

# CONCRETE GARDEN

SUSTAINABLE // URBAN // AGRICULTURE

WINTER • 2018



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CONCRETE GARDEN IS DEDICATED TO  
DECOLONIZING AGRICULTURE AND FOOD  
COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT OUR WORK.  
WE HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS MAGAZINE  
IS PRODUCED ON THE UNCEDED TERRITORIES  
OF THE COAST SALISH – THE LEKWUNGEN  
AND WSÁNEĆ PEOPLES.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

WINTER CAN BE TOUGH. THE DAYS ARE SHORT, THE NIGHTS ARE long, and the holidays are challenging for some people. But it's also a time to rest and restore before the bustle picks back up in the spring. We've tried to fill this issue with warmth, good stories, and tips to keep you active while it's chilly outside, and I'm especially pleased to share the winner of our winter writing contest, "Caldo Verde: A tale of green soup," by Kellie Wylie. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

While I'm excited to bring another stellar issue into the world, I'm also sad to say that this will be my last issue with the magazine. *Concrete Garden* started as a class project at UVic in 2012, and I've learned many lessons over the last seven years. I'm proud of the work that we've done and the stories we've told, but it's time for me to move on to something else.

I want to acknowledge Jory McKay and Mike Edel, my classmates who took our final project and turned it into a prototype; Kimberly Veness, who was the head editor before I took over in 2014; David Leach, who believed that we could make this a real thing and who has remained a pillar of support; my art director, Samantha Wey, who I think we can all agree has developed a distinctive style that has beautifully brought important stories to life; and everyone else who has contributed over the years.

It's not necessarily an optimistic time for the world, but I think it is a time to be optimistic about local food and urban agriculture. Since I first started working on this magazine, interest has exploded in this area, which is physically evident in the policies and programs in our city and region, and beyond. Vic High has a working school farm, new community and boulevard gardens are taking shape in neighbourhoods, Indigenous nations continue to re-assert their food sovereignty, the Good Food Network keeps growing, and our municipal and provincial governments are starting to come through with progressive policies that support local food systems and the people working in them.

One of the things that's inspired me the most over the last few years is the brilliance and clarity of some of the youth working in this field. It's often easy for older people to discount younger

PHOTO: LILI STEWART



voices, but young folks are leading where many adults are falling short. Check out my story on the Good Food Summit, "Stories Worth Savouring," and our spotlight on the Youth Food Gathering to hear from just some of them.

A constant issue we've covered has been the protection (or lack thereof) of farmland in B.C., mainly through the Agricultural Land Reserve. It feels full circle that as I was preparing my final issue, the provincial government passed new legislation that reunites the ALR in one zone and tackles rampant speculation and dumping issues. Cameron Welch digs into the act's details and potential shortcomings in "Betting on the Farm."

While it's taken a lot of hard work, this magazine has been a gift that's taught me so much about our food system and how it weaves through all of our lives, connecting every part of society. Hopefully, you will see *Concrete Garden* back soon in one form or another. In the meantime, all our past issues and articles will continue to be available on our website, and you can still contact me with any questions or comments at: [concretegardenvictoria@gmail.com](mailto:concretegardenvictoria@gmail.com).

— QUINN MACDONALD

## SEEDY SATURDAY

**WHEN:** FEBRUARY 16, 2019**WHERE:** VICTORIA CONFERENCE CENTER, 720 DOUGLAS STREET**TICKETS:** \$8, FREE FOR YOUTH UNDER 16

ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, THE JAMES BAY MARKET SOCIETY will again host Victoria's annual "premiere seed exchange and garden show"—Seedy Saturday.

A celebration of both the coming spring and the best of what local growers have to offer, Victoria's Seedy Saturday will feature over 50 local vendors, 14 talks from some of Victoria's most innovative growers, like local soil expert Marika Smith of Healing City Soils, three gardening workshops, and their seed and book exchanges. Hailed as "inexpensive, inspiring, [and] exuberant," by the society's website, Seedy Saturday offers an opportunity for both the knowledgeable elite and curious newcomers to delve into the many local garden societies, volunteer opportunities, and gardening-oriented educational programs.

Carole Elliott, chair of the James Bay Market Society, says that the event is geared towards all ages and experience levels. "I hand out the brochures and head [attendees] up the stairs so no one's out in the elements, and we're finding that we're starting to attract a very diverse age group—people living in condominiums, people looking to grow their own food, young families with children," says Elliott. "It's why we have a children's area as well. We make seed bombs and things like that for [them]."

In terms of vendors, their offerings this year are exceptionally diverse: tubers, corms, bulbs, whips, and starts, as well as an abundance of tools and soil amendments to help your garden flourish, will all be available for sale. With 50-plus new and recurring vendors, such as Salt Spring Seeds, Wilderness Committee, and Omega Blue Farms, attendees will be spoiled for choice. A full speakers' program—included with general admission—will also run all day and cover everything from basic techniques to specialized topics for advanced growers.

"We have the best speakers out of all the Seedy Saturdays," says Elliott. "We have Marika Smith coming about how to get plastics out of soil. We also have Kristen Miskelly of Saanich Native Plants coming to speak on adding native foods to your garden."

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEEDY SUNDAY



Along with the topics, the target audiences are equally varied. "We're trying to get new speakers who appeal to the condominium market and new gardeners, as to the experienced gardeners as well," says Elliott. "We have a lot of younger or newly retired people who are looking to grow their own food as a part of the '100-mile diet.'"

If you're an experienced grower, you can take part in the ever-popular seed exchange by trading in seeds from your garden for something brand new. The event recently added a book exchange that functions the same—simply bring in garden books you no longer use to trade for ones that will help make your garden bloom.

With an on-site ATM, children's play area, and Seedy Café offering local food and drinks, you can stay all day to soak up the best of what Seedy Saturday has to offer.

For more information on tickets and previous vendors and speakers, visit: [jamesbaymarket.com/SeedySaturday](http://jamesbaymarket.com/SeedySaturday)

— EMMA SLOAN

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Find more from *Concrete Garden* on our website! Learn about our team and stay up to date on the local food movement.

