

Hello and welcome to the 8th issue of the Powell River Food Security Newsletter!!

We're certainly heading into the quiet time of the year... the gardens are going dormant, and it's time to start planning ahead to next year's growing season, and continue to tap into the community's energy and interest in growing more food and finding new ways to connect people in the community with healthy food options. One thing to look forward to is the new Community Resource Centre, which is quickly becoming a hub for a lot of new activities: once they get their kitchen fully equipped and certified, I hope to organize some hands-on workshops on preserving and canning. If you're interested in sharing your expertise in these areas, by all means let me know.

One fun thing I did since the last newsletter was go over to Duncan to address the Annual General Meeting of the Island Farmers' Alliance on Nov. 3, 2007. They invited me over there to talk about the story of the ALR exclusion battle that we fought here, since our fight here is just one among many going on all around the province. Just one more way that farming is under threat as a viable way of life in the province. I connected with Catherine Pastula, who is one of the organizers behind [Local Flavours](#), a new producers' cooperative aiming to support and promote small value-added food processors. Someone from Local Flavours will be here in Powell River on November 19, as part of the evening about cooperative enterprises ("Taking Control of our Economies and Resources"). More info below.

As always, if you enjoy what you're reading, and can think of ways to contribute, get in touch with me. If you prefer not to be receiving these email newsletters, get in touch with me and I'll be happy to remove your address from the list. Please pass this message along to anyone you think might enjoy reading it. If you have garden space to share, or are looking for help in your garden, or need tools, or would like to see a workshop on some topic, or have anything to communicate to the 250+ local people who receive this newsletter, let me know. This is YOUR venue for connecting with other people in the Powell River region about food and growing and gardening and cooking and whatever else you're interested in.

Local News & Upcoming Events

1. Workshops

Our little series of three workshops is now over, and they all went quite well. On October 6, we had the first workshop, led by Hana-Louise Braun, where we learned about the basic garden-starting technique called lasagna gardening (or sheet-mulching). On October 13, we held another workshop about preparing a garden for winter gardening. And on October 20, local wilderness-technology expert Brian Lee led a workshop on foraging, which was attended by 18 people and was a smash success. I will certainly be organizing more workshops in the new year, so if there are any topics that interest you, please get in touch with me.

I know that many people out there are interested in learning more about caring for fruit and nut trees, especially how to prune them. I spent some time trying to find someone willing to facilitate a workshop on that subject, and ended up speaking with Paul Nassichuk at the City, who told me that they have offered pruning workshops in the past, but typically hold them in January or February, when it is the right time to prune fruit trees. Apparently now is not the best time of year to be pruning fruit trees. So there is a possibility of the City running a workshop in late winter. Otherwise, if someone out there is going to be pruning trees and feels they can pass some good knowledge along to others willing to learn, let me know.

For anyone who missed the lasagna gardening workshop and is still interested, here's one more chance:

Sun. Nov. 25: How to start a garden cheap & easy! Lasagna gardening with Hana-Louise Braun

12:00 PM to 2:00 PM, Community Resource Centre (4752 Joyce Ave., former Frootique)

Suggested donation: \$5 (or exchange)

Perfect for the aspiring food gardener! Learn about how to create garden beds and build your soil, using lasagna gardening (also known as sheet mulching), a simple and inexpensive way to convert readily available materials into high-quality soil. We're going to talk about a lot of gardening basics, and then do some hands-on work to create a new vegetable bed, using common and easily-available materials. We'll also talk about composting, what to plant and how, and all the basics of growing vegetable crops in your garden. Come in work gear, and be prepared for wet weather, just in case.

2. Taking Control of our Economies and Resources

Mon, Nov. 19, 7:00 PM, Ecole Côte du Soleil, 4368 Michigan Avenue, Powell River

Leocadio Juracan Salome (CCDA President) & Adriane Carr, Deputy Leader of the Green Party of Canada will speak about "Taking Control of our Economies and Resources". Information will be provided with the support of Powell River's First Credit Union and the BC Co-operative Association. I'm excited about this event. I would like to see more cooperative efforts start happening around Powell River. Food co-ops, producers' co-ops, CSA programs, all of these could help build community capacity in food security. If you're interested in starting up some cooperative efforts to help people connect with better food, please come out and let's start talking. I'll be hosting a table at this event, and if anyone out there is interested in hosting a table, let me know or contact Maurice Shapiro at 487-4396.

