

# Dig This!

Fall 2021

**A mega edition this time. Enjoy!**



## Mobile Food Market in north Durham

The Nourish and Develop Foundation's (TNDF) Mobile Food Market (MFM) is a travelling produce stand! It is selling fresh, local, organically-grown produce, meal kits and prepared meals at affordable prices. The MFM aims to be a reliable and convenient source for nutritious food. It's an innovative solution to rural food deserts (areas with no, or limited access to grocery stores or affordable food options) and food insecurity (ensuring people in the community have a sufficient quality and quantity of nutritious food). By outfitting it with features like an ice cream truck jingle and colourful branding, we work towards making this resource fun and engaging for all members of the community.

The MFM is currently visiting 11 different locations throughout Brock Township, including Cannington, Beaverton, Sunderland, Gamebridge, Port Bolster, Manilla, and Wilfrid. We aim to operate year-round, and are currently in the process of securing indoor locations for the winter.



At the moment MFM is a refrigerated van, tents and tables popping up at these different locations, but we will be adding a retrofitted enclosed cargo trailer to the infrastructure by 2022, which will act as the produce stand itself. For upcoming schedules and more information, please check our website at [www.tndf.ca/mobilefoodmarket/](http://www.tndf.ca/mobilefoodmarket/) or follow us on social media @nourishanddevelopfoundation. For inquiries or ideas, please contact Zoe at [zoe@tndf.ca](mailto:zoe@tndf.ca).



Artist's rendering of future set-up. ▶

## Agri-Hero



This season, we invite you to take a drive north to Enniskillen for an enchanting visit to one of our best local organic beef farms! Located at 1721 Durham Regional Rd 3 (Hampton, LOB 1J0), see how this multigenerational family farm operates, while simultaneously browsing work from local artists and artisanal producers of fine foods!

The Bowman family raises a fine Red and Black Angus beef on-site. This breed of cattle

traces its roots to the Scottish Highlands, and has been selected for its gentle nature. They are naturally polled (hornless), and as a herd animal, thrive in big groups, with a set hierarchy. The meat produced is of the utmost quality.

At Gallery on the Farm, the beef is sold frozen, in all manner of cut such as in roasts, steaks, ground (including as burgers) and sausage. A price list can be found online, or in store. You

will also find local cheese and butter, maple syrup, honey, emu oil creams, handcrafted soaps, and so much more!

As the name suggests, the Bowman's shop displays artists' work from around the region. The gallery merits a visit on its own!

For more information, visit their website: [galleryonthefarm.com/](http://galleryonthefarm.com/)

To visit, call (905) 263-8245 or email [galleryonthefarm@hotmail.com](mailto:galleryonthefarm@hotmail.com)



# GardenStory

## The Field Community Garden

The Field Community Garden was officially approved by the City of Oshawa in March 2021.

This garden, based on the principles of traditional pioneer gardening practices, has been operating since the early 1990's. Began by our two founding members, this particular garden started in an abandoned, overgrown field in north Oshawa. These two gentlemen cleared and dug plots by hand, as they had done where they grew up on farms in Italy and Slovenia. In the following years, others joined and the garden expanded. Currently there are eighteen gardens within this area, with members from all over the world. They all have a commonality in that they are originally from farms in their native homelands.

The garden reflects the diversity of its members as can be seen by the different garden formats, practices and types of food being grown. Many of the tools for example are homemade or originated in another country and time. The culture and traditional gardening practices are like those used in pioneer times. Each gardener has cleared and hand dug their section, using traditional tools and planted crops according to their home farming experience and native culture.

Gardening or farming in a field without any amenities is not for the faint of heart. While sometimes frustrating and often arduous, it is a very rewarding and satisfying experience. You must love working hard, love the land, love nature and be thankful for the experience of working as a pioneer in a "Field".