PHOTO: DIXIT MOTIWALA



"Unfortunately, *fish farms* are one of several threats facing wild salmon. Our *wild salmon* are also at risk due to *habitat loss, climate change and poor management*. I will continue to focus my efforts on pushing government to take action in these other areas through the newly appointed Wild Salmon Advisory Council and wild salmon secretariat that will directly advise the Premier."

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**Adam Olsen MLA**  
Saanich North & the Islands



**WHO:** MARCELLO NAJARRO**WHERE:** 10 ACRES

PHOTOS: ADRIAN PARADIS

SINCE I FIRST SAT DOWN WITH CHEF MARCELLO NAJARRO AT the relatively new 10 Acres Bistro in 2014, the restaurant has become a major player in the Victoria food scene, sporting a small chain under the 10 Acres banner—the Kitchen, Bistro, and Commons—and a growing farm on the Saanich Peninsula.

Najarro grew up in El Salvador, where his passion for cooking arose from necessity. His parents were often working, so he had to care for his younger twin brothers after school and ended up experimenting with their meals.

At 19, Najarro began studying engineering, but he missed spending time in the kitchen and started taking cooking classes on the side. After two years, he realized he needed to shift his studies and enrolled at Escuela de Arte Culinario in San Salvador.

While Najarro says he loves the traditions of cuisine in El Salvador, the country's culinary scene is still small. "I wanted to learn more, and I wanted to grow in this industry," he says, "but what drove me the most to come here was wanting to grow as a person." Additionally, he says staying in El Salvador would have meant a lower quality of life and less opportunity for him and his family.

Najarro arrived in Canada in 2007 with only a few bags in

hand. Once in Victoria, he got a job at Pescatores—now 10 Acres Kitchen—where he got to know Mike Murphy, who owned it and two other restaurants on the surrounding Humboldt block. Najarro went to work at Vancouver's Blue Water Cafe for a few years, but the two kept in touch. When Murphy was converting Bon Rouge into 10 Acres, he invited Najarro to come back. He ran the Bistro for a year while the Kitchen and Commons were renovated and now holds the role of executive chef, overseeing all three kitchens.

10 Acres is uniquely positioned: Murphy owns a 12-acre farm that caters to his restaurants. "We wanted to centralize the concepts of the restaurants around the farm," says Najarro. "When I started, the farm wasn't producing enough to subsidize the restaurants. It's changed from that to today, in which the farm can provide 1,000 pounds of asparagus and 1,500 pounds of tomatoes a year."

Murphy and Najarro have organized the farm to produce a small selection of crops in quantities that can feasibly sustain their three kitchens. Almost 90 percent of what 10 Acres Kitchen uses comes from there, since it's the smallest of the three and most focused on fine dining, while Commons and Bistro source specialty items from the farm and staple products from other local sources like Saanich Organics.

For instance, instead of growing Kennebec potatoes—something they can get in bulk, locally—they grow fingerling and purple potatoes. "We don't have that much land, so we have to maximize what we have," says Najarro.

When it comes to livestock, Najarro says the farm gets 10 to 12 Ossabaw pigs a year, a breed specifically suited to the charcuterie they produce. They also raise over 300 ducks annually and turkeys that they prepare for special Christmas and Thanksgiving meals.

Future plans for the farm include long-table dinners, commissary kitchens, a bakery, and a public farm stall. Najarro says he is amazed at the growth of the farm since he has started at 10 Acres. While it'll likely never be able to fully supply their restaurants, he is proud of what they do produce and hopeful for what's to come.

— ADRIAN PARADIS

## ROASTED BEETS SALAD

### BEETS

- 3 Lbs. Of Any Beets
- 1/4 Cup Of Sherry Vinegar
- 1/2 Cup Of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 3 Star Anise Crushed
- 1 Tbsp. Fennel Seeds
- 1 Tbsp. Corn Black Pepper
- 1 Cinnamon Stick
- 1 Rosemary Sprig
- Salt

### VINAIGRETTE

- 1 tsp. Of Grainy Dijon Mustard
- 1 Orange Zest + Juice
- 1/2 Cup Of White Wine Vinegar
- 1 Cup Of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Shallot Brunoise (Small Chopped)
- Salt
- Fresh Ground Black Pepper

For full recipe visit [concretegarden.ca/content/seed-to-plate](http://concretegarden.ca/content/seed-to-plate)

**WHO:** ROBIN TUNNICLIFFE**WHAT:** CO-OWNER OF SAANICH ORGANICS  
AND FARM MANAGER AT SEA BLUFF FARM

FEW PEOPLE FEEL THEY HAVE A TRUE CALLING IN LIFE. ROBIN Tunnicliffe, however, never had this problem. The co-owner of Saanich Organics and farm manager at Sea Bluff Farm says she always knew what she wanted to do.

"It's hard to know why I always wanted to farm," says Tunnicliffe. "When I was younger, I always enjoyed working in our big family garden. I identified with agrarian values, I guess."

Wherever the urge came from, our region has benefited from the leadership role Saanich Organics has played on the south Island. On the surface is a small collection of farms that supply to markets, homes, restaurants, and grocery stores. To many, however, they are one of the longest-running cooperative farm programs in the region and the ideal model that many strive for.

The seeds of the current co-op were actually planted in the '90s at the University of Guelph, where Tunnicliffe was enrolled in the agriculture program. Even then, she was interested in organic farming practices, but the program focused more on managing large-scale livestock. Disenchanted with the subject matter, she switched to post-colonial literature and finished with a general arts degree, but she didn't give up on farming.

While attending the inaugural Guelph Organic Conference, Tunnicliffe met Tina Fraser. Fraser had an organic farm on the Saanich Peninsula and happened to be looking for apprentices. After some discussion, Tunnicliffe moved to the Island in 1996 to work with her newfound mentor. There, Fraser got her thinking about local food movements. "I was into the macro idea of food systems and how we needed to do things in a sustainable way," says Tunnicliffe, "but during my apprenticeship, Tina really gave me a lot of insight into what a local food movement is and what it can do."

