

SUMMER 2013

Home Grown



A Powell River Living publication

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on land

Generation Next

Young farmers
stepping up

Edible gardens

More than pretty
flowers

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FARMERS' MARKETS
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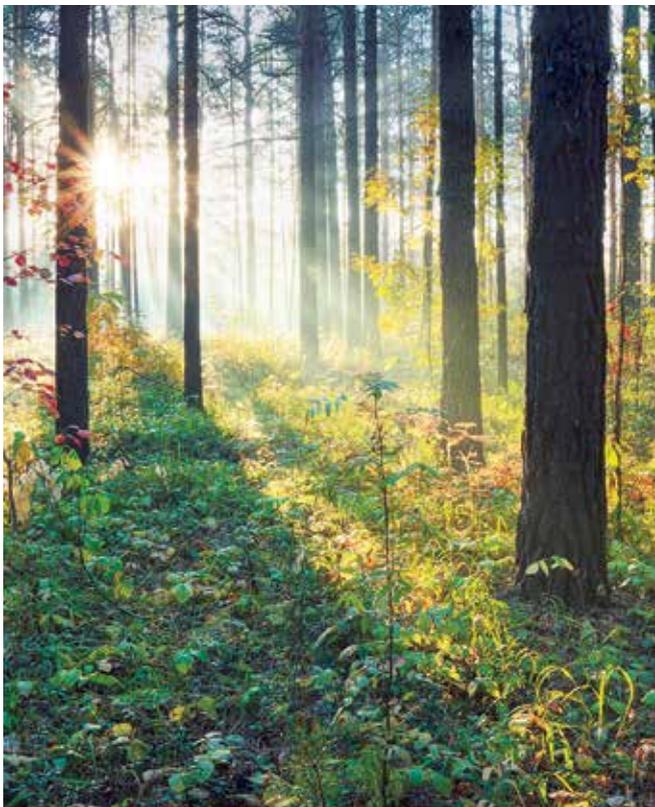
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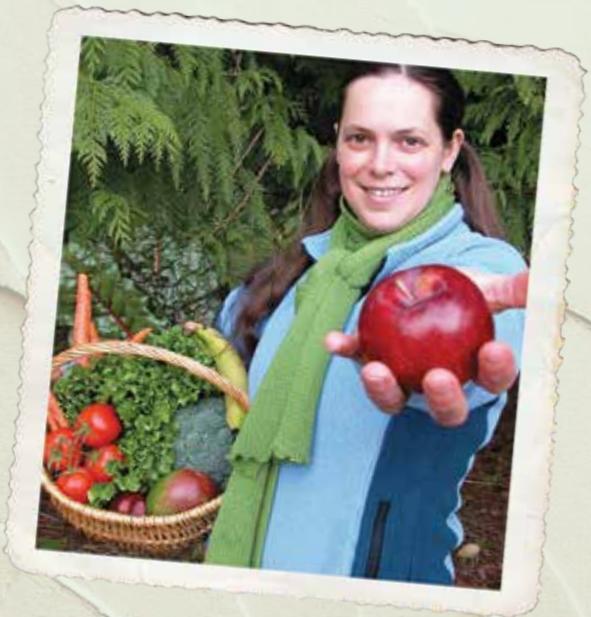
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Welcome

Agriculture and the economy

By Jay Yule, President of PRREDS

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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 Electracote. It's made in Port Alberni with 90% renewable energy. The other half of the pages are Electrabrite 70, which is made on both #9 and #11 paper machines, and is unique to Powell River.

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

ON THE COVER

Awari Dodd holds her favourite chick *Little One*.

Photo by Jennifer Dodd

A new twist on an old saying goes like this: "Keep your friends close and your farmers closer."

There is much to be said for locally grown food by locally grown farmers, and the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society (PRREDS) has focused on revitalizing the agricultural sector. We realize that increasing local agricultural production is good for the economy, and it is what residents want.

But revitalizing a sector of the economy that has been declining for decades doesn't happen overnight. Neither does reclaiming a farm that has been neglected. It takes time to reclaim agricultural lands that have become overgrown and have not been planted for years. Both take time, research, planning and lots of hard work.

Just as people prefer to do business with people they know, people prefer to buy food they trust from people they trust. Both business and agriculture are about building capacity in the local economy.

In 2009, PRREDS released a report on the Economic Development Plan for Agriculture in the Powell River region. At the time, Powell River produced only three per cent of local food. While that figure was disheartening, it also meant there was a huge opportunity to improve.

That report also noted that the potential for increased production is substantial, as there is a large amount of unused land. Goals were identified and an action plan was created.

To date, we've taken action on several items including the full circle farm concept being spearheaded by SALSA (see story on page 21). This teaching farm will show new farmers how to increase production and increase the demand

for local food. Another goal was to strengthen communications within and outside the farming community. We're proud to report that we're continuing to do this by supporting *Home Grown* for a fourth year. Another item, to improve food self-sufficiency, marketing and distribution, is being addressed with the opening of a new market south of town. Increased training and access to resources for farmers and farm labourers is being addressed by Powell River Food Security Project with workshops on everything from winter food growing to composting to canning.

The story about Wolfson Creek Farm on page 25 is an encouraging example of a young family reclaiming agricultural land. And there are other signs of growth. Texada Island, an area steeped in agricultural history, is blossoming. Slow Farm has stepped up production, the Texada Agriculture Group was formed last year, and the Texada Food Hub is moving ahead. What's more, Texada is holding its first Farm Fest this year!

On the Powell River side, PRREDS has been working on the aquatic mall (see story on page 20), which is basically a land-based fish mall where seafood production and research take place.

And finally, PRREDS is completing an inventory of agricultural lands in the region for the purpose of promoting properties available for sale or lease to those that want to farm.

This year's *Home Grown* is a celebration of collaboration and sustainability in agriculture and economic development. It shows what can happen when people work together to increase local food production. 🍎



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Bawk! Bawk! Bawk!

Chickens in the backyard

By Jennifer Dodd

In September 2010, our family registered to take part in the Urban Chicken Project, a test pilot to prove the feasibility of having backyard chickens in residential areas of Powell River. Our four point of lay hens provided us with fresh eggs through the duration of our time with the project.

When the bylaw was accepted this past winter, we decided that we wanted to set up a permanent coop, one that was predator-proof and that we could use to raise our hens from day old chicks. Every summer at the Pacific National Exhibition, I would stand over the bin of day old chicks wishing that one day I would be able to take them



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home. I was excited when I realized I'd soon be able to make my dream a reality!

After researching different heritage breeds on BackyardChickens.com, we decided that we wanted to raise chicks that would give us different shades of eggs. We placed an order with Greendale Heritage Farms in the Lower Mainland and decided on the Black Copper Maran breed for their dark brown eggs, the Lavender Orpington

breed for their beautiful unusual colour, and the Ameraucana cross for their blue eggs.

