

Dig This!

Spring 2021



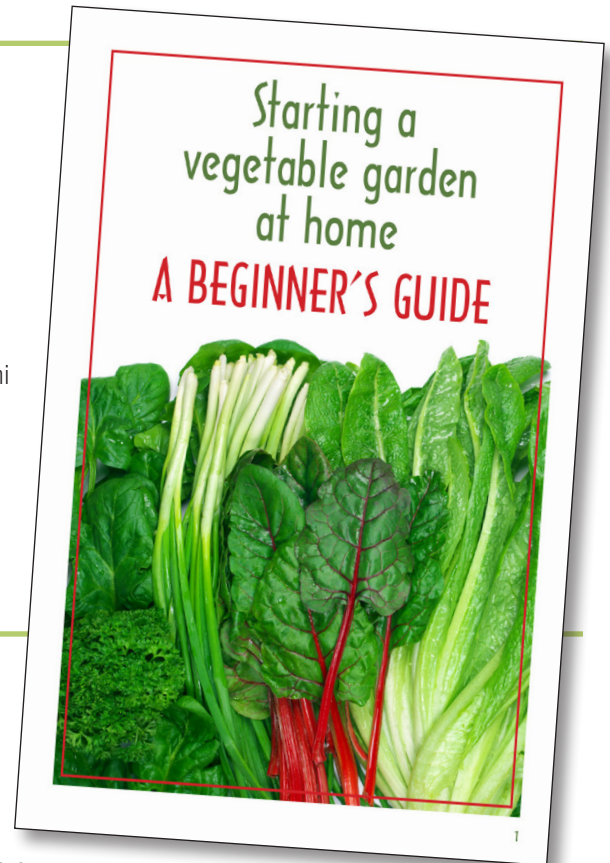
Free download!
What a great way to start the growing season.

As the day began on March 20 at 5:37 a.m. EST, spring sprung, and many of us gardeners set our sights on a new growing season. As it stands, it has been approximately 79 days since we buried my fig tree, covered our raised beds, and pulled the last juicy carrot. If you are anything like me, you tend to need a refresher each season.

DIG newsletter contributor & graphic designer, Ruth Latimer has provided you, our esteemed member, a refreshing handbook that weaves together the ins and outs of gardening. There is something for everyone: beginner, intermediate, advanced.

Geared toward beginners, author Ruth's main goal was to share something to get prospective gardeners started, with a step-by-step, systematic, clear, concise manual.

My favourite tip is on how to battle the annual late summer plague that afflicts summer squash like zucchini and cucumber, and winter squash (acorn, butternut, etc.). Here it is: "Strongly brewed chamomile tea is effective against powdery mildew" (page 33). Check it out on DIG Resources page!



Agri-Hero

C. Bruni & Sons Farms of Oshawa

It was founded in 1977 when Carmine and Pina Bruni purchased a small farm located at 710 Raglan Road East. Currently operated by 5 members of the family, they have since expanded production to include a total of 85 acres.

If you dine at any Durham Region chip trucks or select restaurants, chances are that you have unknowingly eaten some of the farm's potatoes, which make up 50% of their crop total.



Customers rave about the freshness of the produce coming off the farm. C. Bruni & Sons sells at local farmers markets including Wednesdays at Whitby, Fridays at the Oshawa Centre, and Saturdays in Peterborough. Beginning in May, be sure to check out their luscious asparagus, as well as seedlings of veggie and herbs plants. To see a full list of their produce, visit their social media pages.

You can also call ahead (905-655-3440) to pick up produce directly from the farm.

To see inspiring pictures, visit www.instagram.com/brunifarms/

For up-to-date information, visit www.facebook.com/brunifarms
durhamfarmfresh.ca/member/c-bruni-sons-farms/

Virtual Table Talks coming up ~

- March 31, 2021** Bookworm – *Moon of the Crusted Snow* – Waubgeshig Rice (see poster)
- April 21, 2021** Homesteading for Everyone – Jamie Campbell
- May 19, 2021** Balcony / Container Veggie Growing – Pam Love, Master Gardener

More coming your way ~

SAVE THE DATE **How do you Measure a Food System?**
A Durham Food Policy Council Symposium

Thursday April 22, 2021
1:00 – 3:30 pm

Virtual Event
Register at [EVENTBRITE](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/table-talk-botanical-bookworms-2-tickets-137996771057)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Measuring Food Systems

Phil Mount, PhD, is Associate Director at Just Food in Ottawa, Chair of the Board at Sustain Ontario, Adjunct Professor with the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University, and Associate Farmer to his wife Denise at Flat Earth Farms.



