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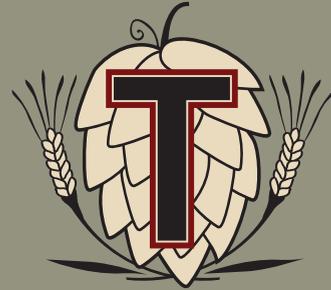
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A NOTE ABOUT OUR PAPER STOCK

Home Grown is printed entirely on paper made by Catalyst Paper. The cover stock is Pacificote—the company’s newest coated mechanical paper. It’s made in Port Alberni with 88% renewable energy. Most of the inside pages are Electrabrite 70, which is made on both #9 and #11 machines, and is unique to Powell River.

ON THE COVER

Wendy Devlin of Glade Farm is a leading figure in the local agriculture scene.

Photo by Isabelle Southcott



The next generation

Farmer of the future

By Jay Yule, President of PRREDS

When it comes to farming, children are the future.

They’re comfortable and knowledgeable about the use of technology and can use it to manage data, communicate and get information. Today’s farmers must be as comfortable with technology they are with crops and animals. Unlike previous generations of farmers, they need to know about genetically modified foods and certified organic products.

When it comes right down to it, today’s farmer needs a broad and varied education.

But before that education can even begin, we need to interest the next generation in farming. Because most of us are much further removed from where our food comes from than our ancestors were, it’s important to expose children to farming and farm life.

Local farmers do just that when they hold farm tours for students. They introduce children to meat rabbits, chickens, goats, sheep, bees and ducks. They are given a taste of farm life.

With so much interest in local food and farming, it was inevitable that schools would get involved.

Last year, James Thomson Elementary launched the first Farm to School lunch program in the district. Students have enjoyed salmon cooked the First Nations way, locally made apple cider, vegetables and coleslaw. Students, staff and volunteers recently

began creating their own garden at James Thomson.

Powell River Christian School principal Matt Duggan also believes in teaching children where food comes from. He brings students to his farm and shows them how to milk a goat, look after chickens and work in the garden.

If young people don’t know where their food comes from, how it is grown and what opportunities exist in agriculture, they won’t consider farming as a livelihood or lifestyle. If they aren’t shown how easy it is to have a house garden when they’re young, they’ll be intimidated later on.

If you are out of school and interested in learning about food production and agriculture, don’t despair. Powell River Farmers Institute, the Food Security Project and Eternal Seed Garden Centre offer courses ranging from cheese making to home canning to how to keep chickens.

When we demystify what’s involved in keeping a small flock of laying hens, planting a vegetable garden or raising a few lambs, we sow the seeds for future food production.

Visit the Open Air Market this summer and taste the difference between home grown food, and food that travels days and hundreds of kilometers before it hits your plate. Not only are you doing the environment a favour by purchasing food grown closer to home but your taste buds will love you for it! 🍎

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society for making this publication possible.



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Grow your own Publisher's message

By Isabelle Southcott

Awet and cold *Juneuary* means that some crops are behind. But today, the day I write this column, marks the first day of summer and I am the eternal optimist. We will have a warm summer and everything from plants to children will have sudden growth spurts just as soon as the sun begins to shine!

It's hard to believe that this is the third year for *Home Grown*. I remember when it was just a seedling of an idea. But, like all seedlings, once it germinated it began to take off and grow. And it is still growing.

Home Grown focuses on local food. We run stories about who is growing it, where to find it and in some cases, how to grow it. With a lot of input and writing from Powell River Farmers Institute's Wendy Devlin (who graces this year's cover) and David Parkinson of the Powell River Food Security Project and others, *Home Grown* is truly a labour of love.

The number of people who want to purchase food directly from the farmer continues to grow. As much as they want to, local producers have a difficult time keeping up with demand. That's why the Powell River Regional Economic Development

Society and the Powell River Farmers' Institute are working to recruit young farmers and exploring innovative ways to help them set up.

Although *Home Grown* is primarily about local food, it also includes other home grown elements, such as items made in Powell River and businesses that support farmers and those who grow food in their backyards.

For example, West Coast Fish Culture's Simply Fish soil amendment is a fertilizer made locally out of fish grown at their Lois Lake net pen farm. Blitz Beach House just released a new product. Their grilling planks made from locally sourced red cedar are perfect for gifts and for cooking your favourite seafood on.

Pollen Sweaters, north of Powell River, make the best sweaters in the entire world. I know because I was given one for my 50th birthday and I love it! If you're the do-it-yourself type, visit the folks at Great Balls of Wool where you can purchase supplies to knit your own sweater.

You can now purchase beer made in Powell River at Town-site Brewing or make your own wine and beer at Westview U-Brew. Be sure to check out our map in the centre section to see what's growing and where.

Powell River is a growing concern. People here are making everything from cheese to chamomile tea. We have workshops on keeping chickens and beekeeping and home canning. The local food movement continues to grow.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Home Grown* as much as our team has enjoyed growing it this year. 🍎

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From fish, to fertilizer

New local product

Simply Fish soil amendment is an all natural liquid fish fertilizer that was recently launched in Powell River. *Simply Fish*, which is produced at West Coast Fish Culture's Lois Lake Fish Farm, has Canadian Organic Standards and US Department of Agriculture approval for organic production.

Because *Simply Fish* is derived from Ocean Wise-approved steelhead, it was easier to gain approval for organic production. At the net pen farm, steelhead salmon are grown for fresh fish markets under the brand name Stillwater Steelhead. They can be found for sale in restaurants such as Earls, and Cactus Club, as well as stores throughout Canada and USA.

Simply Fish is an innovative example of a local company developing a remnant product and turning it into a valuable commodity for the market. "It is a great way to improve soil structure while using an eco-friendly product," says Bill Vandevent, President of West Coast Fish Culture.