Around this time, Fraser founded Saanich Organics as a small collection of farms working as a community supported agriculture system. In a CSA, members pay for a small portion of the farm's costs at the beginning of the year and then receive fresh seasonal produce throughout the year. This method helps cover the high costs of farming early in the year when it is most needed.

Tunnicliffe soon found a piece of land nearby to call her own—three quarters of an acre she named Feisty Field Farm—and when Fraser wanted to step back from running the business in 2000, Tunnicliffe decided to step in. Looking to have more control in the market place than she would as a single farm, Tunnicliffe got together with friends Rachel Fisher of Three Oaks Farm and Heather Stretch of Northbrook Farm to buy the business and expand it into a box program and to begin selling to grocery stores.

"It was more of a concept than a business at that point," says Tunnicliffe, remembering the difficulty of those early days when their time was split between actually farming and handling administration and delivery duties. "People turn to us as the story of hope, but we had such a hard time with so many things. We've had a lot of ups, but a lot of downs too."

Today, the three friends have a team that helps manage the

PHOTO: ADRIAN PARADIS



administration side of things so the business can run more smoothly and they can focus on what they want to be doing—farming. "There are a lot of people holding us up. It's not just us, it's a bigger movement that involves everyone," says Tunnicliffe.

From her early time at Feisty Field, Tunnicliffe knows the troubles of a small farm owner first-hand. She's all too familiar with the devastation of selling your crop at a loss due to market norms. Through Saanich Organics, the three women are often the suppliers, distributors, and sellers of their product. This gives them more clout in setting market prices as a collective of farms, rather than one singular seller with little-to-no power.

Tunnicliffe says she learned this attitude from her mentor, Fraser, who stressed that farms on the Island should not be competing with each other as long as food is being imported. She and her company also continue to plan for the long term with projects like their seed catalogue, even though it's not yet profitable and requires a lot of skill, because it speaks to a sustainable future. "We need Saanich Organics to last into the future because it's a really important way of doing business," she says. "It's cooperative and sees Island abundance above all."

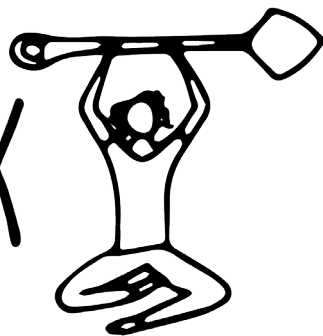
— ADRIAN PARADIS



### FAVOURITE TOOL

The half-moon hoe, with its long handle, surface for scuffing, and a corner for digging. "When you run into things that can't be scuffed, you turn it on its corner and you can lift out the crown of the plants. It's like two tools in one!"

# YOUTH FOOD NETWORK



BY ALEX KUHN, OUTREACH COORDINATOR FOR THE YOUTH FOOD NETWORK

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CHANGE THE WORLD: WE BRING A fresh, enthusiastic perspective to serious issues like climate change, the impacts of industrial food systems, and sustainability. This new perspective allows us to work together to think outside of the box and brainstorm new ways in which we can create positive change and combat the negative impacts we all have on the planet.

At the Youth Food Network, we are working to build a strong, supportive community of young people who care about food, food systems, and the environment. Every year, we host the Youth Food Gathering in October to celebrate good food and mindful organizations in our community and the wonderful work that they do. This year, the event was hosted at the Quadra Village Community Centre.

We had eight hands-on workshops spread out over a two-day period covering a wide range of topics. Project Reclaim covered Indigenous food justice. The Vic West Community Garden walked us through permaculture principles, while the Compost Education Centre hosted a workshop on kombucha and kefir. Reynolds Secondary School led a session on traditional Syrian food cooking, and the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria hosted a youth-lead cooking workshop. The City of Victoria went over local municipal resources and food hubs. LifeCycles showed attendees how to start a school garden. Finally, members of the Youth Food Action and Arts Teams hosted a workshop on how to get involved with the network.

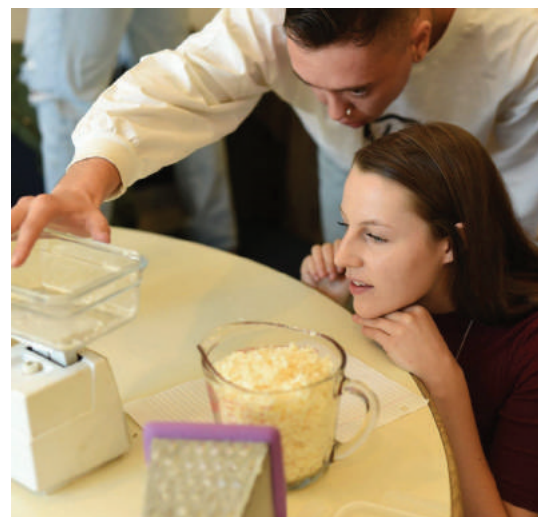
The goal of the gathering is to introduce like-minded youth to both each other and the various organizations around the city that are making positive changes on a daily basis. We make delicious food, meet new people, and step outside of our comfort zones. At the end of the weekend, we gather and brainstorm ideas on how we can take what we've learned and begin to take direct action.

The gathering is also a great platform to highlight our year-round volunteer teams—the Youth Food Action Team and the Youth Food Arts Team. Both meet biweekly and work to organize monthly events like garden parties, clothing upcycling workshops, tea-making nights, and more.

This year, we're excited to announce our newest project, The Sprout Fund. This fund is in collaboration with the Horner Foundation and is a resource for youth looking to start a local passion projects related to food. This could include starting their own school garden, creating a cooking club, or making and distributing an informative zine—the possibilities are endless. Our dream is to help youth get the resources that will allow them to flourish.

When young people are given the space to contribute their own ideas and energy, they're given the confidence to grow their leadership skills and are able to develop into passionate leaders. As consumers, our everyday decisions around the food we eat, products we buy, businesses we support, and the waste we create affect the planet and our livelihoods. We all deserve the chance to help make decisions about the world around us—the world youth will inherit from the generations that came before us.

