



Canadian Organic Growers
Cultivons Biologique Canada
Ottawa - St. Lawrence - Outaouais Chapter
Section d'Ottawa - Saint Laurent - Outaouais
web: www.cog.ca/ottawa
email: cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca
tel. (613) 244-4000

Down to Earth

Editor's Corner

I hope all of you organic enthusiasts are enjoying the winter. While it may not be prime growing season, this is a great time to prepare and enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of past harvests. I trust that those of you who celebrated Christmas thoroughly enjoyed the green beans, potatoes, and turnips at your holiday tables. But you don't have to stop enjoying cold-weather comfort food just because the holiday season has come to an end. Flip through this issue of *Down to Earth* to find the recipe for our savoury "Winter Root Bowl".

What else will you find in this edition of *Down to Earth*? A recent story from Homestead Organics, a review of Stephen Barstow's new book (which is sure to excite all of the vegetable gardeners out there), and a recap of events from this year's Fall Reflections. This issue also contains a special thank you to all of the volunteers and sponsors that make COG OSO's programs, events, and publications possible.

Each new year presents us with an opportunity to take stock and set new goals. For some of us, this includes maintaining our healthy lifestyles. In 2015, let's all continue to include fresh, organic produce in our diets and spend plenty of time in the great outdoors. Here's to being the best we can be.

Regards,

Molly Davidson
mollycogoso@gmail.com

IN THIS ISSUE

GROWING UP ORGANIC UPDATE

Page 3

VOLUNTEER AND SPONSOR APPRECIATION

Page 5

URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS APRIL 2015

Page 9

A message from the Organic Council of Ontario

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT of the Canadian Organic Standard, organic operators in Ontario have been asking for an Ontario Organic Regulation. The current Organic Products Regulation (OPR) leaves a major loophole relating to organic claims that needs to be addressed. The Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) has been advocating for a provincial regulation in Ontario for several years. It has succeeded in getting the Foodland Ontario Organic Logo, but it is not sufficient as it does not regulate any organic claims.

OCO has established a working group to guide the organization's engagement with the process to ensure that all perspectives in the organic value-chain are reflected. If you would like to participate in the working group via phone conference or send in your thoughts about an Ontario Organic Regulation, please email jacob@organiccouncil.ca.

Jacob J. Pries, Operations & Outreach Manager
Organic Council of Ontario.



ORGANIC MASTER GARDENER COURSE

February to April 2015 – Ottawa, ON

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

The Organic Master Gardener Certificate is designed for all levels of urban & community gardeners, landscapers, municipal parks personnel, environmental advocates, growers, naturalists and conservationists.

WHEN:

Feb. 14-15, March 14-15, April 11-12
Saturdays & Sundays from 10am to 4pm

WHERE:

Hintonburg Community Centre
1064 Wellington W, Ottawa

Cost : \$670+HST Early Bird Price
(until January 23rd, 2015)
\$720+HST Regular Price

SPACES LIMITED, REGISTER SOON!

To find out more info and to register call the Canadian Organic Growers at 1-888-375-7383 or visit www.cog.ca/news_events/OMG/



Otesha Project Opportunities

Looking for an unforgettable experience? Maybe it's time to grab life by the handlebars!

The Otesha Project is looking for curious, dedicated and adventuresome volunteers! The Otesha Project's bicycle tours use interactive workshops, theatre presentations and experiential learning to engage people of all ages to take action for a more fair and sustainable future — for people and the planet.

Deepen your knowledge of environmental and social issues, gain skills in public engagement and alternative education, and empower yourself on a cycling adventure — all while having a laugh with diverse and inspiring teammates.

Tours are as short as nine days and as epic as two months. Spaces are being filled on a rolling basis and all levels of cycling experience (or inexperience!) are welcome. You can find all the juicy details at www.otesha.ca.



Homestead Organics

Celebrating Our 10th Anniversary

INVESTORS WANTED

- ✓ Strong Growth
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- ✓ Community Leader

Call Tom Manley at 1-877-984-0480

www.homesteadorganics.ca

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Eco Farm Day is set for Feb 28, 2015 in Cornwall, ON!

There is a new committee planning the next Eco Farm Day. While we are a bit late getting things rolling, this is a great committee, and we believe the conference will be more exciting and dynamic than ever. We are continuing our focus on bringing conference participants more advanced and practical workshops on livestock, pastures, field crops, market farming and some other, more niche topics.

Our keynote address this year is *Healthy Land, Healthy People, Healthy Profits: Using Holistic Management for Sustainable Agriculture*, delivered by Tony McQuail. He will be talking about how holistic management as a decision-making tool can help farm families to attain short and long term goals that benefit the social, economic and ecological aspects of the farm.