For more information and opportunities to support the Durham Food Policy Council please connect with us at: info@durhamfoodpolicycouncil.com

www.durhamfoodpolicycouncil.com



VIRTUAL

Table TALK

Botanical Bookworms

MARCH 31 **Wednesday**
@ 6:30 PM

Join our Zoom call on Mar 31 to discuss the book, please register through Eventbrite. If you would like to reserve a hardcopy book through Brock Library contact TNDF at soe@tndf.ca. E-books and audiobooks are also available to Durham Library card holders via OverDrive/Libby on a first come, first serve basis.


All of these titles are also available through Audible, Apple Books, Google Play, or wherever you get your audio & e-books!

Date: Wednesday March 31, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM
Cost: FREE

Registration Link:
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/table-talk-botanical-bookworms-2-tickets-137996771057>

Contact Us:
705-432-2444
info@tndf.ca
www.tndf.ca

note, read, discuss!

Have you heard?

A new market will open in downtown Oshawa on April 20!

Urban Market Picks, located in the former Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) building, 27 Simcoe St. North, is said to be the first of its kind in Durham Region. The fact that it will be indoors and year-round, is garnering a lot of attention, from not just consumers who appreciate local fresh food, but from farmers too.

For downtown residents especially, this market will fill a major void left when Metro closed its store at Midtown Mall in November 2015. The nearest major grocery retailer is approximately 2 kilometres away.



The opening of the new market will help ease the food desert that exists in this urban area. Food deserts occur in low socio-economic urban areas when there is limited or no access to healthy, affordable food. According to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_desert low income families are more likely not to have

transportation and so tend to be negatively affected by food deserts.

While food deserts have become widely known of late, a concept I recently learned about is that of “food swamps”. These geographic areas have adequate access to healthy food retail, yet tend to be “swamped” by fast-food restaurants and convenience stores. For more information on food deserts and swamps, check out www.nccch.ca/sites/default/files/Food_Deserts_Food_Swamps_Primer_Oct_2017.pdf.

Kudos to the new venue that will include about 4,000 square feet of shopping and dining with 20 independent vendors. For the full exciting list, visit Urban Market Picks' recently launched website www.urbanmarketpicks.ca/vendors.

Encouraging healthy eating

As the pandemic rages on, teachers have had to set their sights on growing food indoors, often hydroponically, to promote healthy eating, as well as to support various strands of the science and health & physical education curricula. Many teachers and parents struggle to make healthy eating fun for children. The fact that taste buds in kids are less developed, and that advertising dollars go towards promoting junk food more often, adds to this challenge.

An event designed to excite and energize local, healthy food, *The Big Crunch* was recently held in Canada (virtually on March 11). Created by The Coalition for Healthy School Food, a group of over 150 organizations that advocates for a national school food program, *The Big Crunch* is an annual "moment of anti-silence



in which students, teachers, parents and others passionate about food join the food movement and crunch into apples (or other crunchy fruit or vegetable) to make noise for healthy school food". (www.healthyschoolfood.ca/)

As part of the event, the coalition released a lesson plan to accompany the day. My favourite activity involved cutting an apple into different fractions, and then relating the pieces to the fragility and finiteness of Planet Earth.

For example, cut one apple into quarters. Three quarters represent the amount of water that makes up the planet, while $\frac{1}{4}$ makes up the total land area. Slice the quarter representing land; $\frac{1}{8}$ represents the amount of land that



is hospitable to life (where people live). Slice the $\frac{1}{8}$ into four. Three of those pieces represent areas that are either too rocky, wet, cold, steep, or with soil too poor to produce food plus areas of land that could produce food but are developed. Finally, peel the last piece of apple (this is $\frac{1}{32}$ of the apple). The peel represents the surface of the Earth's crust on which life is sustained, going down five feet deep, our food-producing land. Visually, we can see how little is left, and why we must protect our home!

Do you have tips, tricks, or ideas for how to get kids interested in healthy eating and/or gardening? Email us at info@durhamdigs.ca

Food waste

It's something everyone does, whether we care to admit it or not – waste food. Humanity has come a long way technologically, but in other ways we have taken steps backward. Our ancestors spent most of their waking hours searching for food, and the processing of such. Now, we take for granted how easy it is to go to the grocery store and get whatever our heart desires.

Food waste has been a topic much on the mind of late. After having attended last month's **Table Talk** on February 17, hosted by the Nourish and Develop Foundation and DIG, it has become an issue worthy of discussion. Participants screened the video, *Ten Stories About Food Waste*, accessible free here: vimeo.com/245592777

Why should we care? Well, the stats are staggering: the average Canadian wastes 79 kilograms of food per year. Compare that to Americans, who waste an average of 59 kg (tinyurl.com/d85dp4a7). How can this be?