Original field ►

Current 'field' ▼



# GardenStory

## Relocation of the Bowmanville allotment garden - a huge success

This garden's story was featured in the Fall 2020 edition of DigThis. The arduous work of moving the garden has paid off beautifully. Just look at the results!



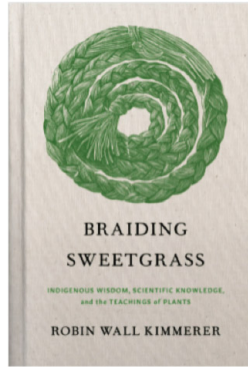


## Bookworms

On September 22, several bookworms met virtually for a discussion on the book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by botanist and Potawatomi nation member Robin Wall Kimmerer. DIG and The Nourish and Develop Foundation presented this session of our regularly scheduled Table Talks, and as usual, conversation was flowing and engaging.

As the summer season is such a busy time for all gardeners, I opted to listen to the book through Audible (an audiobook application) for a change, and it was so charming listening to Kimmerer's poetic anecdotes, matter-of-fact ethnobotanical lore, and all around passion for the flora of the world.

My interest was piqued the entire way through, as I toiled in my own garden, looking around at all of the plants Kimmerer spoke of so fondly: goldenrods and New England Asters (in bloom right now!), maples during the sap



run, nut trees like pecans (which is actually an indigenous word meaning “nut”) that communicate together and ensure the survival of every member of the tree community. Fascinating stuff!

The chapter called “Hazel”, which combined teachings from an old woman named Hazel, as well as the plant witch hazel, brought me to tears. There was something so relatable to the stories contained within that pulled at my heartstrings, and made me think of my own dearly departed grandmother, who had such a green thumb herself.

This book truly has something to teach all of us, in particular, it reminds us that the world is full of life, each living thing having a spirit, and deserving respect and appreciation. Beauty is everywhere we look, and this wonderful book helps each one of us connect to the natural world.

Braiding Sweetgrass is certainly a book to add to your library!

## Adopt-A-Garden 2021

The City of Oshawa has a large number of Garden Beds which are normally planted and maintained by full time horticultural staff and seasonal summer students. Because of COVID-19, the City Parks Operations was not able to maintain many of these garden beds. This presented a unique opportunity to engage the community in adopting a garden to grow fresh produce for donation to local food banks and residents. The program increased access to fresh, local produce while inspiring community action.

This year's adopted gardens were at City Hall and Fire Hall 3. The Oshawa Garden Club, Durham Master Gardeners and Mary St. Community Garden participated. The City provided logistical support.

Veggies grown included cabbage, winter squash, zucchini, cucumbers, kale, onions, hot peppers, green beans, beets, chard, peppers, spinach, carrots and eggplant. All were donated and received with great pleasure.

Participant Helen Vander Byl reported – “We received many compliments on the gardens and how wonderful they looked; and

what a tremendous initiative this was. All of our volunteers felt it was a great way to spend the summer and contribute to a great cause.”

Top - Fire Hall 3 Bottom - Oshawa City Hall



## The Durham Food Policy Council and upcoming Report Card on the region's food systems

Community gardens are the very picture of a short supply chain, a place where food is grown, harvested—and sometimes even eaten—onsite (I'm thinking about those sun-warmed, just-ripe cherry tomatoes...). Community gardens also form one important part of our broader, complex, local food system of practices, policies, and people who grow, produce, process, distribute, purchase, cook, eat, and dispose of food. The Durham Food Policy Council (DFPC) envisions a just and sustainable food system for Durham Region and looks to the Durham Region Food Charter for direction in getting there. The DFPC also understands that, in order to realize this vision, we need to know: what does our current food system look like in different sectors and different municipalities across Durham? how healthy is our food system already? what is working well and what needs improving? what does this all mean for steps needed to move forward?