In addition, Tony will give a presentation on his recent research on behalf of the Organic Federation of Canada; this research focuses on why so few small diversified farms in Canada have organic certification. Tony will be presenting on two potential alternative organic certification schemes designed to meet the needs of these farmers in an organic-certification system. This session will also provide a great opportunity for farmers to provide feedback for Tony about these alternative organic-certification schemes. So come to the conference and speak up to shape the Canadian Organic sector. More information can be found at <http://www.organicfederation.ca/>.

The slate of presentations is in the process of being finalized. It is too early to announce all of the details, but we can give you an idea of the topics we hope to cover to help pique your interest.

- As with Eco Farm Day 2014, this year's conference will feature a partnership with Organic Meadow to help bring in high profile presenters on organic pasture management and livestock nutrition.
- Impacts of sustainable agriculture and conservation tillage practices on soil and water quality
- Technicalities of successful root-cellarling of vegetables
- Raising organic pigs on pasture: from farrow to finish
- Aspects of organic vineyard management
- Growing and breeding open-pollinated field corn
- Season extension and year-round production using hoop houses and greenhouses
- Growing and marketing organic medicinal herbs
- Value-added products from goat and sheep milk
- Toward a chemical treatment free beehive management
- Crop rotations, cover crops and weed management in organic field crops

Our committee is currently discussing the possibility of adding a more extensive, half-day workshop and other events to the Eco Farm Day program.

To get more information and to stay abreast of conference updates, remember to revisit cog.ca/ottawa/eco-farm-day as well as our Facebook page, [facebook.com/cogosochapter](https://www.facebook.com/cogosochapter). Registration will be available on the website.

As always, Eco Farm Day is seeking both cash and in-kind sponsors, as well as exhibitors for the trade show (which is part of the conference) and volunteers to help out. Please see cog.ca/ottawa/eco-farm-day/eco-farm-day-2014-contacts for more information.

Enquiries should be directed to ecofarmday@cog.ca, or by calling 613-244-4000 x4.

World Food Day

ALISSA CAMPBELL

Celebrating the launch of the Seasonal Harvest Program at DA Moodie Middle School

Every year, on October 16th, people around the globe celebrate World Food Day, which is why we chose this day to celebrate our Seasonal Harvest Program. We gathered at DA Moodie Middle School and, while students filed in to get their daily nutritious snack, which included delicious quinoa salad and fresh organic vegetables from Aubin Farm, we took the opportunity to thank the people and funders that have made this unique program possible. While crunching down their romanesco cauliflower, students had a special opportunity to meet Tim and Roshan Aubin, the school's farm partner that was matched through the program.

With the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the hard work of our marvelous partners at the Ottawa Network for Education's School Breakfast Program, this program is bringing local, organic produce into our student nutrition programs. This is something to celebrate indeed.



This October is also Canada's first "National Farm to School Month", a testament to the growing recognition of the value of farm-to-school programs that connect children and youth with local, sustainable food. Of course, we've known the benefits for a long time! We know, in particular, that when food literacy programs like Growing Up Organic and food access programs like the school Snack and Breakfast program are combined, the impacts of both programs are magnified.

The Seasonal Harvest Program also supports our local organic food system by putting farmers at the forefront. By linking schools directly to farms like the Aubin's, we are helping to build unique relationships between producers and consumers, as well as putting a face to the food we eat every day. Most importantly, the Seasonal Harvest Program works to make local, organic, healthy and whole foods accessible.

Finding a model for the Seasonal Harvest Program wasn't easy! There are many innovative ways of linking school procurement to local farms, and we learned a lot from others along the way, as well as from our own ideas. We learned that it takes passionate student nutrition monitors who are



Left to right: Stephanie Craze (Food and Logistics Coordinator at the Ottawa School Breakfast Program), Alissa Campbell (Program Manager for Growing Up Organic), Suzanne de Abreu (Community Development Coordinator at the Ottawa School Breakfast Program), Susan Molson (DA Moodie's Snack Program Monitor), Paul Parmelee (DA Moodie's Principal), Roshan and Tim Aubin (Farmers from Aubin Farm), Colin Lundy (Farmer Outreach Coordinator for Growing Up Organic), Carolyn Hunter (Director of the Ottawa School Breakfast Program), and Sherrell Franklin (Local Grant Review Team of the Ontario Trillium Foundation).

dedicated to preparing snacks from whole foods and are engaging students in the kitchen to make it happen. It takes schools with adequate kitchen spaces, and administrations that share a vision for whole food preparation. It takes farmers who are willing to test new waters and go out of their way to deliver customized orders directly because they believe in the value of building personal relationships with schools and students.