When our baby chicks arrived, the coop was just about finished being built so we housed our chicks in a brooder until they were ready and feathered to brave the winter weather. There are many different styles of coops, and we decided that we wanted one large enough so that it was easy to clean, and secure enough to withstand any



Hens in the hood: The Dodd family have an interesting variety of laying hens.

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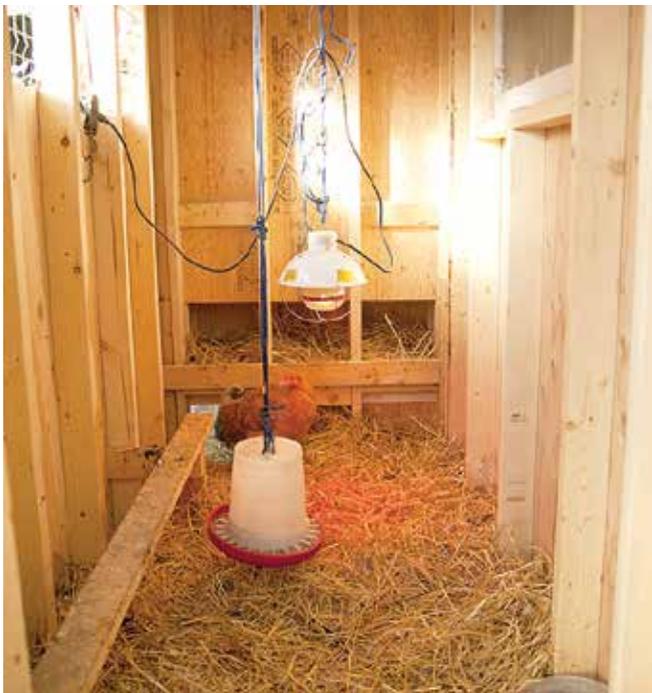
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wandering bears. Our coop is 4' x 8', with a 6 foot slanted roof. Our run is enclosed to keep out raccoons and is 4' x 25' and 8 feet in height. To deter predators, we don't keep feed outdoors, but we have a bin in our house by the back door and only take out what the hens will eat during the day.

Since April, our hens have been laying, and we've enjoyed gathering their eggs daily. Our daughter gives our extra eggs away to family, and we use the old shavings out of their coop in our compost to help boost production of our garden. The chickens eat the pulled weeds from our garden and any leftover fruits and vegetables. They have become a permanent part of our family, and we recommend the experience to anyone who has the ability to provide a safe, secure environment for them. 🍎



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In the garden

Building community, growing food

By Isabelle Southcott

A community garden connects people to the community they live in while they grow food. Last summer, Rhea Zajac invited me to visit Club Bon Accueil's Community Garden to see what members were growing. Everyone was having a wonderful time as they worked away and chatted about what was going on.

It was a successful year. Members of Club Bon Accueil harvested beans, beets, zucchini and chard, all of which they shared. Once inside, the smell of a delicious ratatouille permeated the air and an invitation was extended to share a meal!

There are several community gardens in the Powell River area (see page 22). If you don't have a garden, consider getting involved with a community garden, and get growing! 🍎

GARDENERS ALL!

(L to R) Alice Piché, Lucille Mirlees, John Trepanier; Simone Trepanier, Mariette Roux, Wilfrid Bélanger and Rhea Zajac.





Sunshine Organics

Cash infusion flows to farmers

By Linda Wegner

For Powell River-based Sunshine Organics owner Melissa Call, being awarded a \$100,000 grant from the BC Buy Local program means she can continue to expand her already successful businesses in Powell River and Comox while providing opportunities for local producers to do the same.

"Sunshine Organics has been providing fresh produce to local consumers for more than ten years and we always source our products locally and within B.C. first," she said, explaining the company's direct-to-door food box program. "With funding from the Buy Local Program, we can now connect with more farms in the Comox Valley and the Sunshine Coast to find and offer additional local products. It will also help us raise awareness of our food delivery service and allow us to send our message to more people in the region, which we see as a win for consumers, a win for farmers, and a win for those look-

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ing for increased sustainability in agricultural economic development," she says.

For co-worker, Karin Burnikell, receiving the grant simply means expanding the possibilities for enhanced food security and sustainability.

"I'm happy to be part of making local sustainability happen, with a focus on local economy, health, and of course, lots of yummy food!" Karin added.

Sunshine Organics isn't the only business to benefit; the grant provides a boost that is directed toward benefiting suppliers as well. For example, all suppliers to

the business now can use SunCoast branding, including its logo. Although reaching the goal of greater local food production is still a ways off, local farmers and producers envision the day when increased consumer demand for their products will result in the need for greater and more consistent demand, and ultimately, more farmers.

Melissa has been in business for nearly 11 years and owns three outlets: Powell River Sunshine Organics, Comox Valley Sunshine Organics and, Ecosentials, a shopping outlet in Powell River offering bulk organic foods and environmentally-sensitive cleaning products. 🍎



Spot prawns and salsa

Barb Cooper's winning recipe

Competition was fierce at this year's Spot Prawn Festival as cooks competed in the black box competition.

Not only did Westview Agencies' Barb Cooper win the event but she finished early and was able to help a fellow competitor who was experiencing equipment difficulties!

Home Grown caught up with the winning chef after the competition and asked her to share her prawn and mango salsa recipe and she agreed.

MANGO SALSA

Barb said she chose a salsa because you can add almost any type of fruit and it tastes great. For the *Black Box* competition she used:

Ingredients

- Chopped mango, pineapple, purple onion and red pepper mixed to-

gether in a bowl. Add finely minced ½ jalapeno pepper; adjust for taste

- Add the juice of a fresh lime, pea shoots and ½ cup cilantro
- Mix well and let sit while you cook the prawns.
- Avocado and strawberry are also delicious in this type of salsa.

PRAWNS

Ingredients

- ½ shallot – chopped fine (optional)
- Mixture of Garlic Thai chili sauce (approx 2 tbsp), rice vinegar (approx 1 tsp), fish sauce (approx 1 tsp), lime juice and lime zest (half a fresh lime)
- 1 tbsp sugar (brown or white)
- Pinch of cumin, chili powder and pepper flakes
- ¼ cup Westview Wheat Townsite Brewery beer (optional)



- A dozen prawns, head and shells removed (more if you got them)
- Heat canola oil in frying pan. Sauté shallots until tender. Mix all the remaining ingredients in bowl and add to a hot pan. Stir and flip until prawns are just cooked — a couple of minutes on each side. Just before serving, toss with a bit of cilantro.

