

Attachment 3 - Get Growing Victoria



Growing in the City

The City supports urban food production on public and private land.



Urban gardening and food production contribute positively to health and well-being, social interaction, connection to nature, and environmental education. They help create healthy and diverse ecosystems while building community and our food security.

Get Growing, Victoria!



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This free food seedlings distribution program created by the City of Victoria in partnership with community and non-profit organizations supports communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is renewed interest in community resilience, food security and learning how to grow food at home.

In April 2020, City Council directed staff to temporarily reprioritize operations in the existing municipal nursery in Beacon Hill Park for the growth and distribution of food starts to be shared over the 2020 growing season.

Over 75,000 edible plant starts are being grown by the City, to be distributed by over 30 community partners who directly serve over 10,000 households of marginalized communities. The first round of 50,000 seedlings supported over 6,000 households facing barriers to fresh food access and garden materials.

Most of our partner organizations are acting as distribution sites for community members to pick up seedlings to be transplanted at home. Some community partners are growing the seedlings in their existing operations to distribute the fresh produce through their programs.

What is being grown?



The seedling varieties were selected for easy growing by the novice gardener, and suitable for a variety of locations, such as garden beds in yards or container gardening on decks and balconies. Local seeds were procured from Southern Vancouver Island farms, and through West Coast Seeds and BC Eco Seed Co-op.

Spring/Summer 2020 Distribution provided 17 vegetable and herbs and included cucumbers, zucchini, squash, cabbage, mizuna and mixed mustard greens, rainbow and eldorado swiss chard, red russian and siberian kale, three different varieties of cherry tomatoes, stupice tomato, parsley, basil and lettuce.

Fall/Winter 2020 Distribution

The Fall/Winter distribution will provide 10 vegetable and herb starts for a selection of hardy greens including lettuce, chard, kale, mustard greens, as well as peas, kohlrabi, purple sprouting broccoli and green onions.

Who is eligible to receive plants?

The project prioritizes support for people who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and want to grow food at home, but that may be facing barriers to access to food plants and garden materials, or are facing barriers to access fresh, locally grown food.

That may include, but is not limited to, those who have experienced loss of work, Indigenous people, people who are immunocompromised, people with disabilities, seniors, at-risk youth, families in need, and/or people who self-identify as food insecure.

How can I receive seedlings?

The Spring/Summer distribution, which ran from May 25 - June 14, 2020, is now complete. The Fall/Winter crop distribution will happen in mid-August. Please contact your local community centre to find out how to register. Plant orders will not be placed in advance. Seedling varieties can be selected by participants on site.

Each location will host the first hour of distribution for seniors and immunocompromised folks only, and after registered participants have received seedlings, the program is open to the wider public.

For example, for locations offering 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. distribution:

10 - 11 a.m.: Seniors and immunocompromised

11 a.m. - 12 p.m.: Registered participants

12 - 2 p.m.: Open to wider public

Community Partner Organizations

Contact Information

Oaklands Community Association	reception@oaklandsca.com
North Park Neighbourhood Association	coordinator@npna.ca
Victoria West Community Centre	coordinator@victoriawest.ca
Fernwood Community Centre	info@fernwoodnrg.ca
Fairfield Gonzales Community Association	fairfieldcommunitygardens@gmail.com
South Jubilee Neighbourhood Association	SRJgetgrowing@gmail.com
Downtown Yates Street Community Garden	yatescommunitygarden@gmail.com
Burnside Gorge Community Association	info@burnsidegorge.ca
Quadra Village Community Centre	info@quadravillagecc.com
Yates Stret Community Garden	yatescommunitygarden@gmail.com
James Bay Neighbourhood	No contact

Thank you to our community partners who helped ensure the success of Get Growing, Victoria!

Greater Victoria School District – partnership with LifeCycles Project Society and Farm to School BC

Families of the Greater Victoria School District were eligible to access free vegetable plants and educational materials, for the seedling Spring/Summer distribution that happened from May 25 to June 11 at four school sites. Over 2,000 families from 47 schools accessed to the seedlings. For more information, see [here](#).