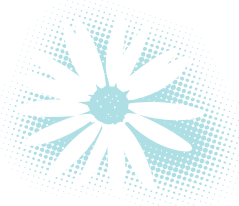
When Tim Aubin spoke, he used the word "forward-thinking" to describe this program, and I couldn't have said it better myself. This is just the beginning for our Seasonal Harvest Program. Over the next few years, we will be working to integrate more educational materials so students are more aware of the farm their snacks are coming from, and we'll be expanding participation to more schools and more local organic farms. This is all thanks to the creative vision and hard work of an absolutely fantastic team. Thank YOU!

Sherrell Franklin, from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and Carolyn Hunter, Director of the Ottawa School Breakfast Program, speak with Tim and Roshan Aubin on October 16th



Senior Organic Gardeners SPONSOR

Pantry plus



Fall Reflections with Snow on the Ground!

Sunday November 30 dawned with the white stuff on the ground but quite mild and a nice day. This event is our chance to share all our chapter does throughout the year- which is a LOT with a LITTLE!

The location at the Glebe Community Centre was warm and friendly with plenty of hot coffee on the go as everyone arrived.

A Power Point Display ran continuously from 1:00-1:30 honouring all our dedicated volunteers and our generous sponsors. The first order of the day was the presentation of our Outstanding Volunteer Awards this year to Janet Mrenica who for several years coordinated Feast of Fields and has always been on deck to volunteer for Feast of Fields since that time. Jim and Denise Davidson received awards for their dedicated work at the Demonstration Garden near the Experimental Farm. COG OSO does so much exactly because of the loyal and dedicated volunteers and we thank them.

We welcomed our keynote speaker, Rick Smith from the Broadbent Institute to speak about "The Impact of Pesticides on Health - Ours and the Planet's." Rick was both informative and inspiring and people had many questions for him during the Q&A and during the break over coffee, tea and great goodies by The Greendoor Restaurant!

Members had requested that a video be made of Rick's Talk and he graciously accepted. Pentafolio Media accepted the task pro bono as huge supporters of COG OSO and we will be doing major promotion of it. If you missed Fall Reflections, make sure to find it on our website: www.cog.ca/ottawa/resources.

There were many booths around the large room: Growing Up Organic, Senior Organic Gardeners, COG OSO and a Silent Auction as well as an abundance of great organic food!

Our meeting chair, Stephanie Lane then presented an illustrated Bird's-Eye View of COG OSO in 2014 showing the different programs and events and recording their successes and challenges.

There were about 75 people in attendance at Fall Reflections this year. We were pleased with the support for our work in 2014. The election of the Steering Committee for 2015 took place before the meeting adjourned. It was announced that if anyone else is interested in becoming a Steering Committee member, we invite them to attend a couple of meetings and then if it is a good fit on both sides, they are appointed for the remainder of the year.

A number of COG OSO people took Rick Smith to dinner at The Green Door where we had a great meal and chat until time for Rick's flight.



Keynote Speaker Rick Smith and audience at Fall Reflections



Lloyd Strachan at the COG OSO Booth during Fall Reflections



The Food Lineup at Fall Reflections - thanks to The Green Door Restaurant

Growing Up
Organic
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Tribute to our Volunteers and Sponsors

Eco Farm Day 2014, Chair Planning Committee

Simon Neufeld

Eco Farm Day 2014 Volunteers

Colin Lundy, Bill Barkley, Debbie Holzman, Richard MacArthur, Christina Bitar, Hazel Nicholls, Judith Klassen, Connie Horbas, Pauline Gagnon, Delia Barkley

COG Booth Leader

Lloyd Strachan

COG Booth Volunteers

Alissa Campbell, Diana McLean, Barbara Koch, Fred McFarland, Gary Weinhold, Colin Lundy, Ingrid Neumann, Janet Mason, Joanne Tipler, Johanna Cornelissen, Laura Harris, Linda Harvey, Margaret Tourond-Townson, Marie- Therese Voutsinos, Mike Ilgert, Mourad Regragui, Pauline Gagnon, Pedro Escudero, Seigfried Neumann, Stephanie Lane, Suzanne Yap, Wentzi Yueng

Communications Leader

Marley Lewington

Coordinator of Volunteers 2014

Johanna Cornelissen

Down to Earth

Molly Davidson, Stephanie Pelot, Megan McLeod

COG OSO E-News

Sara Holzman, Michael Vilenkin, Elena Vilenkin

Feast of Fields 2014

Marley Lewington, Victoria Platel, Barbara Koch, Janet Hughes, Jennifer Dittmar, Scott Mackay, Janet Mrenica, Lei Lu, Karin Nault, Pierre Nault, Heidi Monk, Richard Szirtes, Peter Fischl, Lloyd Strachan, Margaret Tourond-Townson, Stuart Collins, Adele McKay, Alissa Campbell, David Townson