Presentation

Pile the salsa in the middle of a large square plate and arranged wonton spoons crisscrossed on the corners with the prawns. Just scoop a bit of salsa onto your spoon and enjoy! 🍷

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Slow farm living

Growing food takes time

By Linda Wegner

The sign on the gate says SLOW FARM but nothing about its owners or the farm's progress can be considered sluggish. For Tom Read and his wife, Linda Bruhn, discovering and reworking the property has been the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream as well as reviving an important part of Texada Island history.

Linda, who worked as marketing manager for UCLA Medical Center, has farm roots in Wisconsin; Tom, who worked for Computer Sciences Corporation and lived in various large cities across the United States, says "in all those places I wanted to have a small farm. It's always been a dream."



LONG FIELD: Tom Read, planting potatoes in April in Slow Farm's long field. They grow six varieties of potatoes, kale, lettuce, corn, beans, peas and more.



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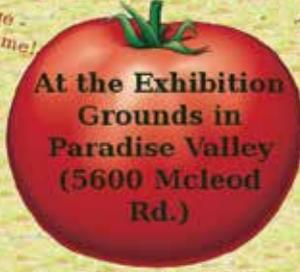
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Up Front Greenhouse is on wheels and moveable; this year's rows of garlic growing in front of it.



Babies get their start in the Starts Greenhouse. Several trays of starts are enjoying a day in the fresh air.

After purchasing the seven-acre property in 1997, the couple moved from California, built their home, cleared land, dug a spring-fed pond to facilitate irrigation, fenced land and in 2011, begin market gardening. An adjoining seven acres parcel, leased from the Texada Island Forest Reserve, enhances their capacity.

"The leased part is a former hay field and the site of a homestead that was founded about one hundred years ago. We had the opportunity to walk around it with a seventy-year-old former owner who had lived there in the 1940s and 50s," Tom recounted.

Depressions from the house and outhouse foundations, a chicken coop constructed from logs and the rotting carcass of an old car can still be seen on the property.

Even the name, SLOW FARM, is part of the island's agricultural history. A group living and farming on Texada during the 1970s had a number of children who played on the road that snaked by their place and someone put

up signs reading *Slow Farm*.

When Tom and Linda moved in, the name was revived and preserved in a steel sign made by a friend. SLOW FARM is now the official corporate name.

The decision to make farming their sole employment hasn't come without major investments of time, money and hard work, but it's beginning to pay off. The couple sell their produce at the Texada Farmers' Market as well as operating a home delivery service. Their customer base has grown even as the farm infrastructure continues to expand. A large greenhouse, built on wheels, allows the structure to be moved, exposing the ground (allowing nature to clean it up) and supporting pest control. Carefully monitored collection of nearby kelp, ready access to limestone and a local supply of manure cuts costs and provides natural fertilizers.

Texada may be small and quiet, but farming is alive and well. 🍎

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More choices than ever

To market, to market to buy a fat pig

By Pieta Woolley

If you're a techie, marketers have you pegged: create a buzz, and let the salivating begin. Just consider, say, the camp-outs the night before Apple released the iPhone 5. I do not hunger for cell phones. They're not my thing. But I do hunger for farmers markets.

So when I moved from downtown Vancouver to Powell River in mid-March, the marketing gurus at the Open Air Market had my number. "Opening April 27," the posters announced — without much detail. It was enough. I'm a sucker for foodie events of all kinds. But I was braced for disappointment. This has been a rough year, for markets, for me.

One night last summer — back when we were still Vancouverites — my husband and I planned to make burgers for dinner. So as I was cruising home from work, I stopped by the farmers' market to pick up a tomato. I had \$3.25 in my pocket.

The heritage tomatoes were gorgeous — orbs of burgundy flesh. Damned if I could find a single tomato for under \$3.25. So, I left tomato-free.

Vancouver's Chinatown Night Market, just a block from our former townhouse, was a favourite destination for my kids. But the tables of plastic toys — all featuring alarmingly loud music — never failed to solicit "I want it" whines.

In the fall, I took an assignment in Central Africa, and, of course, hit the local market. Handmade sea salt and batik cloths lured me. That is, until I discovered the goat abattoir — complete with bleating, river of blood, and swarms of flies — just steps from the meat stall.

Would the Open Air Market also be brutally expensive, I wondered, or filled with plastics, or a little too earthy for this former urbanite?

I don't know if you realize this, Powell River, but you might have the BEST MARKET IN THE ENTIRE WORLD here. In the mist on opening day, the clear awesomeness laid itself out before me in the grass. The bandstand. The train. The \$2 tomato plants. The salty caramels. The bright pink rhubarb and hunter- green chard. And, the casual chat, chat, chat.

I posted a few pics of the market on my Facebook page. One friend wrote, "OK, the more I hear about your new home, the more I want to move there!"

Well, yes. But don't overcrowd my market, please. I don't want to battle an iPhone-like line-up to secure my carrot fix. 🍅





FOUR LOCAL MARKETS

Open Air Farmers' Market

The 26th season of this market runs from April through October at the Exhibition Grounds in Paradise Valley. Market hours are Saturdays 10:30 am – 12:30 pm and Sundays 12:30 – 2:30 pm.

The market offers a wide variety of local fruits and veggies, meat, eggs, bedding plants, cut-flowers, hot food, country baking, candy, honey, teas, kombucha, soaps, knits, wood-crafts, and ceramics. Plus, on Sundays, the miniature train at \$2 per ride.

Lund Co-op

We're hoping that the Lund market kicks off this summer, but at press time, we didn't have confirmation. Usually, it runs Friday nights by the water taxi. It offers produce, eggs, honey, and more.

Texada Island Farmers' Market

At the ball field in Gillies Bay, the pick of the island is available Sundays from noon 'til 1:30, through Thanksgiving. Between four and eight vendors sell Texada-grown produce. Plus, another dozen or more vendors sell baking, crafts, preserves, jewellery and clothes. Lunch is available. Come for Farm Fest on August 25 (see page 28).

Kelly Creek Garden Market

This is Kelly Creek's first year — it's small, but packed with goodies. Friday nights, from 5 – 8 pm, shop for fresh produce from the south-of-town farms, plants, baking, barbeque and other treats. Also indulge in massage or henna tattoos, while the kids entertain themselves at the playground. Enjoy live bands from 5 to 7 pm, and an open mike after that. On Zilinsky Road across from the school.



Remember the
Mother Goose rhyme
that went like this?

To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,
Home again, home again, dancing a jig;
To market, to market, to buy a fat hog;
Home again, home again, jiggety-jog.



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Wolfson Creek Farm (2)

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10084 Nassichuk Road
coastberrycompany.com
Growing strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and vegetables. Stop by the country store for coffee and baked goods, too.