A lot of waste is built into the system, up to 40%, according to the NRDC, due to things like oversized portions at restaurants, overstocked products at grocery stores to

convey an image of abundance, and the inability of farmers to get their product to market, often due to an inferior product look. Food waste makes its way into landfills, becoming a source of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Don't fret. As intrepid gardeners, we can do our part. Ever wanted to try **backyard composting**? Now's your chance! In that one small act, you can turn food waste into garden gold! Live somewhere where backyard chickens are legal? Start a small flock! Chickens are efficient converters of food scraps (and pests that thrive in your garden) into eggs, and nitrogen-rich manure.

Here's a fun tip: during the growing season when your zucchini plant is growing like gangbusters, trim the stalks and use them like pasta noodles! Yes, really! They are edible, and are a good pasta substitute if following a gluten free diet.

Resources:

www.nrdc.org/food-waste
savethefood.com/

Writing contest

It's not too late to submit your entry into our writing contest for a \$100 gift card to a local garden nursery. We will also post the winning entry in our Summer 2021 newsletter!

We ask that you describe what your garden meant to you during our most memorable & bizarre growing season ever, 2020. If possible, send us a photograph of you in your garden.

Rules:

- This contest will be judged by a panel designated by the DIG board of directors.
- One submission per person
- A limit of 1000 words maximum
- Your name, an email address, and a phone number must be included.

See our recent winter newsletter for an example of an article written by board member Carri Edwards, about what the St. John's Port of Whitby community garden means to her.



Recipe



Rhubarb crumb cake

Combine:

- 1 egg
- 1½ c Brown sugar
- ½ c shortening

Add:

- ½ tsp salt
- 2 c all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda

Stir in:

- 1 c sour cream or yogurt

Fold in:

- 1½ c rhubarb cut in small pieces

Put into greased 9 x 13 inch pan.

Combine and sprinkle on top:

- ½ c coconut
- ½ c brown sugar
- 1 tbsp melted butter
- cinnamon to taste

Bake at 350 for 45-50 minutes.

GardenStory

Author in our Midst

Sher Letooze of the Bowmanville Allotment Community Garden is an historian, storyteller and author of several books!

She has tended a vegetable garden and foraged wild plants for most of her adult life, and her books are a culmination of this knowledge. Sher has written about pollinators and pests (*The Natural Gardener*), Companion Planting, a book on how to ID 77 varieties of heritage or wild apple trees (*Identifying Heritage Apples Across Ontario*), guides to wild edibles and medicinal plants, plus a colourful handbook on dyeing fibres with wild plants. How cool is that?

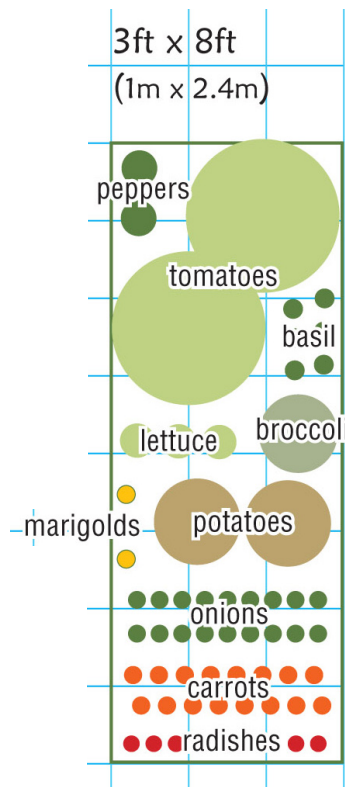
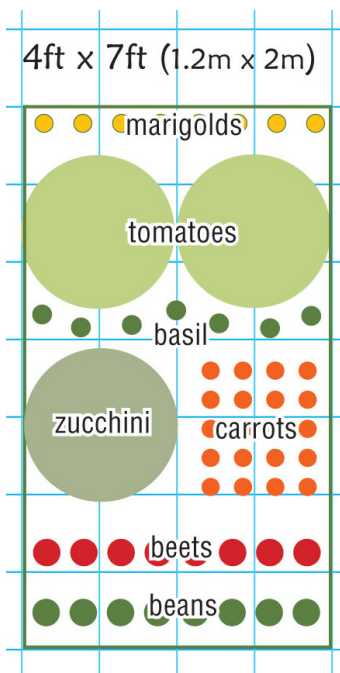
For more information about Sher's books (as well as handmade blankets), and to order, visit her website: sherleetoze.com/



GardenTip

Garden planning for small plot

Here are a few ideas from the DIG booklet *Starting a Vegetable Garden at Home - A Beginner's Guide*.



DigThis!

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