Organic Gardening in the City Workshops

David Townson, Rita Peterson, Marley Lewington, Molly Davidson, Margaret Townson, Craig Murkar, Lloyd Strachan, Peter Bradley

Organic Gardening in the City Instructors

Rob Danforth, Alissa Campbell, David Hinck, Telsing Andrews, Pat Lucey

Organic Demonstration Garden

Barbara Koch, Braden Gunther, Christiane Misaka, Denise

Davidson, Dulce Rosario, Helena Misaka Sawace, Jim Davidson, Leo Dai, Lloyd Strachan, Lynda Kelly, Lyse Morel, Melinda Hiatt, Michael Gunther, Rita Paterson, Siang Dai, Telsing Andrews, Terry Hiatt

Website and Social Media

Marley Lewington and Alissa Campbell

Growing Up Organic

Alissa Campbell

Senior Organic Gardeners

David Townson, Margaret Townson, Rob Danforth

Longfields Manor – Brian Graham

Unitarian House- Maureen Comerford
Regina Towers – Guy Clairoux

Brooke Towers – Gail McGuire, Mark Boire, Patrick Miller, Wanda Brown

Wellington Towers – Deborah Garrick
Russell Manor – Helen Pinkney, Sarr Sam

Policies and Issues

Margaret Tourond-Townson

Finances

Treasurer – Gary Weinhold

Fall Reflections 2014

Lloyd Strachan, Gary Weinhold, David Townson, Margaret

Tourond-Townson, Stephanie Lane, Dick Coote, Alissa Campbell, Marley Lewington, Johanna Cornelissen

Outstanding Volunteer Award Committee

Lloyd Strachan, Margaret Tourond-Townson

2014 Steering Committee

Stephanie Lane, Gary Weinhold, Dick Coote, Stuart Collins, Lloyd Strachan, Margaret Tourond-Townson, David Townson, Marley Lewington, Alissa Campbell

Sponsors

The Green Door Restaurant, The Government of Canada, Community Foundation of Ottawa, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Natural Factors, Little Stream Bakery, Parkdale Market, Pentafolio, Sure Print & Graphics Orleans, The Cottage Gardener Seed Nursery, Greta's Organic Seeds, Pantry Plus, Rainbow Foods, Bryson Farms, Oxfam Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Just Food Community Gardening Network

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS 2014



Janet Mrenica

For her work as Coordinator and volunteer for Feast of Fields



Jim and Denise Davidson

For their dedicated work at the Demonstration Garden near the Experimental Farm

GRANT PROVIDERS

Ontario Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

Canada
New Horizons for Seniors

Community Foundation of Ottawa



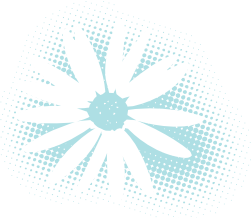
Fondation communautaire d'Ottawa

For good...forever Le bien...toujours

IN-KIND SPONSORS



The Green Door Restaurant



Garlic Fundraiser

Thank you to the organic farmers who donated garlic for COG OSO. You have helped raise much-needed funds for Growing Up Organic!

We received over 500 organic bulbs from:

- Aubin Farm
- Ferme coopérative aux champs qui chantent
- Ferme du Covenant Farm
- Ferme la Rosée
- Luxy Farm
- Rainbow Heritage Garden
- Riverglen Farm

Most of this garlic has been sold at \$3 per bulb or 4 bulbs for \$10. Some bulbs were retained and replanted at Littledown Organic Farm. This replanting will give us approximately 500 more bulbs to sell next year. Hopefully, this will become a growing and successful fund-raising activity for COG OSO.

Please seek out these farmers: visit their websites, like them on facebook, follow their blogs. Better yet, support their businesses, as they have supported COG OSO, by joining their CSAs and/or seeking out their products at Farmers Markets. Whether you are in Brockville or Pembroke or Montreal or anywhere in between, you are close to at least one of these farmers.

Colin Lundy



COG OSO volunteers Lloyd Strachan, Barbara Koch and Dick Coote (owner of Littledown Organic Farm) planting garlic to sell for fundraising next year.

To Certify or Not To Certify: The perspective of small-scale organic farmers

ORIGINALLY PRINTED ON THE ORGANIC FEDERATION OF CANADA BLOG

Local +organic = a win-win situation for growers, consumers and the environment.

Small-scale organic farmers represent the face of the Canadian organic industry — at the farmers' market, CSA drop-off and at the restaurant back door. Today, public on-farm exposure often happens through harvest days and other events offered by small farms.