The Food Eco-District – My FED Farm

In partnership with Top Soil Innovative Agriculture, My FED Farm provides free start-up food garden kits to 500 families in need. There are still remaining spots available to get your own micro-garden! To sign up or to find more information, see [here](#).

How do I care for seedlings?

The City has partnered with the Capital Regional Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR) and its *Growing Together* campaign to offer free educational resources in the form of videos, webinars and access to a new-gardener mentorship program. *Growing Together* shares knowledge from local experts, including site-planning your garden, building healthy soil, companion planting, how to safely transplant seedlings, best watering practices, organic pest management and more.

Start learning today: <https://www.growingfood-together.com/learn-to-grow>

Growing Food and Gardening in Mixed-Use, Multi-Unit Residential Developments

To encourage urban gardening and food production in mixed-used, multi-unit residential developments, a guide has been developed to offer resources and examples to support the successful and durable incorporation of urban gardening and food production in new and existing developments. The guide also aims to increase awareness about existing good practices and opportunities to innovate. [Learn more here.](#)

Boulevard Gardening

Boulevard Gardening Guidelines are designed to help beginners and experts garden on City boulevards more confidently and responsibly. [Learn how you can transform the boulevard beside your property into a beautiful and healthy garden.](#)
[Learn more here.](#)

Community Gardens and Orchards

The Community Gardens Policy encourages local non-profit organizations to establish community allotment gardens, commons gardens and orchards. [Find a community garden near you or learn about starting your own.](#) [Learn more here.](#)

Urban Food Tree Stewardship Pilot Program

Residents, through a community organization, can apply to plant and maintain up to five fruit and nut trees in a local green space. The City will work with the organization to find suitable locations. Trees must be planted from October to November. [Read more about the program \[PDF - 388 KB\]](#) and [apply to become a Food Tree Steward here \[PDF - 38 KB\]](#).

Rooftop Greenhouses

Rooftop greenhouses can enable year-round local food production in dense urban environments. If you want to build a greenhouse on a rooftop, the [Building a Rooftop Greenhouse Fact Sheet \[PDF - 611 KB\]](#) will help you get started.

Keeping Bees and Hens

The Animal Control Bylaw permits an unspecified number of bee hives and up to 15 female chickens or other poultry. Bee hives, coops and pens of all sizes must be set back from the property line. Check the Zoning Regulation Bylaw to see required setbacks for your zone, at victoria.ca/zoning. For information on good hen-keeping practices, see the [Basic Chicken Care](#) manual made available by the City of Vancouver.

Growing Food to Sell

You can grow and sell edible and non-edible products including unprocessed fruits and vegetables, flowers, herbs, fibre, seeds, nuts, seedlings, mushrooms, plant cuttings, eggs and honey. [Apply for a business licence to sell products off-site \(e.g. in retail stores or restaurants\) as well as on-site \(e.g. at food stands\).](#) [Learn more and get started here.](#)



Resources for Urban Gardening

- The Compost Education Centre offers information on building small greenhouses, soil testing and rainwater harvesting as well as workshops on compost management, organic gardening and soil science.
- The Capital Region Beekeepers' Association offers online and in-person resources for new and experienced beekeepers.
- The LifeCycles Project Society helps people to grow their own food and have better access to fresh local foods.
- Hallburton Farm is an incubator farm in Saanich that provides educational opportunities related to small-scale organic farming.
- The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific offers gardening workshops and access to demonstration gardens.
- To minimize pesticide use, find tips on the City's website to prevent garden pests and encourage beneficial insects.
- The Guide for Planting, Growing and Harvesting Fresh Produce to Reduce Health Risks, made available by the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health, provides resources to prevent produce and soil contamination.
- Public markets provide artisans and local growers the opportunity to promote and sell produce and handcrafted goods in a vibrant atmosphere.
- Pollinators are a key component of a sustainable, resilient and biodiverse urban environment. Learn more about pollinators and how you can help pollinators here.