NEW PRODUCT — Ward Griffeon (at left) talks about the West Coast Fish Culture's new soil amendment product.

The fertilizer is in a diluted form and sprayed onto fields and foliage to enhance crop through a natural biological effect on the soil. This then enhances microbiological growth and improves soil conditions with noticeable effects on recovering worm populations and building immunity against invasive worms and pests.

Saskatchewan farmer and soil analyst Rory Ylioja uses *Simply Fish* for his large scale grain crops. He says the results have been amazing for him, and others.

A federal grant helped fund West Coast Fish Culture's liquid fertilizer and oil recovery operation. The facility has been equipped to turn fish offal, into a liquid fertilizer soil enhancer.

The soil amendment is Pro-Cert Approved Input for organic production. *Simply Fish* is available at local nurseries. For more information visit www.simplyfish.ca. 🍎

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Why buy local?

We ask some local restaurants



For local restaurants, there are many reasons to choose local food suppliers.

Roy Blackwell, chef and owner of The Boardwalk Restaurant, says 85 per cent of their menu is made up of local food. They've been working towards adding more local food to the menu since they purchased the restaurant.

"As a chef, it's all about the flavour. It's such a beautiful area, visually, and there's a flavour to it, too. The food reflects the beauty and the health of the area. Why would I bring in factory food that doesn't taste as good?"

"As a restaurateur, there are attractions to locally raised products. People like that.

"As a member of the community, I want to support my neighbours. If I can pay a farmer down the road rather than (foodservice distribution giant) Sysco, that's a no-brainer."

When you buy direct from the farms you know where your food comes from and you can get to know the growers. Not only are you supporting your community and the local economy but you are avoiding factory farming. In Powell River you can buy a variety of fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs, eggs, meat, chicken, honey, jams, pickles, home baking and more.

You can taste the difference when it is fresh. Foods that

are grown close to home are grown for taste rather than to withstand long distance shipping.

Margaret Thistle, chef and owner of Magpies Diner, in Townsite purchases her eggs and pork from Creekside Farm in Powell River. Margaret's diner is famous for its tasty breakfasts that feature farm fresh, local eggs. "I have visited Creekside Farm and have watched Kathy hand feed piglets and lambs and experienced firsthand the excellent care these animals are given," says Margaret. She also makes as much food as possible from scratch, staying away from processed, premade food products.

Marika Varro, owner of the Tree Frog Bistro on Marine Avenue uses fresh, local organic eggs for all their schnitzels. The eggs, along with a variety of tasty salad greens and vegetables they serve are grown locally on Black Tail Farm on Texada Island. Marika also uses local steelhead and fresh herbs grown in her own garden to create food that is not only fresh but also bursting with flavour!

Earlier this year Townsite Brewing opened its doors for business and began selling local beer. Their craft beer, which is available in 650 ml bottles and growlers, has proven incredibly popular and can be purchased at many local restaurants as well as the brewery.

Dave Bowes, chef and owner, of The Laughing Oyster uses Emmonds Farm produce. "We use several types of lettuce, green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, golden and green zucchini, basil and tarragon." He also buys Jenny Peterson's rustic assorted greens from Kelly Creek.

Although the oysters, clams and mussels, he uses are harvested locally, they have to travel to Vancouver Island where they go through a federal shellfish plant, before they come back.



When the halibut boats stop by Lund, Dave goes to the docks and sees the fishers. Fresh prawns are delivered to his restaurant in season.

When you eat locally, you eat what's in season. When you eat what's in season, you support local producers and the economy year-round. 🍅

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A DAY AT THE FARM



More than 60 James Thomson Elementary school students visited Glade and Windfall Farms in Wildwood, along with Serendipity Rabbitry recently. They met rabbits, sheep, goats, ducks, bees and chickens. They planted seeds in peat pots and learned about farming and where your food comes from. Here's what they saw and did.

Shear that sheep!

By Linda Wegner

Sheep in the Upper Sunshine Coast recently had a visit from Johanna Walker, a shearer and a strong advocate of responsible animal care.

“I had watched other shearers do it and I thought, ‘I could do that’ but I thought that I could be more gentle [than some, not all]. I respect the value of each animal and to me, this is not just a job to earn money but it also means working toward the better health of the animal.”

Better health includes removing their wool on a regular basis.

“In summer the weather gets warm and [unshorn] wool can cause them to get stressed. That affects their health. Also, sometimes they can get ‘keds’ or ticks and that doesn’t help their health, either. I get the greatest satisfaction from knowing that the animal is healthier for what I’ve done.”

Johanna has been shearing sheep for nearly one-third of her life. Raised on a farm near Fort Langley, she began shearing at the age of fourteen; now, eight years later, she works fulltime at the job. In addition to her annual visit

to Powell River, she works throughout the Fraser Valley and up to Princeton.

“This is a physically stressful job. You handle heavy animals, you’re bent over most of the time and you’re depending on the animal not to kick. Using sharp pairs of equipment such as hoof trimmers and shears, people get their hands cut.”

Physically challenging or not, Johanna spoke of the fulfillment that comes with helping owners learn how to look after their animals. There’s also satisfaction, she said, in going to fairs and demonstrating her craft.

“It’s amazing how little people know about agriculture. By doing this I feel I am providing a service to the community and teaching others outside the sheep community.”