You can find more information about the Youth Food Network, our volunteer teams, and The Sprout Fund at [youthfoodnetwork.com](http://youthfoodnetwork.com) and on Facebook and Instagram @youth.food.network. ♦



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## THE ETHICS OF EATING: MAKING AN IMPACT

### Third in a Four-Part Series

At the Blue Heron Advisory Group, we take pride in providing our clients with socially responsible and sustainable investment options. That's why we research local and global issues, and choose investments that align with our client's environmental, social and governance (ESG) values.

We dig deeper by measuring the owned carbon emissions of our investment portfolio in tonnes of CO2 by using the MSCI ESG Carbon Footprint Calculator.<sup>1</sup> Then we compare the carbon emissions produced by companies included in a \$500,000 investment in the S&P TSX 60 index, to a \$500,000 investment in our Blue Heron Canadian ESG Leader portfolio. The difference if investing in our portfolios, is equivalent to removing fifteen cars off the road.<sup>2</sup> Here's a snapshot of our portfolio's past performance.

| Blue Heron Canadian ESG Leader (As at August 31, 2018) |       |        |        |        |                 |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| Inception Date: Nov 2013                               | 3M    | 6M     | 1Y     | 3Y     | Since Inception |
| Strategy Performance                                   | 4.05% | 6.57%  | 15.77% | 12.37% | 12.90%          |
| Benchmark Performance                                  | 3.27% | 6.62%  | 13.05% | 9.83%  | 9.99%           |
| Difference +/-   | 0.78% | -0.05% | 2.72%  | 2.54%  | 2.91%           |

Performance is gross of fees.  
Past performance does not indicate future returns.  
Benchmark make-up: 60% S&P/TSX + 25% S&P500(CS) + 10% MSCI EAFE(CS) + 5% DEX 910T-Bill

Our individual choices can have a substantial impact relative to the average person. We believe that as consumers we can make choices that have a positive impact on the environment. These choices can help reduce carbon emissions from transport and storage, minimize water and pesticide use, and prevent soil erosion. If you haven't already, consider incorporating these options into your everyday life:

- Eat seasonal and local fruits and vegetables
- Avoid packaged foods
- Upgrade to energy efficient appliances
- Eat wild fish that are not endangered
- Avoid plastic bottles
- If you can, walk to where you're going

By implementing these changes, you can help reduce your environmental footprint. For more information, on the impact of our food choices visit: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/12/your-kitchen-and-the-planet-the-impact-of-our-food-on-the-environment>. We believe we can all make a difference by doing things differently.



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<sup>1</sup> MSCI "Carbon Footprinting 101" (<https://www.msci.com/www/research-paper/carbon-footprinting-101-a/0229050187>)

<sup>2</sup> MSCI Inc "MSCI ESG Carbon Footprint Calculator." <https://esgmanager.msci.com/>

<sup>3</sup> Performance results in this document are based on a composite of CIBC Wood Gundy Advisor Managed Account ("AMA") retail accounts with more than \$75,000 invested in the Blue Heron Canadian ESG Leader Portfolio. The composite includes open fee-paying discretionary managed accounts where the Strategy has been held for at least two months, through a purchase or a switch from another investment or a different AMA strategy. Also included in the composite are closed accounts that held the Strategy, up to the last full month the Strategy was held. The composite was created in June 2010 and includes AMA performance data from August 2010, two months after the Strategy's inception in the AMA program. Composite performance returns are geometrically linked and calculated by weighting each account's monthly performance, including changes in securities' values, and accrued income (i.e. dividends and interest), against its market value at the beginning of each month, as represented by the market value at the opening of the first business day of each month. This Strategy can be purchased either in U.S. or Canadian dollars. Performance returns in this document are expressed in Canadian dollars and are calculated by converting U.S. dollar accounts into Canadian dollars using the month-end Bank of Canada noon rate. Performance returns are gross of AMA investment management fees, and other expenses, if any. Each individual account's performance returns will be reduced by these fees and expenses. Individual Advisor Managed Account performance results may materially differ from those in this document due to the above and other factors such as an account's size, the length of time an AMA Strategy has been held, cash flows in and out of the individual account, trade execution timing, market conditions and movements, trading prices, foreign exchange rates, specific client constraints, and constraints against purchasing securities of related and connected issuers to CIBC Wood Gundy. Past performance may not be repeated and is not indicative of future results. This document is prepared for informational purposes only and is subject to change without notice. This document is not to be construed as an offer to sell, or solicitation for, or an offer to buy any AMA strategy or other securities. Consideration of individual circumstances and current events is critical to sound investment planning. All investments carry a certain degree of risk. It is important to review objectives, risk tolerance, liquidity needs, tax consequences and any other considerations before choosing an AMA strategy. This information, including any opinion, is based on various sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy cannot be guaranteed and is subject to change. CIBC and CIBC World Markets Inc., their affiliates, directors, officers and employees may buy, sell, or hold a position in securities of a company mentioned herein, its affiliates or subsidiaries, and may also perform financial advisory services, investment banking or other services for, or have lending or other credit relationships with the same. CIBC World Markets Inc. and its representatives will receive sales commissions and/or a spread between bid and ask prices if you purchase, sell or hold the securities referred to above. © CIBC World Markets Inc. 2018. CIBC Private Wealth Management consists of services provided by CIBC and certain of its subsidiaries, including CIBC Wood Gundy, a division of CIBC World Markets Inc. "CIBC Private Wealth Management" is a registered trademark of CIBC, used under license. "Wood Gundy" is a registered trademark of CIBC World Markets Inc. CIBC Wood Gundy is a division of CIBC World Markets Inc., a subsidiary of CIBC and a Member of the Canadian Investor Protection Fund and Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada. Graham Isenegger and Neil Chappell are Investment Advisor with CIBC Wood Gundy in Victoria, BC. The views of Graham Isenegger and Neil Chappell do not necessarily reflect those of CIBC World Markets Inc. If you are currently a CIBC Wood Gundy client, please contact your Investment Advisor.