Many of these farmers, however, are not certified organic. The typical small-scale farmer depends on direct marketing relationships — their sales pitches cultivate and educate buyers interested in supporting environmentally-sound farming methods. For these growers, the expense and effort of certification isn't justifiable, since attaining certified organic status doesn't significantly increase sales or the trust already earned from buyers.

In the spring of 2014, the Working Group on Small Scale Organic Certification (WGSSOC) administered a survey to small-scale farmers. 200 responses were received. The data highlights how the current "one size fits all" model of organic certification is often not feasible for small-scale operators.

Meanwhile, "opting out" is far from optimal. The split among organic producers (certified vs non-certified) confuses customers, who are still learning what organic agriculture is all about. Survey respondents cited concerns that the decision of small farmers not to certify has hindered the growth of the organic movement.

Building on its survey data, the WGSSOC has drafted two organic certification models that aim to be attainable for a small-scale producer focusing mainly on direct sales (farm-gate, CSA, farmer's market, etc.): the Peer Certification Model and the Self-Declaration Model.

For both models, features are:

- Simple online application
- Can be used only in jurisdictions without a provincial organic regulation
- All documentation pertains to small, diversified operations engaging in direct sales
- Bureaucratic overhead is reduced

"CERTIFIED LOCAL ORGANIC" (CLO) — THE PEER CERTIFICATION MODEL

Annual on-farm inspections are conducted by peers. Compliance with the Canada Organic Standard is verified online by a third-party certification body.

- Records and verification reports are accessible and available online.
- Annual certification costs are based on gross sales of organic product.
- BUT, peer verification of farms in remote areas may be difficult to arrange.

"ORGANIC AFFIDAVIT (OA)" — THE SELF-DECLARATION MODEL

Producers publicly pledge to understand and follow the Canada Organic Standard.

- Applications and pledges can be viewed online.
- Low annual certification costs.
- BUT, model may not be accepted by the rest of the organic producer community.

SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE! Would the self declaration or peer review model be something that feels more appropriate for your farm? Do these models address the concerns and needs you have around certification? If so, which one would be the most appropriate?

Your input will inform WGSSOC's presentation of these models at the Technical Committee on Organic Agriculture meetings in December 2014 and April 2015.



Homestead Organics Hosts Delegation from Thailand

On Tuesday September 30th 2014, Tom Manley and Homestead Organics hosted a delegation of eight agricultural advisors and directors from Thailand.

The officials from the Division of Soil Biotechnology, Land Development Department of the Thailand Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives have a responsibility to enhance soil fertility and agricultural productivity. Since 2004, they have been working on a project to promote long term sustainable and organic farming. Their objective is to produce more organic food. The project covers an area of 2,700,000 hectares.

The delegation started their Canadian visit with meetings at McGill University in order to establish a research partnership in agriculture. They then arrived at Homestead Organics' organic grain operations to tour the company's current feed mill in Berwick, followed by the new seed-cleaning plant in Morrisburg. The group then continued for tourist stops in Kingston, the Thousand Islands, and Niagara Fall before heading home.

Tom Manley and the company's agronomist Valérie Yoder shared insights regarding their success as well as the challenges, practices and successes of the organic farmers that the company serves. The discussions covered grain-handling equipment and processes, quality assurance, organic marketing, organic certification, and best practices in organic agriculture.

Tom said, "we host visitors regularly from farmers, consumers, high schools, Alfred College and Kemptville College. This is our first international visit." To explain how they found Homestead Organics, Tom added, "[a]lthough I am not sure why they selected us, we are easy to find on the Internet



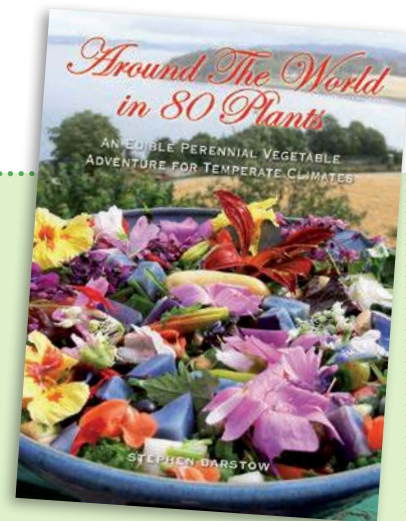
as we are well known, we have a great website, and we are mentioned in many directories and news stories."

Homestead Organics' mission is to develop and serve organic agriculture. Established in 1988 on the home farm in Berwick, the company has grown exponentially over its 26 years. The Company supports organic farmers in their implementation of sustainable production methods and to respond to the constant growth in the consumer demand for organic food. Homestead Organics moved from the home farm to the Berwick feed mill in 1997 and has recently established a second grain-processing plant in Morrisburg.