Powell River is one of those communities that appreciates her coming. “I come to Powell River once a year but it was a large scale project this year. I didn’t realize that there were so many people with one or two sheep.” 🍅



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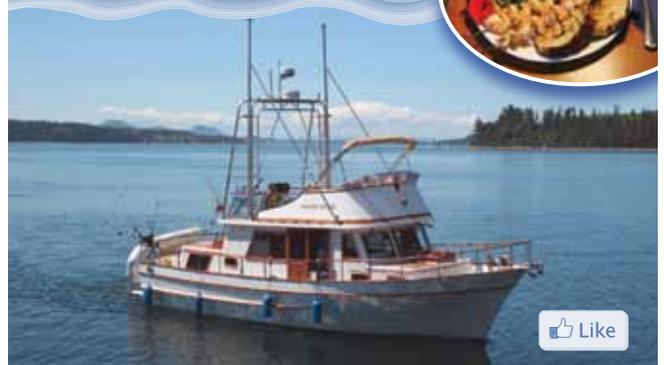
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Under the Rainbow

Everything you need for the farm

By Wendy Devlin

It's 9 am on an April Friday morning. Hundreds of day-old chicks are peeping their arrival at Rainbow Valley Pet and Feed Supplies. Earlier this morning, owner Sheila Dickers picked up cardboard boxes of chicks at the Powell River Airport, across the road from her feed store. The chicks arrived safe and sound from their flight from Rochester Hatchery in Alberta.

Ordering spring chicks is just one of the many services provided by Rainbow Valley. I know, because nearly every week of the year, I'm in the store buying feed or other supplies for our dairy goats, sheep, chickens, ducks, rabbits, cats and dog. From Wildwood, I drive into 'town' and enter the cave-like storage area, beside the store. Soon, either Sheila, Tony Houle or another employee appears. I leave the heavy lifting to them! While they hoist 20-kilogram bags of feed or bales of hay into the van, I walk into the store to pay the bill and have a visit.

A country feed store is traditionally a hub for farming activity. The store contains just about everything a



person needs to farm successfully. Inside the building, the shelves are loaded from floor to ceiling. There are smaller items like cages, feeders and over the counter veterinary supplies. Supplies for pets, like food, leashes, beds and toys etc. are in abundance. Outside

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PEEP PEEP— Rainbow Valley employee Dillon Clark checks out a new shipment of baby chicks.

in the yard, larger supplies like tools, fencing, gates, irrigation equipment and wheelbarrows are available. Besides animal supplies, there is also bulk fertilizers, soil amendments like vermiculite and coir, plus seeds, for the gardener. There's almost always, fresh farm eggs in the fridge. If you can't find what you're looking for in the store, Sheila or Tony will do their best to bring the item in for you, on the weekly truck run to the lower Mainland.

Besides pet and feed supplies, the place is also a good place to find information. Sheila knows which customers have what animals, so if you're looking to buy livestock or need advice, she can suggest who to contact. Chances are, she may give you, my phone number!

Membership in the Farmers' Institute has its privilege. Rainbow Valley gives members a discount of 5% on five bags of livestock feed and 10% on 10 bags or more. The store and the Farmers' Institute are supporters of both Fall Fair in September and 4H, a provincial community club for youth between the ages of nine and 19. Currently, 4H has a sewing and quilting club, a horse and pony club and this year, the small livestock club will be up and running again.

Rainbow Valley has a free bulletin board on the wall near the back door. It's a great place for selling, swapping or giving away animals, goods or services. 🍎

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By Linda Wegner



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Other than limits imposed by space and geographic location, if it can be eaten then Carol Bennett probably grows it. You can be assured, as well, that if she grows it there's a good chance it's in a glass jar somewhere. "It's one way I explore my creativity," Carol tells *Home Grown*.

Though her creativeness is expressed in other ways as well, it is her love of gardening and canning that has earned her appreciative customers, a respected place at Powell River's Open Air Market, many trophies and first place ribbons.

As a child, Carol learned the principles and methods of food preservation from her mother, who, Carol said, "made everything possible and imaginable.

After moving to Powell River from Squamish, Carol and her husband, Mike, tackled the job of transforming a non-descript city lot into a veritable garden of eatin.' From the land surrounding their home the pair harvests, preserves and feeds themselves as well as a lot of other folks.

"We grow and preserve about 80% of our own foods, including smoking and canning salmon and freezing cod. What we don't grow we trade with others. For example, last season I canned approximately 150 jars of dill pickles alone. There is no way I can grow enough little cucumbers to keep up with supply and demand so I actually trade with an organic farmer friend of mine and in return she



*If I can it, they will
line up to buy it.*

gets a lot of the product," Carol says.

Although not certified organic, Carol and Mike are proud of the fact that they've never used any pesticides, herbicides or any other chemicals on the garden. "I believe in Nature's gifts such as seaweed or compost," she says.

Other gifts of nature find their way into Carol's kitchen and pantry, as well.

"I've always been a gatherer of wild berries and I developed my own jam and jelly recipes. I've used everything from Oregon grape to wild huckleberries and blueberries — anything that's been available, including Saskatoon berries when we've travelled. There are lots of natural foods available here in Powell River and not just fruit and berries. There are mushrooms and wild herbs such as stinging nettles for salad, dandelion greens and watercress," she notes.

It's been said over and over again, "if you build it, they will come." Although history hasn't proven that famous line always to be true, Carol Bennett has her own story to prove that "If I can it, they will line up to buy it."

You can find Carol's canning at the Open Air Market. 🍷

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Paradise Valley 604 489-0046
ingriddevilliers@shaw.ca
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Mr Kristensen's Farmgate (9)

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Keeper of the bees

By Linda Wegner

There's a buzz about town

“Oh the buzzing of the bees...” While the words of that old song may have been written to depict the hobo's idyllic life, for local beekeeper Doug Brown, the buzz of bees has been music to his ears for more than thirty-five years.

Both lifestyle and geographic location sparked his initial interest in the flying insects, he says.

“I was living in Lac La Biche in Northern Alberta and the northern prairies are bee country. I was also an old hippie living on a quarter section of land so it felt

natural to put out a few hives.”

