzman – Editor
Michael Vilenkin
Elena Vilenkin

URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS 2015

Volunteers

David Townson
Margaret Townson
Lloyd Strachan
Peter Bradley
Anouk Mackenzie
Rachel Moore
Teti Kabatu
Elizabeth vanDenning

Instructors

Rob Danforth
Alissa Campbell
David Hinck
Telsing Andrews
Pat Lucey

ORGANIC DEMONSTRATION GARDEN 2015

Angela Stuart and Bonnie
Braden Gunther
Michael Gunther
Dai Siang
Denise Davidson
Hanna
Antonio
Helena Misaka Sawace
Jim Davidson
Lyse Morel
Rita Paterson
Telsing Andrews

COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS 2015

Johanna Cornelissen
Cory Fournier

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Marley Lewington
Alissa Campbell
Stephanie Lane
Margaret Townson

SENIOR ORGANIC GARDENERS 2015

David Townson
Margaret Townson
Michael Matthews
Rob Danforth – Advisor
Guy Clairoux – Regina Towers
Gail McGuire – Brooke Towers
Margot Boire – Brooke Towers
Patrick Miller – Brooke Towers
Wanda Brown – Regina Towers
Helen Pinkney – Russell Manor
Sarr Sam – Russell Manor
Cathy Thompson – St Patrick's Long Term Care Home
Dougal Rattray
Lyne Matthieu – Translator

FINANCES

Gary Weinhold- Treasurer

FALL REFLECTIONS 2015

Stephanie Lane
Lloyd Strachan
Gary Weinhold
David Townson
Margaret Townson

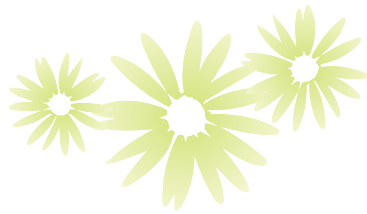
OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD COMMITTEE

Lloyd Strachan
Margaret Tourond-Townson

2015 STEERING COMMITTEE

Stephanie Lane
Gary Weinhold
Dick Coote
Lloyd Strachan
David Townson





Potato Hand Pies, Two Ways

BY LAURA MONCION

*Bank with someone who shares
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Here are two versions of potato pies – one, pierogi-inspired cheddar and onion filling, and two, spiced sweet potato filling. This pie crust is a version of *pâte brisée* from the blog *Chocolate and Zucchini* (the French know how to do their pie crusts). Note! you will need one batch of pie crust for each batch of filling.

1. PIE CRUST (PÂTE BRISÉE)

1 1/3 c flour
1/2 tsp salt
7 tbsp cold butter
1 large organic egg, beaten
ice water

METHOD

- combine the dry ingredients (and add spices if you want a spiced dough, which can be fun!)
- rub the butter through the flour mixture with your hands, until it resembles coarse meal
- make a small well in the middle of the mixture, add the egg
- blend the egg in with a fork, and add a bit of ice water
- knead gently until the dough comes together into a ball, adding more ice water as necessary
- wrap the dough ball in plastic wrap and chill in the fridge for 30min to 2hrs (you can chill for up to one day, but I find this to be the best margin)
- when chilled, unwrap dough onto a floured surface and roll out into a long rectangle
- cut smaller rectangles, spoon the room-temperature filling onto one half, then fold over the other half of the rectangle to create a little packet
- seal the mini pie with a bit of water or crimping
- place on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake at 350°C for about 30-35 minutes, or until golden brown and pastry is crisp.

2. SAVOURY FILLING – POTATO, CHEDDAR, AND ONION

1 large organic potato (yellow- or white-fleshed, preferably, but it doesn't matter too much – anything that will mash nicely!)