# RILEY PARK

## *Little* MOUNTAIN

RILEY PARK–LITTLE MOUNTAIN IS A COMMUNITY THAT stretches from 41st Avenue to 16th, between Cambie and Fraser streets, in East Vancouver. This close-knit community has a number of wonderful destinations for foodies, many of which have sustainable, farm-to-table practices, and although it's an urban neighbourhood, the large parks that populate the area make it feel like a getaway from the city.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT SPOTS IN RILEY PARK–LITTLE Mountain is Queen Elizabeth Park, a 130-acre municipal park with beautiful gardens, big old trees, and a stunning view of downtown Vancouver—perfect for a picnic. Queen Elizabeth Park is the site of the former Little Mountain Quarry, where the neighbourhood gets its name. Try to catch a sunset or sunrise while you're here—you'll thank me later. The deep-pink sky blazing above the view of the outstretched park and the city beyond is really something to behold.

### RILEY PARK FARMERS' MARKET

A VISIT TO RILEY PARK–LITTLE MOUNTAIN ISN'T COMPLETE without a stop at the farmers' market at Nat Bailey Stadium. It continues through the winter, so you can take advantage of the fresh garden produce no matter the season. The market has over 70 vendors, from established businesses to local farmers selling their garden crops and preserves, and there are plenty of food trucks, so you can have lunch after you buy an armload of fresh produce to take home.

Some vendors of note include Craft Grain, a new company that sells handmade vegan snacks made from the grain leftover from local breweries, the Aussie Pie Guy—which is exactly what it sounds like, an Australian guy selling delicious pies made locally—and One Arrow, where you can get fresh, locally sourced bacon handmade by Métis-Cree chef Heat Laliberte. The market often features live music, and you just might see a few of the vendors having a little dance party.



PHOTOS: ROSE MORRIS



### SEASONS

WHILE IN THE PARK, YOU MAY WANT TO STOP BY THE Bloedel Conservatory in the park and say hello to the exotic birds who live there, but you'll definitely want to have a meal—or at least a glass of local B.C. wine—at Seasons, a restaurant situated in the heart of the park. Seasons serves local, seasonal (get it?) foods like grilled salmon and organic, grass-fed steak with a side of breathtaking views.

### RAIN OR SHINE

IF YOU'RE STILL HUNGRY, TAKE A WALK DOWN TO RAIN or Shine on Cambie Street and 18th Avenue. Do it even if you're not still hungry, actually, because there's always room for ice cream. Owned by local couple Josie and Casey Fenton, Rain or Shine was born from their frustration at the artificial ingredients in the ice cream they were buying. They decided to open their own ice cream shop that would only sell all-natural frozen desserts made with as many locally sourced ingredients as possible.

Their menu has a few constants (malted milk chocolate, honey lavender, and London fog, to name a few) and seasonal flavours that are available for a limited time (currently they've got Nanaimo bar and bourbon pecan pie). Rain or Shine has dairy and vegan options, and both are delicious. Trust me, I've tested them out several times for you.

— ROSE MORRIS



# GARDENING AS HAÍŁZAQV RESURGENCE

BY 'CÚAGILÁKV (JESS HOUSTY)

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE RESURGENCE OF ANCESTRAL knowledge and practices, no one typically pictures a gleaming zucchini or a tomato plant listing under the weight of its fruit. There is a convenient myth that Haíłzaqv were hunter-gatherers, opportunistic people whose land relationships were incidental and connected to our resources rather than our homelands, which stretch from the mainland to open ocean on B.C.'s Central Coast—the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest. This myth is at odds with the deep, intimate, and reciprocal connection to place that is foundational to our Haíłzaqv identity. It also serves a worrisome purpose: it diminishes the visibility of our place-based identity and practices in a way that strengthens the kind of colonial rhetoric that leads to the exploitation of our homelands.

The truth of the matter is: gardening *is* an ancestral practice, and the careful techniques that led to healthy and thriving Haíłzaqv families for millennia are transferable skills that can make us adept community gardeners today. Our ancestors cultivated root gardens in meadows throughout the territory, carefully weeding and tending patches of ǫ́vsús (springbank clover) and xvúkvm̃ (northern rice root). They pruned and fertilized wild berries and fruit trees to produce more abundant crops. They even “gardened” shellfish, meticulously building up clam gardens that were significantly more productive than untended beaches.

In all these practices, our ancestors were taking care of the spaces and species that, in turn, take care of us. In this way, for them, “gardening” was infused with the good medicine of reciprocity. If we as Haíłzaqv people accept the truth that

our ancestors were more than passive hunter-gatherers, that they held deep relationships with the territory that sustained them, then it is not a stretch to accept that digging our hands in the earth and tending to the plant life that nourishes us today is an ancestral practice.

When my elders and mentors taught me how to fertilize my gardens and fruit trees with rockweed, káláx (bracken fern), and fish guts, it benefitted my ǵvám̃ (huckleberries) and damson plums alike. The attention that produces thick, aromatic wild mint also renders marjoram and oregano. The seed-saving techniques that replenish my stocks for the following spring give me renewed harvests of both dúxva (stinging nettle) and leafy lettuce. And the generosity with which I've been taught, which extends to the things that I grow, is as Haíłzaqv a value as Haíłzaqv values come; it applies to my ǵúlás (salmonberries) and my rhubarb, my crisp fiddleheads and my snow peas.

Though what we do now may not look like the lands-stewardship kind of gardening that our ancestors practised, it is nevertheless an important aspect of our modern Haíłzaqv identity: we strive for self-sufficiency and to harvest an abundance that we can share with our community.

Haíłzaqv community partners have built gardens in Bella Bella and at our seasonal community spaces out on the land. We've mapped community fruit trees and sold or distributed dozens of raised beds made from local wood for community members to start their own gardens at home. We are rebuilding the kind of intimate, place-based knowledge of our territory that helped my grandmother's grandmother know where to harvest what she needed and how to tend



PHOTOS: 'CÚAGILÁKV



those places into abundance—but we are learning and practising by developing an intimate knowledge of our own little gardens.