The northern prairies are, as Doug puts it, lands well suited to beekeeping: the days are long; there's lots of alfalfa and wild flowers; and, the bees had no natural predators such as mites or other pathogens to threaten their existence. Back then, he continues, it was the habit of beekeepers to destroy the insects every fall and buy new ones in the spring.

“We would go to California and pick up two thousand packages of bees every spring and still get 150 to 200 pounds of honey from a hive,” he continues.

Things are not quite as they were back then, though. The climate is decidedly different here on the Coast, one factor that resulted in a poor harvest of honey last year.



SHE'S THE QUEEN — Beekeeper Doug Brown points out the queen for this hive; she's larger than the other bees.

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“The weather was terrible. Also, the bees rob each other if the hive is not strong and the bees in the weaker hive can’t do much about it. We got one hundred twenty pounds of honey from one hive but that is because it was the ‘robber’ hive. Other hives had nothing,” he says.

According to Doug, the impact of farm chemicals on bee populations is still a relatively unknown factor, at least to him.

“I really don’t have the kind of knowledge or research

skills [to state] that any of the farm chemicals was the only thing that had an impact. Everything was part of the impact on the current bee situation.”

What he does know without a doubt, however, are the benefits of keeping bees. Along with an average yield of sixty pounds of honey per hive, he has learned one of life’s greatest lessons: how to relax when things are going crazy.

“Bees are reasonably predictable, but when things are not going well [with them] you must slow down, be mindful, be careful and relax. When you’re being stung, that’s hard to do; the natural reaction is to flail but that’s not the best thing to do. Bees



HARVESTING — Doug Brown removes one of the frames in this hive, loaded with honey.



BEE RUSH HOUR — Hive C is, well, a beehive of activity as honeybees come and go on their daily tasks.

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help me in that respect. Working with bees you have to be calm because they know if you are nervous or upset and it makes them that way. And anxious, nervous bees you don’t want.”

Doug is currently mentoring Austin Gunn, Ron Berezan and Wendy Devlin in the art of beekeeping. He has six to twelve hives, depending on the time of year. 🍎

Fun fact • Worker bees suck up nectar and water and store it in a special honey stomach. When the stomach is full the bee returns to the hive and puts the nectar into an empty honeycomb. Natural chemicals from the bee's head glands and the evaporation of the water from the nectar change it into honey.

Multi-generation farm

Kids, parents and grandparents too!

By Linda Wegner



There's something homey about the Duggan place. A country-style kitchen table, the laughter of children playing, the aroma of freshly made coffee and a view that includes 19 goats makes you forget you're minutes from the centre of town.

In a small but vibrant, growing movement toward local food production and sustainability, there are a lot of elements involved. While workshops, discussion groups, Open Air Market, Seedy Saturday and farm gate sales are some of the more visible signs, what is really needed are more young people to...well, to go farming!

Matt and Wilma Duggan fit that bill. As one of a number of young couples in the community they

serves as a teacher and the principal of Powell River Christian School.

The Duggans live on a 15-acre property, ten of them cleared. Within the cleared property there are three areas, each serving distinct purposes: one has been planted with 600 blueberry bushes, one is the main pasture and the third, a winter/rotation pasture. There are two residences on the property, a newly constructed greenhouse, four adults, four children, laying hens and 19 goats. There's no doubt that it's a farm in progress.

Although Lynea (6), Asher (4), Te-man (2) and Thias (infant) are too young to assume an active role on the farm, they've got great role models mentoring them with an eye to yet another generation of farmers. In addition to Matt, Wilma, Bob and

“It is enriching for children to come to the farm. It gives them an understanding of where food comes from.”

—Matt Duggan

have enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to not only grow their own food but to teach others to do the same. Farming and education fit together easily for them.

Wilma was raised on a dairy farm in the Lower Mainland while Matt's mother, Ann, grew up on a farm in Alberta. Matt's father, Bob, is a semi-retired principal and teacher. The couple moved from Alberta in August 2011 to join their children and grandchildren on the Padgett Road property. Matt currently

Ann demonstrating the art of looking after chickens, the garden and the milking chores, they're developing an educational program for school children.

“It is enriching for children to come to the farm,” says Matt. “It gives them an understanding of where food comes from.”

It's called Education with a Vision, Farming with a Future, Learning in an Outdoor Classroom and it's all part of the plan to feed Powell River. 🍓



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COMMUNITY GARDENS

Powell River has four community gardens and one demonstration garden. A community garden is a place where people come together to garden to grow food. Having a common garden allows people to share ideas, tools and labour and provides garden space for those who might not otherwise have any. A demonstration garden is a garden where people can learn about gardening, growing food, food preservation and preparation.

Seventh Day Adventist Church Garden

Pastor Ernie Dunning • 604 485-7106

Kelly Creek Community Garden

Kelly Creek Community Church, Pastor Mike Martinig • 2380 Zillinsky Road
kellyck@telus.net or 604 487-1884.

Sliammon Community Garden

TlaAmin Community Health, Shelley Clements • 604 483-3009 or
s.clements@tlaaminhealth.com

Demonstration Garden @ Community Resource Centre

Michelle LaBoucane 604 485-0992 or
manager@prcrc.org

Club Bon Accueil Garden

For club members and students of École Côte du Soleil only • Rhea Zajac,
604 485-3966 or rhea-z@telus.net

Edible Garden Tour

The fourth annual Edible Garden Tour coming up Sunday, August 5 at various locations. David Parkinson • 604 485-2004 or
fsp@prepsociety.org

Hot Summer Night Market (15)

At the Blue Cat Square, Thursday nights, July 5 – Aug 30 from 3 – 8 pm. Farmers, food vendors, artisans and musicians. Jillian Amatt and Misha Brooks-Thoma
604 344-0017 or visit their Facebook page.