Dohmann Enterprises

604 485-5503 fitz.rae@shaw.ca
Honey and bee pollen

Creekside Farm (4)

Alan and Kathy Rebane
7812 Valley Road 604-485-7737
facebook.com/ValleyRoadVendors
Offering free range eggs, broilers, Berkshire pork, beef and some produce.

Emmonds Beach Farm (5)

604 483 9766
Basil, parsley, corn, tomatoes, zucchini, winter squash, spinach, kale, beets, peas, potatoes, onions, lettuce, beans and carrots.

Eternal Seed Garden Centre (14)

Gary & Ellen de Casmaker
2309 Zilinsky Rd (at Hwy 101)
(604) 487-1304
edecas@travel-net.com
www.eternalseed.ca
From our greenhouse nursery we offer annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees and ornamental garden products in addition to plant starts grown from our own line of locally grown heirloom seed including many organic varieties.

Glade Farm (6)

Wendy Devlin 6834 Smarge Avenue, Wildwood
604 483-9268 wenmex@shaw.ca
Interested in raising fresh eggs, meat, milk, vegetable, fruits, seeds and herbs? Wendy offers gardening, animal husbandry, food classed for individuals and groups.

Hatch-a-Bird Farm (7)

Helena & Peter Bird
6603 McMahan Avenue
Organic vegetables, eggs and limited meat products

Honeysuckle Farm

Texada
604 486-7686
Beef, lamb, eggs, chicken, goats, hay

Little Wing Farm

604 414-0383
littlewingoyster.blogspot.com
littlewingfarm@telus.net
Heritage breed chickens, eggs, greens, honey.

Mayana Adar Family Farm (8)

The de Villiers family
Paradise Valley 604 489-0046
ingriddevilliers@shaw.ca
Organic fed, free range, soy free eggs, lacto-fermented dairy products, organic fed, free range, soy free chickens and lamb. Local chapter leaders for the Weston A Price Foundation, supporter of organic and community farms.

Morrison Farms

6619 Sutherland Avenue 604 483-8939
Productive farm on a single acre in Wildwood. A focus on biodynamic farming. Don and Audrey sell at the farmer's market all year long. Wide variety of produce, specializing in garlic, tomatoes, and carrots. Berries and seasonal fruit.

Mr Kristensen's Farmgate (9)

9269 Kristensen Road 604 487-9187
Monday - Saturday 10-noon and 1:30-5 June thru Nov. Pumpkins, potatoes, peas, beans, beets, carrots, onions, broccoli, squash, corn, blueberries and more.

Myrtle Point Heritage Farm

8679 Gaudet Road 604-487-0501
myrtlepointfarm@gmail.com
Bringing the traditional basics back to farming, with heritage breeds (pigs, chicken & goats), and heirloom produce. Free-range eggs, seasonal produce, Berkshire pork, heritage turkeys, organic goat milk soap.

Nailer's Nursery

Linda Nailer
9306 Malaspina Road (corner of Lund Hwy)
604 483-2488, May through July
Bedding plants, perennials, vegetables, hanging baskets, patio pots, custom orders and gift certificates.

One Tree Farm

Wilma and Matt Duggan
3527 Padgett Rd 604-485-3956
wilmaandmatt@shaw.ca or Facebook Wilma Duggan
Organic fed free range eggs, pastured organic fed broiler chickens, grass fed chevon (goat meat), blueberries, long english cucs

Periwinkle Granary & Pasta

Fran & Simon Cudworth
604 483-6516 periwinklepasta@gmail.com
www.lifeatperiwinkle.blogspot.com
Fresh milled organic flours and mixes, multi-grain pasta, wholesome goodness, farm fresh taste including our popular best selling ravioli.

NIMH Farm (10)

Roly & Cindy Demeester
Corner of Donkersley Rd. & Hwy 101 South
604 487-0445
Farm gate sales for organic eggs year round and organic produce in season. Limited orders for chicken, rabbit, duck and goat.

Pacific Ambition Seafoods (15)

Doug and Christine Mavin
3128 Padgett Rd. 604 485-3522
pacificambition.com
Local Commercial Fisherman, Doug Mavin serves up freshly caught Halibut, Ling-Cod, Snapper, Sockeye, Crab & Prawns. Watch your fish come aboard at www.pacificambition.com

P.K. Farming

Peter Kantymir
7445 Southview Road
604 483-9686 cedar-grove@shaw.ca
Lambs and meat birds.

Roger and Kathy Hodgins (11)

7819 Valley Road 604 485-7025
facebook.com/HodginsFarms
holidayfarm@shaw.ca
Horse and cattle hay, potatoes, corn, tomatoes, peppers and pumpkins.



Worms bin composting

Turning scraps into castings

By Inger-Lise Burns

Dig into any mound of earth, and you're likely to find a wriggling worm on the hunt for its next meal. Worms are also particularly fond of kitchen scraps and can thrive on a regular diet of these. Instead of tossing your organics into the landfill where they'll create toxic greenhouse gases, you could be reclaiming this natural resource and turning it into a nutrient rich soil amendment by using a worm bin composter.

Worm bins, also called vermicomposters, are essentially containers, preferably made of a



natural material like wood, filled with a medium that worms like to squirm about in. Carol Engram, a local worm composting expert, likes to mix decaying leaves, coffee grinds, horse manure and shredded newspaper together for her worm bedding. Once combined, she simply digs her kitchen scraps into one corner of the bin, closes the cover and lets the worms do their magic.

Organics that have passed through a worm's body are transformed into worm castings, or worm manure. Soil treated with worm castings is better aerated, can retain more moisture, is less susceptible to disease and attacks by garden pests, and contains higher levels of beneficial microorganisms and plant nutrients. Worm bins also produce worm tea, the liquid that leaches out through holes drilled through the bottom of a worm bin system. Once collected, this tea can be diluted with water and sprayed directly on leaves, where it is quickly put to use by a plant.

When properly maintained, a worm bin will have a pleasant, earthy scent, and will be able to break down

Learn about composting



The Powell River Regional District's **Let's Talk Trash team** wants to support you in your search for the right composting system for your lifestyle.

Whether you are an apartment dweller, have mobility constraints, live in bear territory or are without much time to dedicate to maintenance, we are confident you can find a method that is right for you.

Come visit our **Compost Education Center** (in the gardens behind the Community Resource Center at 4752 Joyce Ave) for a self-guided tour of our seven different composters. We are demonstrating: a worm bin; 3-bin system; Critter Proof composter; converted Freezer composter; Jora bin; Speedibin and the Green Cone.

We host **two free workshops every month** throughout the spring and summer where local experts are happy to answer your composting questions.