Each post-contact generation of Haíłzaqv people has endured assaults on our land-based identity. Colonialism has attempted to legislate us off our territories and away from many of the resources that we depend on for food, social, and ceremonial purposes. It's the driving force behind systemic oppressions that have sought to separate us from our homelands and our Haíłzaqv identity. While this has clawed away at our access to our homelands and the intimate knowledge our ancestors held of all 35,553 square kilometres of our territory, we have survived, and we will thrive again.

That bone-deep impulse to thrive manifests in language revitalization and a Haíłzaqv bighouse rising in the heart of our community. It manifests in a local school and college that believe in land-based education, a network of local agencies committed to building community, and councils of hereditary and elected leadership that work hand-in-hand to assert Haíłzaqv sovereignty and self-governance every day.

It also manifests as many pairs of Haíłzaqv hands digging in the dirt, calling up the little green promises of abundance, as the weight of the kale and the carrots and the aromatic herbs we grow is equal to the weight of the full hearts swelling over the meals we share and good food we give away to the people we love. That love and generosity is Haíłzaqv to the core.

Of course, gardening in isolation will not solve everything. But food is medicine, and food is community building. In gardening, we express food sovereignty. We take responsibility for nourishing ourselves and our loved ones with good food that will make our bodies strong.

We reinforce the social and spiritual bonds that hold our people together when we work side by side and share our harvests with one another. And we become more giving, more autonomous, and more attuned to the natural cycles and rhythms that help us—and our gardens—to grow. In my garden, I feel at peace and in control. This is an act of resistance in a world that seeks to marginalize me, and in that peace, I feel a stronger connection to my ancestors.

In the face of generations of colonial oppression, gardening is one more way to say that we're still here. We're taking care of our bodies and our people. We're planting seeds as a promise to our future selves. And in this way, to me, growing deep-red tomatoes and hefty zucchinis is a creative way of doing the work our ancestors set out for us because it is a tangible commitment to our own resilience.

For a Nation keenly focused on asserting and building up its identity, growing a garden is planting a seed of Haíłzaqv resurgence. ♦





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# Comfort Food for Kids

Nourishing activities to warm up your winter

BY HEATHER NEALE FURNEAUX

AS FALL SHED ITS BRILLIANT ORANGE LEAVES AND WHISPERED of the coming winter chill, my five-year-old daughter Malia and I decided we needed to make some comfort food—delicious warm concoctions spun from fresh, local ingredients that would warm our souls and get us from the dreags of November to winter school breaks and New Year's resolutions. We'd begin by conducting some research, we figured, the fun kind: visiting great restaurants, sampling yummy treats, dreaming up what we'd make, and buying colourful produce with which to make it.

On a particularly rainy Wednesday, I picked Malia up from school at noon, explained the word “hooky” to her, and whisked her downtown. We headed for Nourish, a soulful restaurant whose name reinforced our goal: to nourish ourselves with heavenly snacks, warm energy, and good company. An early 20th century-style heritage home situated on the corner of Pendray and Quebec streets in James Bay, this place epitomized

freshness and vitality with herbs and microgreens sprouting from every corner.

The backyard, where we parked, featured an outdoor eating space for warmer days, complete with tables and chairs, and raised planter boxes growing kale, lettuce, purple cabbage, and herbs. You can enter via a small arbour near the rosemary bushes and glimpse staff hard at work in the kitchen, preparing meals behind extra tall windowpanes that channel natural light. As we followed the sidewalk around a vivid green hedge to the front of the house, we spotted the trendy wooden sign framed by yet more greens-filled planter boxes. Lavender scent put us right at ease and sent me straight back to my sadly-infrequent-but-heavenly-nonetheless trips to the spa.

“This is a house, Mom, not a restaurant,” Malia quipped, snapping me back to the moment. And that was the point. We were being invited to an intimate eating experience where



we could feel relaxed and present while sharing hearty and wholesome food. The back of the sign even read, “Eat with People You Love.”

Solara Goldwynn, co-owner of edible landscaping company Hatchet & Seed and the brains behind Nourish's comprehensive garden design, outlined the intention behind the concept. “The idea was that the garden would be reflected on all the plates served,” she said, explaining that owner Hayley Rosenberg and her staff wanted guests to feel nourished not just by the delicious fresh organic food, but also by the aesthetic beauty of edible flower garnishes and a sense of connection to their food source and the earth.

Rosenberg worked in the restaurant industry for a long time before opening her own places—starting with the former home of Nourish, now Charlotte & the Quail, located at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific—and became increasingly disheartened by the “too much” mentality of it all. She wanted to create something much more healthy and grounded. That's where Goldwynn came in.

“Kitchen staff can pop out at any time and select their garnish of choice,” said Goldwynn—adding that guests can too, for that matter. Goldwynn's own daughter, Flora, has spent hours, both at Nourish and at home, doing just that. “She's practically grown up in a garden,” Goldwynn says with a laugh, explaining how enriching the experience of being outside and continuously creating edible green spaces with her daughter nearby has been for their relationship. I can relate. Being in the yard, collaborating on food prep, working together with Malia to nurture our harvest, and eating our own crops is just plain old good for the soul.

Once we'd ordered, Malia and I headed upstairs to the café section to wait for our food. We found a cozy spot to

hunker down in The Study—a smaller room tucked around a wooden bar with hanging lamps, two stand-alone tables, and a pillow-laden window booth. (Our other room option was The Parlour, a slightly larger living room-like space with couches, eclectic art, and an area rug.)

Nestling into the window-bench pillows, Malia and I sat beside two women who immediately commented on how they had grandchildren of a similar age. Twenty minutes later, we knew each other's names, birth places, and respective feelings on encouraging kids to learn their own body cues and eat what they choose. “Telling someone they can only have dessert if they finish their peas gives them the message they can't trust their own hunger cues,” one woman said. “Yes. I think everything in moderation is a great adage,” the other chimed in.

The restaurant's intimate seating arrangements had already succeeded in fostering vibrant conversation between total strangers. The women finished their meal just as our food arrived, and we wished them a beautiful day.