50-Mile Eat Local Challenge

Aug 5 to Sept 23. Eat as much food as you can that is produced within a 50 mile zone. To register or for more info call David Parkins 604 485-2004 or
fsp@prepsociety.org.

Kale Force

Community Resource Centre David Parkinson • 604 485-2004 or
fsp@prep-society.org

Gardeners, growers and food lovers meet at 5 pm every 2nd Wednesday to share food and ideas about how to increase the amount of food being grown locally. Special guest speakers and workshops on various topics.

Lund Co-op

Look for us at the Lund Water Taxi this summer. Lund area farmers get together to offer a variety of locally-grown items, including eggs, greens, honey and more. Pat Hansen 604 483-9890

Open Air Market (16)

McLeod Rd, Paradise Valley • 604 344-0021 or
jesseblack@gmail.com

Locally grown farm & garden produce, home baking, preserves, perennials, crafts and more. Entertainment, a children's play area and pony-cart rides. The market supports sustainable methods and the humane treatment of animals. Saturdays 10:30 am to 12:30 pm and Sundays 12:30 to 2:30 pm.

Powell River Farmers' Institute

Has existed since 1915 to improve the conditions of rural life so that settlement may be permanent and prosperous. info@prfarmers.ca
President • Erin Wilson 604 487-0101 or
erinwilson2005@yahoo.com
V-P • Wendy Devlin at 604 483-9268 or
wd2006@shaw.ca

Powell River Fall Fair

At the Paradise Valley Exhibition Grounds Saturday, September 22 and Sunday, September 23. Noon to 5 pm.

Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative

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www.skookumfood.ca

Skookum Gleaners

(formerly Powell River Fruit Tree Project) 604 485-4366 or
gleaners@skookumfood.ca
A volunteer-run project that works to save all the fruit in the region which might otherwise be wasted. Volunteer picking teams are sent to clean off fruit trees for homeowners. Split evenly between the pickers, the community and the homeowner. Last year over 700 kilograms of fruit picked. Pickers and fruit trees needed.

www.skookumfood.ca

Texada Island Farmers Market

Ballfield, Gillies Bay, Sundays noon – 1:30 pm
Linda Bruhn at 604 483-1471.

Fresh vegetables, fruit, preserves, food, crafts, jewellery and clothes. Runs from the end of May till the second weekend in October. An occasional indoor market takes place during the winter at the Texada Community Hall.

Texada Agriculture Group (TAG)

604 483-1471 • texadasf@gmail.com

A brand new Texada Island agriculture group that aims to unite Texadans who are interested or involved in agriculture and related activities so they may share knowledge, resources, and facilitate educational opportunities related to agriculture.

Transition Town Powell River

604 483-9052 or
transitionpowellriver@gmail.com. Local food is one way to increase our self-reliance. Join us to work on community resilience around food, transport, our local economy, energy and more.

transitiontownpowellriver.ca

Winter Farmers' Market (14)

Community Resource Centre
4752 Joyce Ave, 604 485-0992
Saturdays, October to April.

Fun fact • An acre of trees can remove about 13 tons of dust and gases every year from the surrounding environment.