For the past few years, DFPC has been taking steps to develop a **region-wide food systems report card** to help answer these questions. We've researched report cards in other jurisdictions, heard from stakeholders and experts in the food system, and considered how we might build a report card that is specific to Durham. This year, DFPC, through the MITACS Accelerate Program, with support from the Region of Durham, and in collaboration with The Nourish and Develop Foundation and Ryerson University, has been fortunate enough to be working with a graduate student researcher to move this process forward. She has been developing a profile of the local food system and a report card template, working towards the vision of the inaugural report card to be available in early 2022! Right now, she is working with us to plan a September roundtable event to hear more from municipal staff and community food system representatives on how to make sure the report card can be filled out using meaningful, representative, and available data. Over the long term, DFPC hopes that this process will help us understand Durham's food system better and how it is progressing towards being just and sustainable!

## GardenTip

### Putting the garden to bed,... sort of

The end of summer means that most of our gardening is coming to an end, but read this before you go about preparing your garden for winter. The kindest and best thing you can do for your plants, birds, and insects is to leave your plot alone and only clean up what you need to.

Leaving flowers, leaves and stems in place means that possible food sources for birds are left in tact all winter. Leaving fallen leaves on the ground provides additional hibernating habitat for a variety of insects. These small insects are not only integral to garden health but may also be a food source for birds in winter and early spring.

Think your garden is hosting insects you don't want? Dead plants and leaves in the garden give a winter home to some butterflies and their chrysalises, as well as beneficial insects. Not to mention bees need somewhere to live and they are important for pollinating.

The less you do in autumn the better.

Leave what you can... clean up what you must.

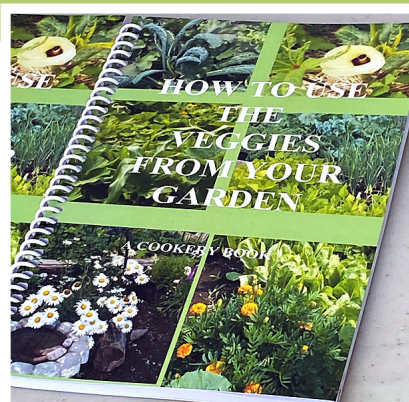
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## GardenFundraiser

The **Bowmanville Allotment Gardens**, has put together a cook book as a fundraiser: *How to Use the Veggies from Your Garden*.

It's not a big book, but the recipes are all DELISH! You will find pickles and sauces, soups, salads and more. Indexed.

[sherleetoze.com/](http://sherleetoze.com/)



## GardenART



### A winter project

Don't throw out that old-style resin chair and add to landfill. Make art instead.

Scrub down that chair to remove dirt and to rough up the surface a bit. Rinse thoroughly and let dry. Prep with an acrylic primer or exterior porch paint. Then, ... make creative patterns using quality acrylic paints ~ floral, greenery, favourite veggie, polka dots, or stripes, etc. After completely dry, finish with a couple coats of exterior water-based varnish.

The tomato chair shown here is part of the *Encouragement Path* art installation at the Whitby Ajax Garden Project.

## Recipe



### Low-cal zucchini pizza

#### Ingredients

- 24 slices zucchini, cut 1/2 inch thick (Use medium-small zucchini.)
- 2/3 cup tomato sauce
- 2 oz. light mozzarella cheese, grated (about 1/4 cup)
- 2 oz. parmesan cheese, grated (about 1/4 cup)
- 1/4 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 24 slices fresh mushrooms
- 24 slices ripe olives
- paprika to taste

#### Method

Prepare sliced vegetables - zucchini, mushrooms and olives.

Drain zucchini slices on paper towels.

Place the drained squash on a well-greased baking sheet.

Combine the sauce, cheeses, oregano and pepper. Spoon this mixture on the squash slices.

Top with mushroom and olive slice. Sprinkle with paprika.

Broil until heated and the cheese is gooey (about 5 minutes). Serve while hot.