Book Review

Around the World in 80 Plants

STEPHEN BARSTOW



BY TELSING ANDREWS

WHAT DOES A VEGETABLE GARDEN look like in Norway, where the sun disappears midwinter and the thin soil freezes to the bedrock? Perhaps you would not expect a diverse, intermingling quilt of vigorous perennial edibles that provide both food and beauty. But that is the sight that would greet you if you were to visit the garden of Stephen Barstow, author of *Around the World in 80 Plants*.

When Stephen first moved to Norway to start a job as an ocean scientist, he was dismayed by the limited selection of vegetables at his grocery store. So he planted a garden and joined a local foraging group. Given that his job required travel, he also took the time to learn about the local food traditions of the countries he visited, especially of plants that were hardy and perennial. His garden grew. Many of the vegetables he was harvesting were unrecognizable to most. Others were familiar, but their use as food had been forgotten.

However, these uses were not forgotten by everyone. Interspersed throughout the book's descriptions of origins, growing habits, uses and history are relationships between plants and people. This is not merely an informative account of 30 years of testing perennial green vegetable crops in a harsh climate, it is also a book of stories. Some are recent, like the story of the Korean woman who asked Stephen to send her seeds of a particular Aster that she remembered eating from her childhood. Others are ancient, like the suspected remnant populations of a solid stem variant of Angelica, possibly originating from the Vikings. It is a story that is still being written by plant explorers, agricultural adventurers, and backyard gardeners, of which Stephen is a venerable member. Known as the Extreme Salad Man in European Permaculture circles, he coined the term Edimental to refer to plants that serve double duty as being both ornamental and edible.

Around the World in 80 Plants is the kind of book that the enthusiastic gardener will have trouble putting down. It will either send you on a seed chase or have you looking at your ornamental bed in a whole new way. A novel addition to the food-growing cannon, it will expand the horizons of gardeners, foragers, homesteaders and permaculturists.

- Winter 2015 Course Offering

Introduction to Holistic Management for Family Farms Making Better Decisions

February 19-21 and March 12-14

Location: Ottawa/Eastern Ontario TBD

This is a participatory six-day course where farm families learn the principles of Holistic Management while applying them to their own operation.

The course covers the creation of a Holistic goal, how to make progress towards your Holistic goal, financial planning, planned grazing, and more.

At the end, participants will have a draft holistic goal and a well-started financial plan. The cost is \$1100 plus HST for up to two participants from a farm; for additional people, it will be \$226 each. Farms eligible for Growing Your Farm Profits may have part of the cost covered under Capacity Building.

For more information, to suggest a location, or to register, contact Fran & Tony McQuail mcqufarm@hurontel.on.ca or 519-528-2493.

Ottawa's First Annual GMO Free Symposium

KATHLEEN LEESON PH, COORDINATOR GMO FREE OTTAWA

Well, the first annual GMO Free Symposium has come and gone and, from remarks made during the day and the comments on our questionnaires, it seems clear that the large majority of participants went home happy. They thanked us profusely for putting the event together.

GMO Free Ottawa originally came about in order to host the keynote speakers on the GE & Human Health Cross-Canada Tour. As we went along, we realized that what was needed was more, not less education about GMOs and associated issues, so we decided to create a broader educational event around hosting these speakers for the first time in Ottawa.

Happily, this endeavour proved to be well worth the effort. The standout for the day was definitely Dr. Vrain's presentation on the history and health effects of the chemical 'glyphosate', which is marketed as the herbicide 'RoundUp'. Many participant comments were consistent with the statement, "Vrain's information was incredibly comprehensive and concise". Participants were overwhelmingly impressed with everything he had to say on the subject, as well as his presentation.

GMO Free Ottawa is particularly pleased with this outcome because it had become clear to us over the months it took to organize the symposium that Dr. Vrain was not very well known in our area. We tried to rectify this situation by posting his YouTube links consistently, wherever we could.

The open letter that Dr. Vrain sent to Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health, contains a short synopsis of his presentation. You can find the letter at the link below.

http://www.robynobrien.com/blog/Inspiring_Ideas/post/a-former-federal-scientist-sends-an-open-letter-to-the-minister-of-health/

While most in attendance came for the morning keynotes, those who also attended the afternoon panel discussion reported that it was "focused" and "brought different & important information from different backgrounds & experiences on the subject". We are also happy to report that all of the speakers "were impressive" and "original". In particular, Colin Lundy – Farmer Outreach Coordinator for COG OSO - received the highest praise. We are now thinking that he may be an underutilized local resource, and we are busy strategizing to rectify this situation.

