

Dig This!

Summer 2021



Another careful - pandemic - summer.
Productive and joyful nonetheless,... at least to all gardeners!

Agri-Hero ~ Lunar Rhythm Gardens

These are exciting times in Durham Region. Right at our doorstep, located at 253 Gray Road, Janetville, we have a wonderful certified organic, 100-acre vegetable and meat farm!

Lunar Rhythm Gardens is so much more than just a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farmer's market stand (found at both the Peterborough and Port Perry Farmers Markets on Saturdays until Thanksgiving). What really sets it apart is its farming practice; owner/operator Jessica Foote uses draft horses to plow fields! It is amazing to know that somewhere so close to home, there is a group of people farming in such a traditional and sustainable way.

Jessica grew up on her family's farm and knew that farming was what she wanted to do.

Her duties included helping with the pigs and cattle and raising chickens. At sixteen, Jessica was introduced to logging with horses by a gentleman who logged their bush. She loved logging and decided that farming with horses would work well.



This is not an easy feat; the horses who work the land must obey commands without putting up a fuss. To plow a field, the machine must slice through soil, roots, vegetation, while turning the soil so that the grass bits are facing downwards. It is a delicate dance when you introduce working horses; and it takes time and training to do it right! According to <https://pethelpful.com/horses/Using-Horses-for-Draft-Power>, a two-horse team can plow 2 acres per day. Imagine doing 100!



The success of the farm has been incredible. Jessica is passionate about Lunar Rhythm Gardens and how much it has grown since its early days!

For more information, or to order any of their wonderful produce, call 905-986-9612, email info@lunargardens.ca, or visit www.csafarmdurhamkawartha.com/



Adopt-A-Garden at Oshawa Fire Station #3



At the beginning of June, the City of Oshawa, once again, proudly started their Adopt-A-Garden vegetable gardens which have converted city floral displays to giving gardens helping address food insecurity in the area.

This year **Mary Street Community Garden**, along with DIG and the Oshawa Garden Club, planned and planted vegetables in the newly-created boulevard plot at Fire Station #3. This is located at the north-west corner of Mary and Beatrice Streets.

The Oshawa Garden Club provided seeds and seedlings. Members of the Mary St. CG (across the street from the Fire Hall) did the planting, with hope for an abundant harvest. This produce will be offered to the high density, multi-cultural community of the area.

We all look forward to improving the quality of life through sharing.

See page 3 for more information on Mary St. CG and its participation in the **Friendly Neighbours** pilot project.

Now is your chance to prove that you are a real bookworm!

On June 23rd, at 6:30 p.m., join us for a book **Table Talk** on Zoom (registration link: www.eventbrite.ca/e/tabletalk-botanical-bookworms-3-tickets-149893869599)

DIG & The Nourish and Develop Foundation are pleased to present *The Hidden Life of Trees* by forester Peter Wohlleben. This intriguing book details the complex social networks that trees form, connected subterraneously by their roots and mycelium, which intermingle and intertwine.

Written in an anthropomorphic (giving human personality to nonhumans) way, Wohlleben explains in one section that communities of trees are able to send nutrients to their hungry tree children, and cure sick tree neighbours. When tragedy strikes in a forest, and one tree is struck down, often close neighbours also die, because of these vast underground connections, and for the way that trees cumulatively create micro (and sometimes macro) climates.

Even if you miss the Book Club, be sure to pick up *The Hidden Life of Trees* to learn more about our planet's truly awe-inspiring creatures, the trees.

VIRTUAL

Table TALK

Botanical Bookworms

JUNE 23 Wednesday @ 6:30 PM

Join the Zoom call on June 23 to discuss the book, please register through Eventbrite.

If you would like to reserve a hardcopy book through Brock Library contact TNDF at zoe@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!

Come take a page out of the community handbook and join us as we dig into discussion & fun!

Registration Link:
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/table-talk-botanical-bookworms-3-tickets-149893869599>

Date: Wednesday June 23, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM
Cost: FREE

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

The Nourish and Develop Foundation

DIG Durham Integrated Growers
 FOR A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

All Saints' Whitby Community Garden – Learning, Growing, Sharing

In 2019, All Saints' Anglican Church in Whitby had an idea – to transform an ordinary patch of grass into space to grow vegetables for our food bank, the **Deacon's Cupboard**. After months of planning and corralling of volunteers, the garden was built this past May and we have begun our first growing season. Our vision sees our garden as a sacred space that will express love towards neighbour and care for creation. All Saints' will sustain this community garden as a place for gathering, learning and serving so that we can provide fresh produce for our Deacon's Cupboard. We decided to start modestly in terms of size and scope, with room for future expansion. We have approximately 100 ft of in-ground beds combined with 6 raised beds, which gives us a modest growing surface area of 400 Square Feet. We built and planted our garden over 3 days in the middle of May, with 13 cubic yards of soil, 3 cubic



yards of compost, and 65 volunteer hours of help on-site. We were able to work safely within the COVID restrictions, donning our PPE and working in shifts of small teams. We are growing a variety of vegetables as well as some herbs, with tomatoes (6 varieties), bell pepper, onions, and garlic being our staples. Companion planting is a technique that we are using, to include the Three Sisters (white

corn, pole beans, butternut squash) which we planted in the Haudenosaunee tradition with prayers of blessing in collaboration with Metis and Cree members of our community. So far the vision of our garden is being lived out, as we learn about, grow, and share the many blessings that a garden brings.