Here began the taste-testing portion of the afternoon. Malia had ordered “Sleeping Beauty Pancakes”—a gluten-free dish complete with “fresh seasonal fruit compote, organic whipped cream, bee pollen sprinkles, and maple syrup.” I had a sandwich on Fol Epi ciabatta, accompanied by red lentil soup and a refreshing glass of rosemary lemonade. (There may also have been a few ginger snaps and matcha truffles in our very-near vicinity too, but I'll never admit to eating them—all.)

We decided the fruit compote atop Malia's pancakes would be something worth recreating, as well as the red lentil soup, and we set out to find variations we could attempt. A quick Internet search and we had our shopping list: celery, potatoes, onions, parsley and cilantro (because who could decide!), lemon, and blueberries. My mom had some peaches she'd sliced and frozen from a summer Okanagan trip that we could use and we'd throw in some apples and strawberries for colour.

Malia was excited about chopping. Not everyone feels this way about that task, but since using a blade sharp enough to amputate her own fingers was a new thing in her world—the novelty of being trusted with it still fresh—she was determined to do all of it. “I don't need your help, Mom.” This lasted a good 20 minutes until she learned that even novel things could be monotonous. “Can you do the last part?” she asked, referring to the lion's share.



PHOTOS: HEATHER NEALE FURNEAUX





“No problem, dear.”

Once we'd sautéed the onions and softened the potatoes, it was time to pull out some spices. Turmeric, ginger, paprika, and cumin rounded out the flavour nicely and gave me a chance to talk about their various healing properties with her. She was fascinated that they worked like medicine in some respects. “Tell me what I can eat to make sure I have superpowers,” she insisted. “Kale,” I joked. But of course, I was only half kidding.

When the soup was ready, we dove into making the fruit compote. Malia and I had made stewed rhubarb from our backyard stock many times in the summer, so this wasn't extremely different in some ways, but it had a fancy name and she was excited to work with some fruit she hadn't used before. “Are these Amma's peaches?” she asked, as I nodded. Into the pot they went, along with some organic apple juice, freshly ground cinnamon we'd grated ourselves, and a dash of sugar to make it sweet.

One thing we agreed upon was that our food should look as pretty as it tasted, in keeping with Nourish's beautiful aesthetic. So while we waited for the fruit to heat up, we discussed using lemon rinds cut into interesting shapes as garnish, or even carrots carved into smiley face emojis. (Her idea.) “I know!” she shrieked. “We could make whipped cream flowers for the top and throw some cupcake sprinkles on top.” (We then had a discussion about artificial colouring and flavours and how our current goal was to make wholesome, nourishing meals.) “Okay. How about coconut shavings?” Yep, now we were on the same

page—a delicious one.

As we prepared to eat a dinner made entirely by us, I could see Malia standing a little taller than usual. She had taken the time to set the table, laying out cloth napkins and even choosing a centrepiece. (It included My Little Ponies, some Lego friends, and a beanie boo, but hey.) The occasion called for a shiny brown tablecloth hand-sewn by my auntie, mustard yellow antique plates, and blue-stemmed goblets, since we were being fancy. We'd swept up yesterday's hardened pasta noodles left underfoot by her youngest sister and arranged our five chairs so Malia was closest to the kitchen in case anyone wanted seconds. She was determined to be the evening's “server” as well as “chef.”

I loved watching how proud she felt sharing her creations with Dad and her two younger sisters, and to see her paying attention to details like table design and serving logistics without having been prompted. It's as if, without talking about it, the idea of catering to all the senses had sunk in by osmosis during our visit to Nourish. It made me feel much better about taking her out of school. Malia took the inaugural first spoonful of soup to let us know how it tasted. With a quick nod of approval, we all dug in.

We decided to make it a monthly R & D mission throughout the winter. It would be fun and good for the soul to explore new places and palate experiences, and it would help us dream up what new fruit and veggies to plant come springtime. Winter may be setting in for good, but we are warm from the inside out, and now we have some ideas on how to stay that way. ♦

# STORIES WORTH SAVOURING

The Good Food Summit celebrates its third year by highlighting community

BY QUINN MACDONALD

ON A COLD, RAINY AND OTHERWISE GLOOMY EVENING IN November, the Victoria Theatre bustled with warm chatter as people took their seats for the inaugural edition of Savoury Stories. Hosted by the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, as part of its annual two-day Good Food Summit, the evening's goal was to raise money for CREAIR's Good Food Network. But the stories shared over the next two hours also connected community members who care about local food through the power of personal tales and poignant words.

Freshly re-elected Victoria city councillor Jeremy Loveday opened the night with a performance of his 2014 slam poem “Food for the Future” with lines about the Island's limited supply. Loveday then acknowledged the territory of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations, who lived on and cared for this abundant food-producing region for thousands of years before settlers arrived.

Salt Spring Island farmer Simone Cazabon provided levity as the MC, and other storytellers included Tiffany Joseph, who shared a lively update of her “Story of SEMSEMÍYE,” originally featured in *Concrete Garden's* summer issue, an organizer from the QT2IPOC dinners, and two students from the gardening program at Reynolds Secondary as well as Leah Seltzer from LifeCycles, the Growing Schools coordinator.

“Yes, I gained practical gardening skills, but I have also gained confidence in my opinions, my problem-solving abilities, and my leadership skills,” said Rebecca Gittens, a grade 11 student, as the

screen flashed with images of students building beds, planting seeds, and preparing and sharing meals from the food they grew.

“Just being in the garden has also had a noticeable and positive impact on my overall health,” said Sophie Sianen, a grade 10 student. “The clean and crisp air always clears my lungs, while being out and enjoying garden also helps me de-stress.”

Leah Seltzer felt moved by seeing the students show up as leaders and speak about their program with the larger local food community. “As the students left the stage proud and beaming, I could see how vital it is to create avenues for youth voices to be heard and empowered in food movements,” she said. “During the intermission, audience members surrounded the students and their families to express how touched they were to hear these stories. I was reminded how profound it is to hear young people

“I was reminded how profound it is to hear young people share their passion for connecting with the land and growing food; it brings us joy and it gives us hope”

PHOTO: MARIAH CARTER



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share their passion for connecting with the land and growing food; it brings us joy and it gives us hope.”