Get updates on our workshops and learn more about composting on our website - letstalktrashpr.com or email us at letstalktrashteam@gmail.com

and find us on **Facebook**



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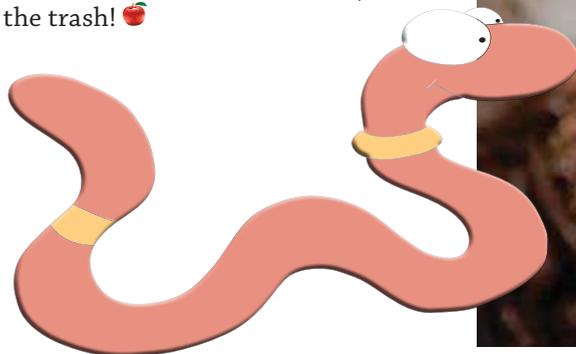
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not only your fruit and vegetable leftovers, but also bits of cheese and meat. To speed up the process and help out your toothless worms, cut up your organics before adding them. Worm bins can function well inside, making them ideal for an apartment or outside in our mild west coast climate.

To learn more about this inspiring method of composting, Carol Engram invites you to join her on Saturdays from 3 – 5 pm in Wildwood at Red Door U Grow 604 485-2311 for free hands-on work with worms. You can also check the Let's Talk Trash team's website letstalktrashpr.com for our next free worm bin composting workshop and for our helpful online composting resources. You'll soon find that making this nutrient rich soil amendment is as easy as taking out the trash! 🍎



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- a) Garden
- b) Feed chickens
- c) Eat dinner
- d) Process accounts payable

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Aquatic mall

Growing seafood on land

Powell River could soon be home to a multi-million dollar “fish mall.”

With more seafood coming from farms, land-based aquaculture is an emerging sector, and some Powell Riverites hope to make the Townsite’s former golf course a centre for seafood production and research.

“In the future, Powell River could have an aquatic park that houses tanks for finfish, shellfish and vegetation,” says Mayor Dave Formosa.

He’s anxious to put to use the Powell River/Sliammon/Catalyst (PRSC) Limited Partnership lands.

Just over a year ago, the mayor spoke with Bill Vernon, who is retired from the aquaculture industry, about the need to promote Powell River and rejuvenate the economy. “Bill knew about the PRSC lands and about land-based aquaculture parks.”

Bill, who spent 30 years working in the aquaculture industry, and the mayor, soon realized this was an idea worth pursuing.

Just what is an aquatic park?

“Think of it as an auto mall,” says Dave. “You can have all different species of fish and shellfish to experimental centres of excellence.”

Aquatic malls are not new. They’ve been around for decades but now more and more attempts are being made to grow food on land. Shellfish, fin fish, macro and micro algae, seaweed, kelp, sea cucumbers and small organisms on which shellfish feed are growing in malls all over the world — like the one that Bill and Dave envision.

An aquatic mall is structured like a regular mall. The mall owner holds the assets and attracts tenants who use the unique complement of natural and logistical resources.

“Powell River has fresh water, salt water and electricity,” says Bill. “It’s

perfect. The paper mill has surplus energy, it sits adjacent to salt water and it has a huge fresh water supply that is dammed up.”

The mayor spoke with city council about possibilities and opportunities and then arranged for Bill, now a consultant for the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society, to meet with Stan Westby, the City’s former CAO and Scott Randolph, Manager of Powell River Regional Economic Development Society (PRREDS). The PRSC partners discussed the idea, followed by a presentation to Council, Chief Clint Williams and members of the Sliammon Development Corporation. “From there, we rolled out a land-based aquaculture plan,” said the Mayor.

Reduce risks

Land based aquaculture is an emerging sector. When aquaculture is grown on land, you reduce business risks, such as the spread of disease from wild to farmed animals, oceanographic conditions such as toxic plankton, and weather and predators. The set-up also reduces environmental concerns, such as spreading disease to wild stocks. That latter reason has earned land-based aquaculture broad approval among environmentalists. “You can manage the environment they are growing in because you can control it,” says Bill. “This means you can manage your inventory and the size of your fish through various tanks,” said Bill.

Investment

Building an aquatic park is a no small potatoes. Salmon requires a capital investment of \$8 to \$10 million, says Bill. But he believes there’s an appetite for it.

“Asians are particularly interested in food production these days.

They’ve been busy buying land in order to secure their food supply. And, they really like the contained system, too.”

Different uses

The opportunities are endless. There is potential for both the nutraceutical (dietary supplements) and the pharmaceutical (medical drugs) industries. Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) is a government agency that operates a unique and innovative ocean science and technology park.

For a park to be successful, you need to have several compatible businesses. Synergies also exist between different aquatic species where waste can be captured from one system and used to supplement feed for another species.

“We’ve made presentations to a number of companies,” says Scott. “The next step is to get letters of intent in place so we have enough companies that want to be part of this development.”

Good jobs

This is a big development. Investors would inject \$2 to \$30 million each. The mall would create an estimated 100 to 200 highly skilled, well-paying jobs.

“There’s so much synergy there with Catalyst right next door,” says Bill.

Scott says there’s tremendous value in being able to take an industrial site and its services and use it to help create new food production. “It’s an amazing relationship.”

Most recently Mayor Formosa, Chief Williams, Bill Vernon, Scott Randolph, City CAO Mac Fraser, and Councillor’s Debbie Dee and Chris McNaughton met with MP John Weston to forward the idea of the Federal Government designating the aquatic park project as a Centre of Excellence for Closed Containment Salmon Aquaculture. Weston is a sitting member of the Federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which recently released a report on closed containment salmon aquaculture that has recommended the creation of a centre of excellence for the industry. 🍅

More food, more demand for food

Full Circle Farm

By Linda Wegner

A new 'teaching farm' will be sprouting up soon — perhaps across from the Italian Cultural Centre in Wildwood.

It's a project of the Society for the Advancement of Local Sustainable Agriculture (SALSA), which is an off-shoot of the Powell River Farmers' Institute. The goal of Full Circle Farm is twofold. First, show new farmers how to produce more fruit, vegetables, and meat. Second, help increase demand for local food.

Currently, local food represents one in every 50 mouthfuls of Powell River food. The potential farm capacity is one in five — if the demand is there to support it.

The farm has been in the works since 2008. Worried that new meat regulations might hurt small farms, SALSA members decided to create the Full Circle Farm model. According to Helena Bird of Hatch-A-Bird Farms, as the idea of a teaching farm began to take shape, the group realized there had to be organizational changes, as well. In 2009, the farm became a stand-alone society.

With the assistance of the Model Community Project and the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society (PRREDS), a basic business plan was created for presentation to the City of Powell River, the Powell River Regional District and PRREDS.