## DigThis!

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## Happy 20th Anniversary Whitby Ajax Garden Project



Photos on next page

The high-target mission of this garden states: *To promote health and healing through urban agriculture and the natural environment, and to undertake this according to Christian principles of creation care, for the benefit of all. Additionally: to provide fresh produce to individuals and families in need and to the agencies that serve them; to educate the public on ecologically and environmentally sound food production and urban agriculture, and to encourage participation toward achieving community food security; to support the development of other urban agriculture initiatives through education and collaboration.*

The Whitby Ajax Garden Project (WAGP) does all that. Remarkable!  
It was started in 2001 by Mary Drummond and friends, members of the Health & Healing Team of Celebration! Presbyterian Church. Parish staff owned a small farm and so offered a 5-acre portion for use as a garden where fruit and veggies could be grown and shared with those in need.

The site is located on the east side of Lake Ridge Road, about half a kilometre south of highway 7. The entrance is the back laneway to the farm. Initially, gardening was done on land on the right side of the lane, just inside the gate.

During the first couple of seasons over 740 lbs. of fresh vegetables were donated to St. Vincent Kitchen, Durham Outlook for the Needy and individual families needing help.

In 2004, the garden relocated to a larger field, further along the lane, west of the barn. Plots were now rented to community members and groups.

2005 welcomed the interest of Crossroads Community Church (Ajax). It provided support for long-term garden sustainability and helped the garden move to non-profit incorporation (which happened in 2014).

During the next 5-8 years, membership swelled and cultivation expanded from 2-3 rows of plots along the north end of the field, to several more plot rows. The garden field became fully utilized with additional larger plots, for special crops, north of the barn. (Each 'regular' plot is 4' x 30'. Each row has 14-15 plots.) About two thirds of cultivation is dedicated to production for food banks.

In 2011 the garden name was shortened to the Whitby Ajax Garden Project. A large sign was erected facing Lake Ridge Road where it could be easily seen by new members, volunteers and visitors.

The WAGP was an eventful place! There were tours and displays, weddings, birthday parties and family events, seminars and farm-gate sales featuring preserves made with garden ingredients. The annual Open House was always well-attended and featured workshops, bake and craft sales, preserves, kids activities, live music, a drum circle and (of course) a barbecue.

As with any successful venture, there were troubles along the way. Most significant of these was in 2013, known as 'the year of the great flood'. The night preceding the Open House, heavy rain washed away the lane over the stream culvert. There was no way into the garden site. Gardeners and volunteers pitched in right away and built a wooden walkway over the stream. The Open House carried on but with much extra effort because supplies

had to be lugged across the bridge rather than car-driven to the site. The bridge was improved during the following months as it had to last until the lane could be repaired, and money raised to do so. Currently, the lane is in great shape but that was a tough time.

Over the years the 'project' continued to expand and consisted of the garden proper, sitting area, children's space, sheds, two large cisterns for gathering the barn's rain water, a sizeable herb garden, outdoor seminar area and the Lynde Creek Tributary Restoration on its original site. It also embraced another 3 acres of natural area surrounding the garden, and a rest spot, creating a sense of sanctuary.

At the end of 2015, founder and chief navigator, Mary Drummond stepped down. The remaining hard-working board of four creative people took over garden affairs.

The board's superb leadership has maintained the high ideals of 20 years ago, and has secured lofty food bank donation amounts. Three raised beds have been donated, a butterfly garden added, and an art installation put in place. The restrictions imposed by the pandemic have been wisely and carefully handled.

Since its inception, WAGP has donated 90,000-100,000 lbs. (a modest estimate) of fresh produce to food banks and families in need. The roster of recipients has changed and grown over the years; the need is persistent.

A WAGP gardener's quote ~  
**"This is a stunningly beautiful place, not just because of the gorgeous surroundings, but because of the people here and the generous nature of the garden's purpose."**



# WAGP photo album

Left to right  
Top to bottom

- garden beginnings
- early decoration
- first sign
- current large sign
- washed-out lane
- early food bank delivery
- recent one-day harvest
- south view of early mostly uncultivated field
- current south view of same field