1/2 organic Spanish or yellow onion, diced

1/2 c shredded cheddar (I loooooove Balderson's 2 Year Old, but any sharp cheddar will do)

1 tsp each salt and pepper

1/2 tsp dill (optional)

METHOD

- cut the potato into small pieces and boil in salted water until mashably soft
- while the potato is boiling, saute the diced onion in a knob of butter until soft and translucent
- in a bowl, combine the potato, salt and pepper, dill and mash
- let potato and onion cool, then combine with the shredded cheddar, taste and season accordingly
- spoon into the prepared pastry
- once baked, serve with sour cream and pickles! yum!

3. SWEET FILLING – SPICED SWEET POTATO

1 medium organic sweet potato

1 tbsp brown sugar (I like it more spicy than sweet, but you can add another tablespoon of brown sugar if you wish)

1 tbsp butter

1 tsp each cinnamon, ground ginger, ground nutmeg

METHOD

- cut the sweet potato into small pieces and boil in salted water until mashably soft
- when sweet potato is cooked, transfer to a bowl and mash while still hot with the butter, sugar, and spices
- taste and season accordingly
- let the mixture cool, then spoon into the prepared pastry
- once baked, serve with whipped cream! enjoy!

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URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS

APRIL-MAY 2016

SÉMINAIRES JARDINAGE BIO URBAIN

AVRIL-MAI 2016



Call for Volunteers

A few volunteers are still needed for the Urban Organic Gardening Seminars on April 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28 and May 3 to arrive at Ottawa City Hall by 6:00 pm for set up, participate in the seminars from 7 to 9 pm free of charge and then tear down until about 9:20 pm. Please get in contact with sog.margaret@gmail.com or call 613 834 5091.



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Chair's Report

* Please Note: this Chair's Report was written at the end of 2015

As this year draws to a close and we look forward to a happy, productive and healthy 2016, the Steering Committee is also working to finalize our plans and prepare budgets for 2016. It seems like there is a real appetite (pardon the pun) for discussion about food issues and agricultural practices – these issues have even figured into recent international climate change negotiations. Food insecurity and agricultural practices are being increasingly recognized as key elements that affect and are affected by climate change. It is an important time to support organic agriculture. With this in mind, here are some of the highlights from the COG OSO Steering Committee's recent strategic planning process, as well as some of what I presented at Fall Reflections 2016.

Plans for Eco Farm Day 2016 are already well underway. This year's event will be held in Cornwall on February 20, 2016. Mark your calendars now and keep checking the [website](#), as details will be added regularly. This is not an event to be missed!

In addition to Eco Farm Day, we are planning on spending time in 2016 envisioning how we can best serve farmers. We will be kickstarting our Farmer Outreach Advisory Committee and are looking for farmers (certified organic or otherwise) to participate and advise us on how we can best serve the community.

We will also be holding our informative Organic Gardening Seminar series in the spring. If you are planning to plant a food garden this spring, this series will provide the perfect opportunity to get some tips and ask the experts!

We continue to work hard on two of our most loved programs – Growing Up Organic and Senior Organic Gardeners. Key funding for these programs has sunsetted, so we are doing everything we can to find additional funding. The communities served by these programs have told us loud and clear that they want us to keep doing exactly what we're doing; unfortunately, as you may know, it is hard to get foundation funding for existing projects. We are actively looking for sponsors and other sources of funds for these and other programs.

As always, for a small charitable organization, we find that while we have wonderful programs and plenty of projects, we also have a limited budget. We are currently working hard on our new fundraising committee to develop ideas, initiatives and proposals to raise funds for the organization.

If you are interested in getting involved with the Steering Committee or any of our committees, don't hesitate to get in touch with me at cogoso.chair@gmail.com. And, as always, please [donate](#) to help us continue our important work!

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

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

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.

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Live the Smart WAY EXPO



Live the Smart Way Expo

We're teaming up with the Live the Smart Way Expo, a one-stop health and wellness show happening in Ottawa on April 23-24, 2016. You can help support COG-OSO by clicking [this link](#) to get **free tickets** to the show. For each person who signs up through our link and attends the show, COG-OSO will get \$5. It's a fun and easy way to support your local chapter.