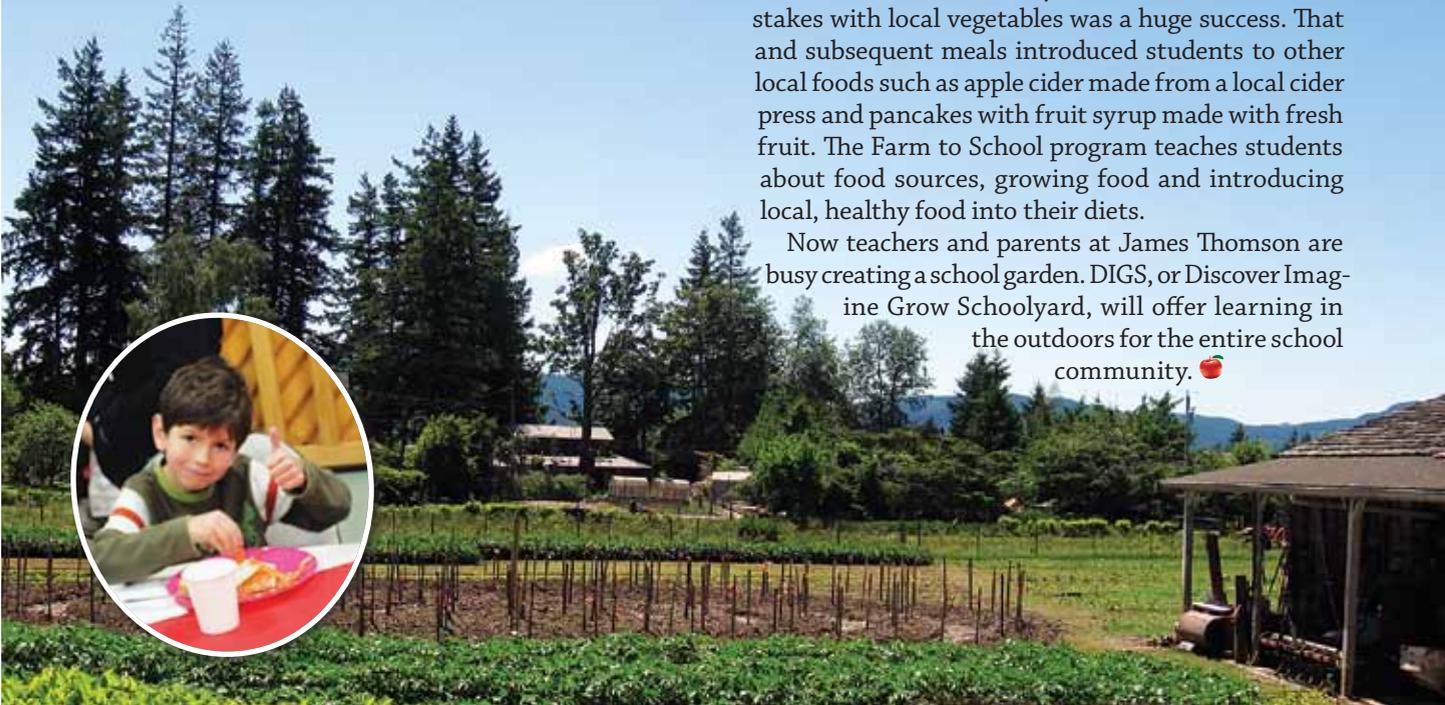
Farm to School

Connecting children to food

A new "Farm to School" lunch program was launched at James Thomson Elementary School last year. The program creates close connections between students and the food they eat by introducing them to food at the source.

Their first meal of sockeye salmon cooked on cedar stakes with local vegetables was a huge success. That and subsequent meals introduced students to other local foods such as apple cider made from a local cider press and pancakes with fruit syrup made with fresh fruit. The Farm to School program teaches students about food sources, growing food and introducing local, healthy food into their diets.

Now teachers and parents at James Thomson are busy creating a school garden. DIGS, or Discover Imagine Grow Schoolyard, will offer learning in the outdoors for the entire school community. 🍎



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Delicious, How to make nutritious your own & fun cheese

By David Parkinson



Mayne Islander and cheesemaking guru David Asher Rotsztain was in Powell River recently for another round of cheesemaking workshops. About 65 people attended, proving yet again that people in the region are really dedicated to reviving and practicing traditional food skills. As the organizer of these workshops, I was present for all four: two introductory and two advanced; and by the end of the weekend, after about 16 hours of workshops, I felt as though I knew a thing or two about getting started making cheese at home. Here is some of what I learned.

1. You could be making cheese today. One of the simplest cheeses is a hung yogurt cheese. Get some yogurt from the store (better yet, make some yourself), pour it into a cheesecloth or other suitable material draped over a colander, draw it into a ball and hang in a cool area away from flies until the whey has stopped dripping out. Salt lightly, add herbs or spices if you like, and use as a spreadable cheese. Delicious!

2. Curdling milk is not so complicated. Many of the better-known cheeses are made from milk that has been curdled with rennet or a vegetable-based substitute. It's actually not rocket science and just requires care, practice, and a decently clean kitchen. We learned how to cut the curds, stir them gently to force whey out, and then



drain them in a cheese press. After that, it's all about ageing... and waiting. The key to success? You have to use non-homogenized milk — homogenized milk just won't curdle the right way.

3. You can make Camembert, feta, blue cheese, mozzarella, and more. David showed us how the same basic technique for producing curds can go off in so many different directions, depending on the mold you introduce into the milk, salting, pressing, the size of the curds, and the process of ageing the cheese.

4. Kefir is amazing. Everyone who participated in the workshops got some kefir grains to take home. Kefir grains turn plain old milk into a slightly fizzy, slightly alcoholic, thickened yogurt-like substance. And they do that without much fussing: drop the kefir grains into milk, leave at room temperature for 24 to 48 hours, and voilà! Now you have something that you can drain for a lovely soft cheese (see #1). Plus kefir is delicious as is, full of health-giving properties, and once you have the grains you'll never need to buy starter culture or fuss with thermometers.

The really good news is that many people have been inspired to put together a group order of cheesemaking supplies for more experimentation at home. Perhaps in the next few years we'll have a local cheesemaking club, so we have something to eat with our local beers and wines. 🍷

Chamomile

More than just tea



Nicole Narbonne and Will Langland bought chamomile seeds from West Coast Seeds three years ago and planted them in a bed in their vegetable garden. Since then, the plants have self-seeded in a very pretty way all around the vegetables.

“If they are in the way, we just pull them. If they are not, we let them stay. They are great for attracting bees. They are pretty. They smell nice, and we can eat the young leaves and dry the flowers for soothing chamomile tea,” Nicole told Home Grown.

Although chamomile is most often used as a tea, the flowers can be added to a tossed green salad for flavour and beauty. They can also be used to season cream sauces, butter and sour cream. Chamomile is used commercially to flavour alcoholic beverages such as Vermouth. It is used in ice cream, breads and cakes, and desserts.



Chamomile also has magical uses! Burn it as incense or scatter it around your property to protect against

lightning (guarantee not offered). It is said to be lucky in gambling (again, guarantee not offered). Place the flowers in your wallet to attract money! (This one might work!) 🍎

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Old-country traditions

From Russia to Powell River

By Janet May

Out of the corner of my eye I can see something white flitting between the alders near the road. I slow my car on the bumpy driveway. I imagine a unicorn. It seems like the sort of place where magic could happen. Then the shape re-forms into two fluffy dogs, as tall as miniature horses, but otherwise realistic animals to find on a farm in Powell River.

They are introduced to me as Akbash, a Turkish livestock guardian, and Luna, a Maremma sheepdog from Italy. Irena Pugachevsky brought them to the farm to live outside with her goats and alpacas.

Irena and her husband Igor Olefrenko emigrated from Soviet Russia with a young family. They lived in Israel and Richmond BC until five years ago, when they found their little farm east of Lang Creek. Drawing on their experience and research, they

are experimenting with Powell River's terroir, testing ideas and techniques they remember in Powell River's soil and climate. Igor has built bark homes for the western toads that live near their trout pond. Irena has planted berry bushes that she remembers from her childhood in the Ukraine.

Irena farms with an understanding and interest in herbal medicine. As a nurse she used buckthorn salves to treat minor burns. She shows me her new ankle-high buckthorn slippers, saying they will become "three metres tall and bear gorgeous bright red-orange berries on their branches."