Our original idea for the day had been for several concurrent workshops to cover more subject matter, but initial sales of tickets were sluggish, so we had to alter the event to better accommodate the keynotes. Many people thought the event was the right length of time.

However, we may return to our original plan for next year's symposium. Our issue now has more to do with how to proceed in the interim, since we think Dr. Vrain's message should really reach growers, and he has said he would be happy to return to our region. Mr. Mitra's idea to get a lab in Canada – there are currently none – to test for glyphosate in our blood is also in discussion.

We are currently assessing some ideas that we have, as well as those that were suggested during the afternoon discussion. You can follow our deliberations and decisions at www.facebook.com/gmofreeottawa

We'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank COG OSO for its support of this first-time event, particularly Lloyd Strachan, Colin Lundy, Robin Turner (from Roots and Shoots Organic Farm), and Tom Manley (from Homestead Organics). All of these individuals donated precious time to the event, sharing their knowledge and expertise with attendees.

COG OSO has proven that its members are indeed experts on organics, GMOs, and all that is related to these issues. GMO Free Ottawa wishes you every success in your projects and hope that some of the event's attendees become volunteers for "Organics in the Schools". Many people thought that was an important local initiative, and we made sure to direct them your way.

We see GMOs as the umbrella issue under which all the 'food' NGOs, health-care practitioners and food-lovers should unite. We should see our role as getting the word out more broadly across our region. Together with COG OSO, we would like to continue to do this.



URBAN ORGANIC GARDENING SEMINARS 2015

REGISTER EARLY for these illustrative, informative Tuesday & Thursday seminars, which offer opportunities for hands-on training, sharing, and Q&A. All seminars take place at Ottawa City Hall and are offered by Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa St Lawrence Outaouais Chapter

- April 14 Basics of organic growing – Soil and Composting–Instructors Pat Lucey & Eveline Lemieux, Colonel By Room
- April 16 Organic Seeds, Germination & Seed Saving – Instructor Telsing Andrews, Colonel By Room
- April 21 Organic Container Veggie Gardening Part 1 – Instructor Rob Danforth, Colonel By Room
- April 23 Organic Edible Ornamentals including Edible Flowers & Herbs – Instructor Telsing Andrews, Colonel By Room
- April 28 Organic Container Veggie Gardening Part 2 – Instructor Rob Danforth, Colonel By Room
- April 30 Organic In-ground Veggie Gardening – Instructor David Hinks, Colonel By Room
- May 5 Designing an Organic Urban Garden to support Pollinators & Pest Eaters and Pest Deterrents – Instructor Telsing Andrews, Richmond Room

Register for the affordable (half price) package of 7 seminars. April 14 to May 5: \$70 for adults, \$60 for students and seniors.

Individual seminar fees are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students & seniors (advance registration or at the door as space permits).

Total package of all 8 seminars, including our Special Class for School Gardens: \$80 (half price).

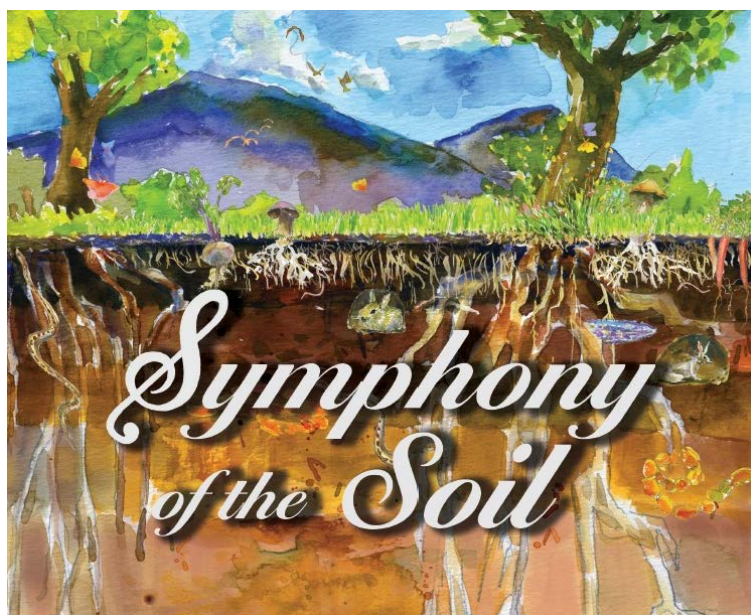
Special affordable half price package of 7 seminars (April 14 to May 5 classes): \$70 for adults, \$60 for students and seniors.