3. More community gardens?

Hana-Louise Braun and I are looking forward to next year. She is talking to many people who are expressing interest in finding space in a community garden to learn how to grow food alongside other people. It looks likely that the Community Resource Centre will be home to a demonstration garden, whose purpose will be to educate people about what is possible, techniques for growing different food crops, composting, and so on -- as well as provide a venue for hosting workshops. It's not certain that there will be space there for allotments belonging to individuals or groups, so the only other option will be the Seventh Day Adventist Church community garden. Hana-Louise and I will be spending some time looking into other possible locations for starting a community garden, so if you're interested in being involved in that, please contact me.

4. PRSC gears up for another application to remove lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve

As many of you will know, PRSC Land Developments Ltd., the joint venture consisting of the City of Powell River, Sliammon, and Catalyst, has indicated its intention to seek removal of some of its holdings from the Agricultural Land Reserve. PRSC has held two public meetings to bring the public up to date on its history, goals, and holdings, and also to invite public input on what should be done with these lands. This is in the early stages, but I hope that there will be more opportunities for genuine public consultation. I know, from speaking with many of you, that there is a very high degree of concern for our regional food security, and it's time to start creating finding ways to increase the amount of local farming activity. Let's hope that the community will get a chance to contribute its ideas for how the future might look in Powell River. Stay tuned.

News, Opinion, etc.

Lots of stuff about local eating this month!!

a. Locavore is the Oxford University Press' word of the year!

"Locavore" was coined two years ago by a group of four women in San Francisco who proposed that local residents should try to eat only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius. Other regional movements have emerged since then, though some groups refer to themselves as "localvores" rather than "locavores." However it's spelled, it's a word to watch.

<http://blog.oup.com/2007/11/locavore/>

b. David Suzuki on the value of eating locally

Another thing that isn't valued in our economic system is nature. More specifically, natural services like cleaning our air and water and providing a stable climate. Things grown halfway around the world and flown to our doorsteps get a lot more expensive if you actually include the cost of the damage this does to our atmosphere. So we cannot know the real price of our food unless we do full-cost accounting, which considers all of these factors that traditional economics considers "externalities." Even then, we still haven't factored in the value of community, of spending time outdoors with friends and family, and so on, that you might get from growing your own food. What are these things worth?

http://www.davidsuzuki.org/about_us/Dr_David_Suzuki/Article_Archives/weekly10120701.asp

c. Gary Paul Nabhan: Deepening Our Sense of What is Local and Regional Food

It is time that we deepen our sense of what we mean by local and regional, offer others better reasons as to why these concerns matter, and steadfastly resist any pressure to endorse simplistic formulas such as a 100-mile diet or an in-state diet.

<http://www.eatlocalchallenge.com/2007/10/gary-paul-nabha.html>

d. New York Times on the latest huge meat contamination scare

Topps began in Manhattan as a small operation in 1940. The original owners, the Sachs family, sometimes donned hair nets and joined their workers on the floor. After Strategic Investments & Holdings, a diversified private equity firm, bought Topps in 2003, it brought in outside managers, invested \$2.5 million in new machines and began ramping up production, ex-workers said in interviews. "The whole time, the whole year, there was a lot more pressure," Alberto Narvaelzi, a supervisor who worked at Topps for 23 years, said referring to this year.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/23/business/23meat.html>

e. Nifty little webpage about sheet mulch (AKA "lasagna gardening")

Sheet mulching can be a great way to relatively easily turn lawn into garden-as long as you have several months before you want to plant. Those months are worth it if you can spare them: in addition to killing the sod, you keep the topsoil of your lawn, with all its ecology, intact, and add 2-4" of topsoil in the process.

<http://onestraw.blogspot.com/2007/10/sheet-mulch-building-soil-natures-way.html>

See also: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/Organic-Gardening/1999-04-01/Lasagna-Gardening.aspx>

e. Table Talk: A conversation with Michael Pollan

It really comes down to seven words: "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants."

<http://www.grist.org/feature/2007/10/12/pollan/?source=weekly>

That's it for now!! See you soon...

David Parkinson
Program Coordinator
Powell River Food Security Project
(604) 485-2004