"In the Ukraine, my grandparents were part of collective farms," remembers Irena, "but everyone had some private land for their own production, and sold excess to neighbours. My grandmother grew amazing black currants. I could milk the bushes of berries. I hated them with a passion."

Irena was told that the naughtier she was, the more she had to pick. "I'm surprised that they didn't kill my love for gardening completely."

Irena wanted to be with animals. "I always wanted to be a milker," she says. All jobs were paid about the same in Soviet Russia, but a milker was about the lowest prestige job around. "This was a big joke in my family. 'Her father is a doctor and her mother is an engineer, and she wants to be a milker!'"

Today, Irena is a milker, with mother and daughter Lamancha goats. She serves me their delicious goat's milk and cheese. I have also shared in a feast of goat meat, from their male offspring.

Igor and Irena are producing for their own use and gifts only. Around their table, as we share their bounty, Igor tells me about rose petal jelly and Kombucha tea: old-country recipes, in a young environment. Magic. 🍎



GREAT GUARDS — Lika with livestock guardian dogs Akbash & Luna



TEA SERVICE — Irena pours blackcurrant leaf, raspberry leaf and mint tea, just one of her many traditional treats.



EXTRA SPECIAL — Irena tickles her Lamancha goat's beard.

Hay shortage

If only we could make hay...

By Linda Wegner

In an increasingly active global movement to grow, produce and consume more local food, cost remains a major barrier to many. There may be no question in the customer's mind as to the nutritional value of pesticide-free greens, but the cost for them, compared to the "other" vegetables, is nearly always higher. Be it carrots, apples or beans, in the battle of budget versus belief, budget usually wins. The same principle applies in the meat department — higher prices trump other considerations for the average shopper.

Farmers in the Upper Sunshine Coast know all too well that hay for their livestock is extremely expensive — except they don't have a choice. Herb Gawley, owner of Jumpin' Jodphurs, a tack and

equipment store in Powell River, explained that hay must be brought into the area. "The reason it isn't grown here is that we don't have the weather for it. That's the biggest problem."

Although the region gets sunny weather, moisture from the ocean makes drying hay nearly impossible.

"Mostly there isn't enough time to put it up, dry it and cure it. It takes [at least] four days of turning it and having the sun on it. Any breeze off the chuck is moist and that makes it hard to dry hay," he explained.

Without turning, or "tedding" the hay, farmers risk at least two negative outcomes: mouldy hay or spontaneous combustion.

The latter, Gawley says, has resulted in barns burning down as heat gener-

ated by damp hay eventually causes it to ignite. He explains that salting down the bales prevents the combustion; it does not stop hay from going mouldy.

"There have been times when I've tilled hay four or five times and still can't get it cured. The entire problem is moisture. With cattle a lot of people say you can feed them mouldy hay, and you can, but then there is a good chance of cows aborting their calves. All this means that it is virtually impossible for us to supply our own hay."

With local hay mostly ruled out, farmers rely on having it trucked in from Vancouver Island or the U.S., but mostly, from Keremeos. That's the part that makes it so expensive.

"Truck and trailer fares on the ferries from Horseshoe Bay to Langdale average around \$400. To bring the hay to Powell River means doubling that price since you have to get back to the Lower Mainland. That translates into approximately \$1,000 just for the four hour return ferry ride. That results in \$25 a bale for hay. The cost of freight is killing us," he said. 🍎

Money-saving tip:

Buy or harvest fruits and vegetables in season, when quality is best and prices are low.

Then makes preserves. Canning fruits and vegetables, pickling, or making jams and jellies is rewarding and can help trim the family budget.

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Apple cider press

Fine, fresh, fabulous juice

By Wendy Devlin

Plump, crisp apples overflow the boxes on the floor. More boxes lie outside on the deck. Mark and Jacqueline Huddleston and I roll up our sleeves. It's apple-pressing time!

The use of the heavy-duty apple press is a new experience for us. Earlier this morning, Jacqueline drove to Jan Burnikell's house to pick up the press. We're members of Powell River's Skookum Co-op, after paying a one-time membership of \$20 each. This allows us to rent the press for \$20 for the next 24 hours.

I start cutting up the first box of clean apples and putting them into the opening of the press. Mark grabs the big black wheel and starts turning. Munch, munch! Clear juice drips into the collecting tray below and drains into a stainless bowl on the deck. Back in the kitchen, Jacqueline is washing more apples and sterilizing empty bottles. I brought wine bottles from home, for my share of the cider. She rented cases of one-litre apple juice bottles from Skookum Co-op.

Four hours pass quickly. We entertain each other with jokes and stories, while keeping our hands busy. When the pressing is finished, I pour most of my juice into waiting wine bottles and top each with a rubber cap. This fresh juice will be drunk within the next few weeks at home. Mark and Jacqueline are going to pasteurize their juice for longer-term storage. We both put aside a couple of gallons into larger bottles. These bottles have sugar and wine yeast added to make hard apple cider. This is for drinking at Christmas.

In the meantime, a glass of fresh juice is calling my name. Bottoms up! 🍏

To join the Skookum Co-op visit them online: www.skookumfood.ca, phone 604 485-7940 or email skookum@skookumfood.ca.



Eat your way around Powell River

So many delicious choices

By David Parkinson

Now that summer is here, it's time to really revel in the quantities of delicious food now available in our regional backyard. People in Powell River are justifiably proud of the food they produce, and you can see this in many different ways. For one thing, we really celebrate our food: there's the Lund Shellfish Festival in May, the Spot Prawn Festival in June, Blackberry Festival in August, the Fall Fair in September, and a Local Food Feast in October. What we really need, though, is a Kale Festival sometime during the winter months!