"We realized we weren't going to advance to the next step in building agriculture without the Full Circle Farm... and if we were going to go forward we needed to present it as a viable business for Powell River," said lawyer Paul Schachter.

"Full Circle Farm will be on the same business footing as every other farm; if it cannot compete in the business world, it will not succeed. We're teaching young farmers about business practices as well as farming practices," Paul emphasized.

Though the project is not without its challenges, there's an educated excitement that acknowledges the tough times but celebrates the possibilities. 🍎



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Helping hands

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Local organizations to help you find local food or grow your own.



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

4880 Manson Avenue
Pastor Ernie Dunning • 604 485-7106

Kelly Creek Community Garden

2380 Zillinsky Road
(beside, but not associated with the church)
Ruth Perfitt • 604 487-4357
Contact rperfitt@shaw.ca to get a plot.
Open to the public. Greenhouse and tool shed available.

Sliammon Community Garden

Tla'Amin 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 fifth annual Edible Garden Tour on Sunday, August 4 at various locations. David Parkinson • 604 485-2004 or fsp@prepsociety.org



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 Parkinson 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

Kelly Creek Garden Market

Fridays 5 – 8 pm at 2380 Zilinsky Road
Ruth Perfitt • 604 487-4357 or rperfitt@shaw.ca
Music, crafts and lots of locally grown food, from berries to starter plants to eggs and including ever-popular fresh-baked bread. Fries and burgers and more. Bands play from 5-7, then open mic starts at 7.

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 • Helena Bird at 604 483-9546
V-P • Wendy Devlin at 604 483-9268 or wd2006@shaw.ca

Powell River Fall Fair

At the Paradise Valley Exhibition Grounds Saturday, September 21 and Sunday, September 22. Noon to 5 pm.

Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative

4486 Marine Ave, 604 485-7940
Building a diverse local food economy by helping our members acquire and share the knowledge, skills and resources they need in order to grow, gather, catch, raise, preserve, process, prepare and share the bounty.
www.skookumfood.ca

Texada Island Farmers Market

Ballfield, Gillies Bay, Sundays noon – 1:30 pm
Linda Bruhn at 604 483-1471.
Fresh produce, a variety of freshly baked goods, fruit, preserves, jams, woodwork and jewellery. Local artisans' work is also for sale. 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
Tom Read, president
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.



Eat what you grow Garden Tour

By David Parkinson



One of the many local gardens on the Edible Garden Tour featuring formidable quality and variety.

We live in a region conscious about the importance of growing food on the small scale. Our farms may be small, but our residential lots tend to be big, and many people are growing food in their backyards, front yards, and all kinds of other places. The Fifth Annual Edible Garden Tour is a great way to spend a day exploring some of Powell River's food gardens, unearthing secrets, and generally snooping in a socially acceptable way. It all happens on Sunday August 4 and it kicks off 50 days of the 50-Mile Eat-Local Challenge. The tour is self-guided and payment is entirely by donation, with the money going to support other local food-related projects.

This year there will be about ten gardens to visit: half in the morning and half in the afternoon. As we go to press, the organizers are contacting food gardeners and will choose a set of gardens that show a wide range of conditions and techniques. One of the main aims of the Edible Garden Tour is to showcase gardens that may not be perfectly organized and well manicured, but which show what ordinary people can do, even with the challenges that many gardeners face. In the past, we've had first-year gardens, a garden, which was entirely wheelchair-accessible, gardens belonging to elderly people with reduced mobility, a zero-budget garden, and a few which showed what a tenacious urban grower can do in a very small space. We've had gardens deep in the forest, right on the seashore, on typical city lots, messy gardens and neat-as-a-pin gardens. If you come out this year, you'll definitely be bowled over by the creativity and determination of our local food growers.

A collaborative project of Transition Town Powell River and the Powell River Food Security Project, with support from the Powell River Literacy Council, the Edible Garden Tour in its four previous years has opened up 44 local gardens to the public. One thing we've noticed so far is that of course the garden visitors learn a huge amount by touring the gardens and asking questions; but at the same time the people whose gardens are on display also learn a great deal from the visitors. It's a day-long festival of informal education in the garden... and it's a lot of fun.

But wait, there's more! The wonderful Master Gardeners will be on hand in a couple of the gardens to help you with all of your gardening questions. We'll have the Food Literacy Treasure Hunt again: there will be clues in the guidebook and you have to find the answers in each of the gardens. We will have stamps in each of the gardens also, so you can keep track of the gardens you have seen. The whole event is family-friendly and a great way to visit some of the most interesting places in the region: places where people are redefining how we think about (and grow) local food.

Powell River Food Security will be making the guidebook available for download a couple of weeks before the tour, so be sure to check in at prfoodsecurity.org or contact them at 604 485-2004 or fsp@presociety.org for more information. 🍎

Texada community commercial kitchen

Can't can? By 2014, you can can

When the first settlers came to Texada Island in the 1800s they knew how to be self-sufficient. After all, they didn't have grocery stores nearby where they could buy bananas, lettuce, meat and fish. These people grew vegetables, ate berries off the land, hunted, fished and knew how to preserve food. If they didn't, they wouldn't survive.

Many of us don't know how to can, flash freeze, and ferment or dehydrate food. In just a few generations, the art of food preservation has been slowly disappearing as we become more dependent on grocery stores for our food.

But in recent years, the local food movement has been gaining momentum. With an increased focus on self-sufficiency and local food, more Texada Islanders and Powell Riverites have shifted their focus to growing and purchasing food grown closer to where they live.

"We want to grow the food and farming sector of our community," says Texada Island Agriculture Group (TAG) president Tom Read. "It's not feasible for Texada people to go to Powell River for everything."

This is why a new food hub is being built on Texada.

This food hub will support Texada entrepreneurs who can't afford their own commercial kitchen, bring together a community of people interested in food preservation and support the community by having better food security. And it is expected to be open by the spring of 2014.

"We'll use this facility for workshops," says Tom, "and the equipment will be available here to do that."

He's excited about the many benefits of this new initiative.



"By allowing locals to make locally prepared food in a commercial kitchen, it can be donated to the food bank."

Planning of the Texada Food Hub got underway in 2012 after the Powell River Regional Economic Development Society, the Texada Chamber of Commerce and the Regional District published the Texada Island Economic Development Action Plan.

"A section of that plan was about local agriculture and one of the recommendations was to form a local society dedicated to local food and agriculture," says Tom.

TAG was created in 2012. "It was started by people interested in farming and value added food products," he says.

After TAG was formed, members decided that they wanted to create a value added food processing facility.

"We have been very fortunate to have the support of PRREDS through Scott [Randolph] and Jennifer [Salisbury]," says Tom.