Photos by Graham Lennard



Branching Out: Building community through the Friendly Neighbours pilot

It has been said that “The most important word in community gardening is not garden” (Jack Hale). It is community that determines what grows in these spaces: friendship, trust, kindness, mutual support. And like sunshine nurtures plants, a sense of community nourishes the people who spend time in and around community gardens. This year, in keeping with DIG's vision, Growing Food and Community, DIG worked with 2 gardens to pilot a pandemic-style initiative, **Friendly Neighbours**, to cultivate connections between gardens and the communities that host them. Originally the ideas were included in a funding proposal to TD Parks People, but when the funding did not come through, it was decided to still see what was possible.

The two gardens, Mary St. and St. Andrew's, although quite different from each other, are both situated in densely populated high-rise neighbourhoods limiting gardening options.

So far both gardens have (in non-contact ways) provided seeds, vegetable seedlings, and colouring sheets (thank you Mag, Brandon, and Mary!) to community members at the garden entrances. Mary St. also provided some information on how to plant and feed tomato plants for success. The hope is to engage residents to grow food on their balconies and to encourage children to bring their completed scarecrow colouring sheets back to enter a colouring contest. There was much interest in the seeds and seedlings, leading to good conversations. And on June 12, Mary St. announced the colouring winner of a prize (flower pot, soil, nasturtium seeds, garden book, and twirly-whirls). St. Andrew's will try the colouring contest in the autumn, when people may be more used to seeing scarecrows.

“**The most important word in community garden is not garden.**”

Future ideas for Friendly Neighbours include gardens decorating small 'houses' (think little front lawn free libraries) to place at the edge of their gardens where community members could select: seeds, DIG's home-veggie-gardening booklets, scarecrow-making directions, nature activity sheets, and bird/butterfly information sheets. Gardens could also set out extra produce near the 'house' for residents.

This process is helping us learn more about who is in the local communities and what their needs are. Positive relationships with surrounding communities can have many benefits for gardens as the gardens become a treasure for community members, even those who are not gardening. As community members begin to understand and value the garden, they are more likely to honour it and less likely to harm it.

GardenTip

Have you ever heard of orach?

It might be the most important vegetable plant you are not eating!

We received a free package of orach seeds last spring from the wonderful people at Transition Toronto, as part of their "Food Up Front" program last year during the height of the first wave of the pandemic (www.transitiontoronto.org/food-up-front). It really was a mixed bag of seeds, and we were in for a pleasant surprise and discovery.

Rifling through the packets, we saw the usual suspects; tomatoes, peppers, squashes, orach. Having never heard of this last one, we did what all millennials do; we "Googled it". Turns out, orach is in the amaranth family of plants, grown for leaves & seeds. The leaves are akin to spinach in texture, but the similarity ends there. Surprisingly, the orach grew to several feet high, and ranged in colour from pink, purple, green, grey. It is due to its deep purple and pleasant green colour that orach is primarily grown as decoration.

Also known by its latin name, *Atriplex hortensis*, saltbush or red mountain spinach, it was a popular vegetable in the Mediterranean region, until spinach entered the limelight, which is a shame, since there should be room for more than one supergreen in your salad.

Orach is a great source of antioxidants, iron, magnesium, calcium, zinc, phosphorous, and vitamin C, having about double the vitamin C of lemons or oranges (<https://morningchores.com/growing-orach/>). Just be careful if you have kidney or gallbladder problems since this family of plants is known to contain large amounts of oxalic acid.

Another reason orach is so amazing is that it loves our hot, often dry, summer. You can direct sow it in any soil, just add compost!

Orach soup recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups packed orach leaves
1 cup cauliflower
1/2 cup cubed potato
to taste cardamom
2 cloves garlic
1/2 tspn chili powder
1 tspn coriander powder
1 tbspn dijon mustard
to taste salt
1 tbspn oil, plus some for garnish
water as needed

Steps:

1. In a saucepan heat oil on medium, add spices and fry for one minute to release the flavours.
2. Add cauliflower and potatoes. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for another couple of minutes. Add mustard, give it a stir, and add water to cover the vegetables. Cover and let the vegetables cook until tender.
3. Meanwhile, in a stockpot, bring some water to boil, add orach leaves and cover for 1 minute. Strain the orach, and puree. Set aside. Save the water.
4. By this time the vegetables should be cooked. Puree in a blender by adding the saved orach water.
5. Mix both purees together, put it back in the stockpot, add salt (if desired), and bring it just to a rolling boil so that the orach does not lose its colour.
6. Enjoy!

Recipe

Roasted radishes

...are not as sharp-tasting as raw ones. The texture is similar to potato. Yummy!



Ingredients:

1 bunch radishes, greens and ends removed
1 tbspn olive oil
salt & pepper to taste
fresh chopped parsley to taste (optional)

Steps:

Preheat oven to 400F. Move the rack to the middle position.

Cut the radishes into equal-sized pieces. If they're particularly large radishes, cut them into quarters. Otherwise, cut them into halves.

Add the radishes to a baking dish and toss them with the olive oil and salt & pepper. Roast them face down to brown nicely.

If the radishes are small, roast for 15 minutes and check to see if they're done to your liking. If they're larger, it may take up to 35-40 minutes to get them tender.

Toss with freshly chopped parsley if desired.

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Congratulations to Whitby Ajax Garden Project on their 20th year!



DigThis will be featuring this wonderful garden, past and present, in the next issue.

We welcome your comments, memories or old photos – info@durhamdigs.ca. We'll also need your permission to use them in the newsletter.