To register or get information about seminars from April 14 to May 5, please visit: www.cog.ca/ottawa/organic-gardening-seminars or e-mail cog.oso.chapter@cog.ca or call 613 244 4000 Extension 2.

FROM FILM MAKER, DEBORAH KOONS GARCIA,
DIRECTOR OF THE 2004 FILM "THE FUTURE OF FOOD"



Your local chapter of
the National Farmers
Union presents



SYMPHONY OF THE SOIL is a feature-length film that explores the complexity and mystery of soil. Filmed on 4 continents, it shares the voices of some of the most highly esteemed soil scientists, farmers, and activists. The film portrays soil as a protagonist of our planetary story. In a skillful mix of art and science, soil is revealed to be a living organism, the foundation of life on earth.

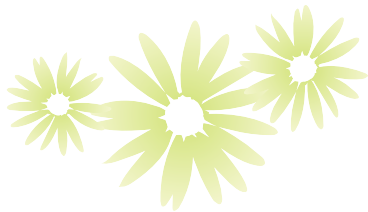
Most people are soil-blind and "treat soil like dirt." With the knowledge and wisdom revealed in this film, we come to respect, even revere, this miraculous substance. The film inspires the understanding that treating the soil right can help solve some of our most pressing environmental problems including climate change, dead zones, water scarcity and world hunger.

Thursday, March 19, 2015 – 6:30pm, doors open at 6:00pm
MAYFAIR THEATRE, 1074 Bank St, Ottawa

\$6 Mayfair members \$10 General \$7 Senior \$5 Children 13+under

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WINTER ROOT BOWL

BY LAURA MONCION

It's getting to that time of year when the leafy greens and soft fruits are starting to dwindle, but the roots are ready to shine. I often eat this hearty bowl as is, but feel free to add cubes of tofu, cheese, or meat – whatever strikes your fancy!

INGREDIENTS

For the bowl:

- a few local, organic beets (depending on how many people you are feeding, and how much you love beets!)
- approximately the same amount of local, organic potatoes
- approximately half that amount of local, organic brussels sprouts
- approximately the same amount of carrots as brussels sprouts
- one local, organic onion
- three local, organic cloves of garlic
- one parsnip
- one can of chickpeas
- half a cup of quinoa per person, cooked

For the sauce:

- ½ cup sunflower seed butter
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp minced ginger
- ½ cup water, or more if you prefer a runnier sauce

METHOD

- chop the potatoes, brussels sprouts, carrots, and onion into similar sizes and place in a roasting pan, with olive oil, salt, and pepper
- peel and chop the beets and place in a separate pan, with olive oil, salt, and pepper
- bake the roots at 400°F for approximately an

hour, or until they are nicely browned and can be pierced with a knife

- while the roots are baking, make the quinoa and rinse the chickpeas for quick assembly later
- to make the sauce, blitz all ingredients in a food processor (tip: you can let the food processor mince the ginger and garlic for you – just put them in before the rest of the ingredients)
- grate the parsnip, then coat the bottom of a frying pan with about an inch of olive oil and heat. fry the grated parsnip in the oil, shaking the pan and stirring often to prevent the parsnip bits from sticking to one another
- when the roots are done, remove them from the oven
- layer the bowls with quinoa and chickpeas on the bottom, then roots, sauce, and fried grated parsnip on top – and enjoy!

VÉGÉPATÉ

BY LAURA MONCION

More roots, more goodness! Végépaté is a potluck staple for me, served with some pitas or crackers; it's also delicious in sandwiches. This recipe uses the flavours of cumin and lemon, but you can substitute in smoked paprika, nutritional yeast, oregano and herbes de provence... the possibilities are endless!

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup shredded local, organic carrots
- ½ cup shredded local, organic potato
- ½ cup sunflower seed butter
- 1 diced local, organic onion
- ¼ cup water
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- salt, pepper, cumin to taste

METHOD

- blitz everything in a food processor (tip: you can blitz the carrots and potato first, rather than shredding them by hand)
- add seasoning to taste
- spread the mixture into a baking pan
- bake at 350°F for approximately 45 minutes or until browned and cooked through.

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

Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa St Lawrence Outaouais Chapter

Editor-in-Chief Molly Davidson
mollycogoso@gmail.com

Ads Coordination Molly Davidson

Co-Chairs

Meeting Chair Stephanie Lane

Emeritus Chair Susan Preston

Rotating Chair Vacant

Communications Marley Lewington

Contributors Telsing Andrews,
Laura Moncion, Colin
Lundy, Alissa Campbell,
Margaret Tourond
Townson, Kathleen
Leeson

Layout Stephanie Pelot,
Pentafolio

Deadline for next *Down to Earth*: **March 1, 2015**. Submit articles to the Editor.

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