School District 47 is also one of the key players in this initiative. They've donated three rooms of Texada Island Elementary School to the food hub. "The education and training aspect of this is important," says Tom. "We don't have details on how we will implement the educational program yet but we expect it will be implemented next year. We have been getting a lot of support from Julie Akre with the Parent Advisory Committee and from principal Rhonda Gordon."

The opportunities are exciting. "We can explore how to be better food entrepreneurs, how to prepare food for home use, what children in school need to know about food and food preparation and wild crafting."

Another upside of the Food Hub is self-sufficiency. "In the event of a crisis that disrupts food delivery, we hope this facility can be used to help feed people."

Discussions are already underway with Texada's emergency preparedness program about how the two groups would work together in the case of an emergency.

Plans call for the food hub to be built this winter and up and running by early spring. Of course they still need to do more fundraising and receive approval from the appropriate agencies but everything is looking positive. Grants have been provided by the Regional District, First Credit Union and the Texada Recreation Committee so far and they expect to receive money from Texada Island Community Society too! 🍅

Wolfson Creek Farm

Feisty new farm generation steps up

By David Parkinson



A farming family: Patches, Tera and Jaden Demeester, with some of their 70-head herd of Dexter cattle in the background.

David Parkinson photo

It's commonplace knowledge that the average age of farmers continues to climb, as farmers grow older and retire, few younger people replace them. At the same time, we all recognize the need for more farms, more farmers, and more food produced closer to where we eat it. Luckily there are many hopeful signs that former farmland in this region is coming back under cultivation and that younger people are stepping up to do the hard work of reclaiming our local agricultural heritage. One good example is Wolfson

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THINK LOCAL, SHOP LOCAL



Wolfson Creek farm raises lambs and cattle, adding even more variety to 50-mile, eat local strategy.

Creek Farm, located at the end of Kelly Creek Road on the edge of Lang Creek (formerly known as Wolfson Creek).

Patches and Tera Demeester, along with their two children Jaden and Dominic, are currently renting this 15-acre property along with an adjoining 12-acre piece and developing a complete working mixed farm. They have pigs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, goats, and sheep, as well as the start of a market garden and seed-saving operation. But the centerpiece of their farm is their herd of Dexter cattle, currently (at about 70 head) the largest cattle herd in the region. Patches explains, as we walk out to the pasture where the herd is grazing, that these small cows are ideally suited to our local conditions. Originally from Ireland, they are well adapted to wet conditions; they are calm and docile and they are considerably smaller than traditional breeds such as Herefords. Not only that, but they will happily browse on blackberry vines, alder shoots, and wild plants that other breeds won't touch.

Dexters are a dual-purpose breed, meaning that they are well suited to producing both meat or milk, unlike other breeds, which have been developed for one purpose or the other. In fact, as Patches points out, they are potentially a three-purpose breed, since they can also be harnessed and used as draft animals. Tera and Patches already have plans for breeding, anticipating a growing demand for locally raised Dexters. They have put together their herd by bringing cows in from the Lower Mainland and from Alberta, but are already helping others start up herds.

And they have been busy making good connections to other farmers; some are making pasture available to some of their herd, and others have helped this new farm with loans of equipment and volunteer labour. The work of recovering a farm fallen into disrepair is enormous, but the Demeesters have nothing but praise for the cooperation and assistance they've received from older farmers.

"Even though they could see us as the competition," Patches tells me, "they have been completely supportive."

Now armed with a shiny new Class D slaughter license, which allows them to sell through their farm gate, at local markets, as well as retail and through restaurants, this small but feisty farm has big plans. The Demeesters are

Now armed with a shiny new
Class D slaughter license... this
small but feisty farm has big plans.

very aware of the need for greater food security in the region and are ambitious in supplying the ever-growing demand for local and sustainably raised food. They are excited to have local butcher shop The Chopping Block carrying their meat, and they make it clear to me that they see no reason why the summer should pass by without everyone getting some local hamburgers or hot dogs. Ultimately, they tell me, one of their ambitions is to open a dairy in the region, something that has been lacking for quite a number of years.

As with all farms, there are challenges to deal with. For Wolfson Creek Farm, the next big hurdle is to buy the main property they're farming — the one with the farmhouse and barn. They are also talking about advocating for what they call "FFF" or Free Ferries for Farmers. As Tera explains, "If farmers were able to transport farm supplies without paying the excessive ferry fares, we could come much closer to providing our customers with local food at prices much closer to grocery store prices."

I come away from my visit feeling inspired and even more hopeful for the future of farming in Powell River. 🍎

Crazy Critters

Kids learn farming skills

By David Parkinson

Few things show the vitality of an agricultural community as much as the extent to which young people are learning traditional farming skills from experienced farmers. So it's a good sign that Powell River once again has an active 4-H Small Animal Club. Every other week, seven young people get together with their club leaders to learn about caring for different types of small animals and to practice the skills that will give them self-confidence in public speaking and critical thinking. All of them, except one, are new to membership in 4-H, an organization that has been supporting young people in farming communities by training them in skills that will help them become better citizens and farmers.

Club leaders Kathy Rebane and Kathy Hodgins are farmers, neighbours, and members of the Powell River Farmers' Institute who responded to the call to resuscitate the Small Animal Club, now known as "Crazy Critters." They were soon joined by Joshua Rogers, another club leader. Both Joshua and Kathy Hodgins have previous 4-H experience: Kathy was a club leader with the horse club and Joshua grew up in 4-H. Meanwhile Kathy Rebane, who is new to 4-H, is fast learning what it takes to lead a club.



Powell River's 4-H animal club is alive and well. Here members Katie Indrebo, Breanna Mcleod, Emma Indrebo and Sarah Shelton show off their rabbits.



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As for the young members of the club: they are full of energy and passionate about their animals. The 4-H motto is "Learn to do by doing," and these young people are certainly doing a lot. I visited them on two occasions, once when they were learning about chickens and another time when they each had a baby rabbit to hold. Most of them are farm kids or have relatives with farms, and all of them have some kind of animals to care for at home, whether rabbits, chickens, or guinea pigs (cavies). The Crazy Critters club teaches them about safe and humane handling of animals and also about the finer points of raising animals. And their enthusiasm is contagious! These meetings are full of laughter and high spirits, and somehow through it all the adult team leaders manage to introduce the element of education into the excitement.

But it's much more than learning about animals. Club members learn how to run a meeting, how to present themselves in public, how to speak and deliver information, and how to develop a critical eye by judging. At one of the meetings I attended, we all had a chance to judge the relative merits of tape measures, cooling racks, and horse hoof picks — so that the members could practice thinking clearly and expressing those thoughts. In June, some of them travelled to Courtenay for a judging rally where they judged beef cattle, goats, rabbits, hay, quilting, and sewing. And the club has participated in a

regional public speaking competition in Port Alberni and has prepared educational displays and submitted them to a competition hosted by the South Malahat 4-H Club on Vancouver Island.