For produce, we have all of our backyard gardens and community gardens, not to mention our farms

and farmers. When the greens, potatoes, peas, carrots, and everything else are in season, we hit up our favourite farm-gates, drop in at the Open Air Farmers' Market on the weekends, or stop by Bernie's Vitamin Express (better known as "the fruit truck") for beautiful fruits and vegetables from the Okanagan, vegetables from local farms, fresh baking, canned goods, and honey. The amount of fruit (and tomatoes) that Bernie sells for home canning is stupendous, and is one of the mainstays of summertime food preparation for Powell Riverites.

Half of the fun of eating your way around Powell River is that it is sometimes a bit of a scavenger hunt. No one person knows where to find everything you might be looking for; but there's someone out there to assist you in your search for just about anything. One person is the expert on making blackberry wine; another person raises honeybees and might let you have some excess honey; another person knows everything you ever wanted to know about Brussels sprouts, and so on. By the time you find what you want, you've made three new friends and finally managed to find a home for those extra zucchini cluttering up your back porch.

Need some fruit? There are a lot of fruit trees which no one is picking from. If you see a tree in your neighbourhood loaded with something you want, go ring the doorbell and offer to pick some of the fruit. You're probably doing the homeowner a favour, you're

helping reduce bear incidents, and you'll be going home with beautiful fruit for canning, freezing, or eating right away.

One good way to connect with the real hardcore foodies — the ones who will share their food-growing secrets or secret canning recipes — is to turn out for the fourth annual Edible Garden Tour on Sunday August 5. This free self-guided tour lets you wander around a bunch of food gardens in the region, where you can find exactly the people who have the inside track on the local food scene. Watch for posters around town as the date draws nearer, or contact the Powell River Food Security Project (fsp@prepsociety.org) to be on the email list. 🍎



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Fun fact

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Opportunities in agriculture

PRREDS encourages new farmers



By Scott Randolph



Powell River is an isolated, ferry-dependent community. Much of our food travels thousands of kilometers before it finally lands on our plate. Some of this is unavoidable, other times, we have a choice.

Powell River literally explodes with food during the summer months. Fresh berries, fruit, veggies, fish, chicken and meat are all available if you know where to find it. That's why *Home Grown*, a publication that focuses on local food and where to find it, is providing a resource where you can learn more about food production in our region.

Powell River Regional Economic Development Society (PRREDS) partners with *Powell River Living* to produce *Home Grown* as this publication helps promote agriculture, an area that has potential for investment and job creation.

One of PRREDS' objectives this year is to encourage new farmers, especially young farmers. This ties in with the work being done by Powell River schools to expose and interest children in farming. As Jay Yule, president of PRREDS, mentioned in his opening message, children are the future, especially when it comes to agriculture and farming.

PRREDS is working to recruit young farmers to the area. We're working on new farm business structures

that may help new, young farmer get into business.

Another project we're working on is the Food Hub concept. PRREDS is working with others to create a business plan and identify potential funding sources.

PRREDS is also working on an objective to access more land and improve availability of land leases. To do this, PRREDS and the Powell River Farmers Institute must identify underutilized or unutilized land, which could be viably brought into agricultural production. As well, we need to identify existing and or new farmers who could make use of productive new land and facilitate sales, leases or community development of land. We're working on developing a database of land for sale or lease along with a list of potential purchasers or lessees and matching the two together.

PRREDS continues to work on the development of a land inventory for the region so that Powell River has a data-base to rely on. As well, we are exploring soil mapping with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands as we are lagging behind most of Vancouver Island in this area.

As demand for local food increases, the need for more farmers becomes more apparent. Local farmers have a difficult time keeping up with demand so we know the market is definitely there. Powell River's moderate climate and affordable land base is appealing to those looking to invest in agricultural lands. Now all we have to do is to encourage them to choose Powell River and start farming! 🍎

Farmers' Institute contributing for almost a century

Since 1915, the Powell River Farmers Institute has supported local agriculture, from Saltery Bay to Lund and Texada Island. They meet about every two months in the Elm Room at the Complex. The Institute is very active in this community.

Every March it hosts Seedy Saturday, a community seed swap and garden fair — last spring, 650 people attended

the one-day event and workshops. The Institute also has working committees like the Seed Bank, Urban Livestock, Meat Regulations, Farm Field Days, Education, 4H, Farmers' Markets and SALSA (Society for the Achievement of Local Sustainable Agriculture).

For more information about local farms and projects, visit their website at www.prfarmers.ca. 🍎



Fun facts • One bushel of corn will sweeten more than 400 cans of pop. There are about 600 kernels on each ear of corn. Farmers grow corn on every continent except Antarctica.

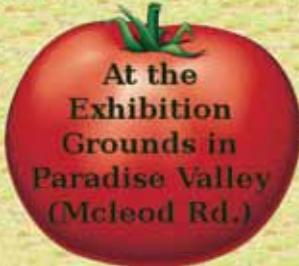
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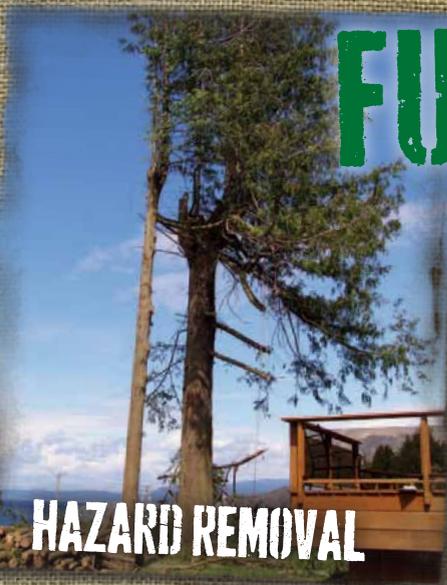
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