Not only that, but the club is organizing a petting zoo at the Open Air Market on the first Sunday of every month. They'll be bringing some of their own animals from home and borrowing others from local farms, and using the petting zoo as a way to spread the word about the club and to raise money to support future activities and outings. And Crazy Critters has an account at Augusta Recycling, so supporters can take bottles and cans and direct the proceeds to the club. All of these fundraising efforts are directed towards keeping the Crazy Critters Club thriving, and will allow the club members to show their animals at the Coombs and Comox Valley Agricultural Fairs this summer — and maybe even at the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver.

There's a lot of growing interest in farms, farming, and all things agricultural in the Powell River area and one of the keys to creating a healthy agricultural scene is to get young people involved as early as possible. If you want to know more about the Crazy Critters club or any other opportunities for getting involved with 4-H, you may visit their booth at the Fall Fair in September, or contact Maureen Venables at 604 485-4534. 🍎



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Ag history and fresh fruit

Texada Island Farm Fest

Mark this date: Sunday, August 25 and plan to attend Texada Island's very first Farm Fest in the ball field area of Gillies Bay.

Farm Fest is all about celebrating local food and organizers are planning a fabulous festival!

Supported by the Texada Heritage Commission, Farm Fest will bring together both the past and present in local agriculture. "They [the heritage commission] will provide a display and interpretation of Texada's agriculture history," says Tom Read, President of Texada Agriculture Society (TAG). Expect a bounty of locally-grown produce available for sale, too.

Farm Fest runs from 1 to 5 pm and is being held in conjunction with the third annual Run the Rock marathon and half-marathon.

Runners get to participate in Farm Fest after the marathon, says Tom. "This is a family oriented event. We invite folks from Powell River to come over to take part in the fun and games." 🍎

Eat local!

The 50-Mile Challenge

By David Parkinson

Seven years ago, in 2006, when Lyn Adamson started the 50-Mile Eat-Local Challenge, who would have predicted how big the local food scene in Powell River was going to become? At that time, it was still a novel idea to spend some part of the year focusing intently on food from nearby and exploring the limits of eating according to the seasons and the foods that local conditions make available. Now, seven years later, these ideas are not so strange; in fact, they are becoming more and more mainstream. Here in Powell River, there is steady interest in year-round gardening, more people are rediscovering traditional methods of preserving food for storage, and it is clear that some kind of invasion of younger farmers and permaculturists is underway.

This year, besides the Open Market on Saturdays and Sundays at the Paradise Exhibition Grounds, there is a new market south of town on Friday evenings. Our grocery stores carry a fair selection of foods from our region and from Vancouver Island. The Chopping Block is carrying local meat from Wolfson Creek Farm and bread from the Cottage Creek Bake Shop. Ecossentials on Marine Avenue sells fresh produce from local growers and wild food gatherers, and the list goes on and on. Many restaurants put fresh local ingredients on their menus during the summer, so be sure to ask them about the local food options when you go out to eat.

Of course, the best way to get your hands on local food is to talk to your neighbours; talk to the people growing the produce at the markets; talk to the chefs and grocers. Are you seeing fruit trees laden with ripe

fruit but no one is picking them? Take a bucket and go ask if you can help pick the tree. Maybe you can swap some of your excess lettuce for someone else's peas. Or you can exchange some of your Italian plums for jam-making lessons. The best part of the riot of fresh local food during the summertime is that things move quickly from one week to the next and there is scarcely a moment to slow down. Everything is at its peak, packed with flavour.

We're lucky to live in a part of the world where the growing season can, with some cleverness, be extended pretty much year-round. We have fruits, vegetables, wonderful seafood, wild foods, an ever-growing agricultural sector, markets and restaurants, and broad-based demand for a strong regional food scene. Back before there was regular ferry service, this region provided a great deal of the food consumed here, so we know that we have the potential to produce much more food than we currently do. Every person who plants a new garden, who asks the grocery store to stock produce from our farmers, who shops at one of our farmers' markets, or who tries a new seasonal recipe, contributes to the revival of the regional food economy.

This year, the 50-Mile Eat-Local Challenge will run for 50 days, from Sunday August 4 (the Edible Garden Tour) until the second day of the Fall Fair on Sunday September 22. During that time, the Powell River Food Security Project will be sending out emails and inviting feedback, recipes, and other tips on eating local. To get connected, visit prfoodsecurity.org, or contact David Parkinson at 604 485-2004. 🍎



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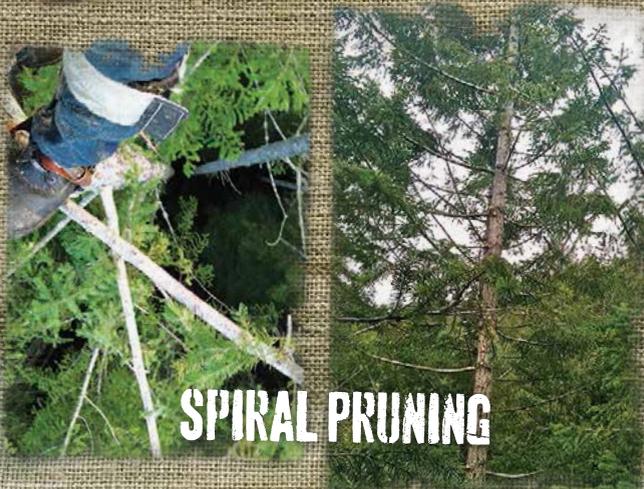
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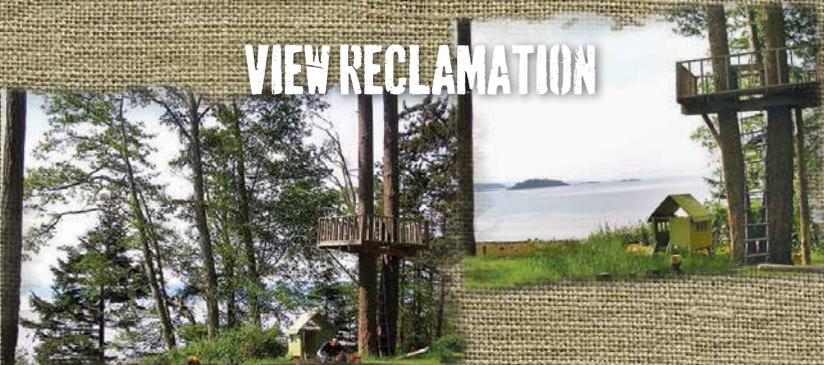


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