The Reynolds students were also a standout for Em Bellinger, the communications and engagement coordinator at CRFAIR, who began dreaming up this evening in the hot days of summer. “It was beautiful to hear the multitude of ways in which the garden program at their schools has impacted them,” says Bellinger. “From positive effects on mental health to hard skills, they were beaming on stage about the experience and what it brought them.”

Jennifer Ferris of the Victoria Storytellers Guild helped with the evening, and her “storytelling wisdom” was integral to the night’s success, according to Bellinger. Ferris shared a story about a gruff uncle who dealt with the trauma of World War One by farming in the English countryside.

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## “Everybody has a story about food it seems”

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The idea for the Savoury Stories event came up when CRFAIR was looking for diverse ways to engage the community around food. “In the initial planning stages, folks had mentioned that storytelling was something of interest. Everybody has a story about food it seems,” says Bellinger. “We thought it would be a fun and engaging way to reach a broader audience than those interested in the conference day.”

Savoury Stories was just one part of the Good Food Summit, which took place on November 22 and 23 and sold out for the second year in a row. The 175 attendees included young farmers, funders, local government and policy-makers, health workers, community organizations, and other members of the public keen to learn, to get updated on the Good Food Strategy, and to make connections with those working on local food in the region and beyond.

While Bellinger was the lead organizer for the conference, she is quick to shout out her collaborators: CRFAIR executive director Linda Geggie and operations manager Ally Candy; UVic student Megan Chan, who planned the Show and Share fair; and Aaren Topley, co-chair of the Victoria Urban Food Table, who organized the urban food tour. This is the third year as the Good Food Summit, although the conference ran for two decades under a different title.

This year’s conference happened to fall on a Pro-D day, which allowed teachers to attend—one even brought a handful of middle school students along—so Bellinger says they might intentionally schedule it that way again.

Highlights for Geggie included attendees’ growing appetite for sessions about oceans, including a “Fish in our Food System” panel. “We often refer to food-growing and farming as the basis for local food,” she says. “We need to recognize the importance of fish and, in particular, salmon to coastal communities.”



TIFFANY JOSEPH SHARING HER STORY OF SEMSEMÍYE  
PHOTO: LAUREN SORTOME



The summit’s keynote and call to action came from Stephanie Lim, a community developer, feminist scholar, and food justice organizer from Vancouver. In her talk, Lim took a food justice and anti-oppression lens that addressed whiteness, racism, and diversity—or, often, a lack thereof—in the food movement and mentioned the importance of anti-oppression training.

“Another important aspect of this year’s gathering was a significant focus on equity considering power and privilege, not only in our food system, but also in our network and leadership,” says Geggie. “The network members had important discussions and made recommendations on how we might work to address that going forward.”

The conference aimed to have or beat 25 percent of local food, which matches the goal in the Good Food Strategy of 25 percent local food production by 2025. But when Elisabeth Bond and Amanda Smith of the Get Fresh Guide, a physical brochure and online resource put out by the two sisters that connects residents with local producers on the south Island, approached CRFAIR to beat that target, Bellinger took them up on their challenge.

Bond and Smith used their connections with local suppliers and worked with staff at UVSS (University of Victoria Student Services) Catering and Conferences to achieve 85 percent locally sourced, made, and grown food products. “The whole exercise of working one on one with a catering company to adjust a menu to feature locally sourced foods was very interesting,” says Bond. Some suppliers who donated products or provided them at a wholesale price include Island Farmhouse Poultry, Longview Farms, Saanich Organics, Paradise Island Cheese, 10 Acres Farm, Green Cuisine, and Babe’s Honey Farm.

Attendees got excited by the food tour, organized by Aaren Topley with help from UVic student Rachael Barton-Bridges. “The tour aimed to tell the stories about urban growing projects before they broke ground,” says Topley. “A lot of time we romanticize these projects and think a group of people or a person ask for land, the city or school district gives it to them and they start their project. In reality some of these projects take one to four years to create.”

The three-and-a-half hour tour started with a presentation from Topley about the institutions groups must deal with to start an urban farming project and the steps to move them forward. The tour then explored the school farm at Vic High, Mason Street Farm, Yates Street Community Garden, the Urban Learning Garden at the downtown public library, and the Fort Commons section of the Food Eco District. The tour ended with lunch at Fishhook and Yalla to show how restaurants play a role in supporting local food.

“As we move forward as a region, trying to create an equitable and strong local food system, we need to ensure that we create easy-to-access pathways to allow more citizens to grow and source healthy fresh local food,” says Topley.

Events like the summit connect people across sectors to build a strong regional food network, says Bellinger. “One person at the end of the day remarked that their highlight was meeting new people, and that each person they started chatting with would say, ‘Oh but you have to go meet Person X if you want to connect on that topic,’ and then Person X would say, ‘Oh I’ve got to introduce you to Person Y,’ and so on and so forth.”

The summit allowed those working in the field to get input

and address challenges, while celebrating successes in what can be a difficult industry. Organizers will need to manage the event’s growing popularity.

“We sold out quite quickly,” says Bellinger, “which came as quite a surprise to many folks who ended up on the waitlist.”

Feedback about Savoury Stories has been positive, so something similar may become a fixture of future summits. “I don’t know if storytelling will be the focus, but I’d love to see more alternative ways to connect on the topics of food sovereignty, equity, and justice,” says Bellinger. “I’d love to see different ways to be involved in the summit other than just the main conference day. Maybe this is a meal, a cooking class, other arts-based-events—who knows?”

Savoury Stories definitely made an impact on community members such as LifeCycles’ Leah Seltzer and her students. “This event has inspired me to weave more storytelling opportunities into our schoolyard gardening and apprenticeship programs,” she said, “and to create more platforms for aspiring youth food leaders to have their voices heard.”

A diversity of voices sharing tales from their experiences can highlight the promise of the local food movement—and the peril of food security on the Island if we don’t take collective action. Land and language are intimately linked at every stage of our food system, from farm to table. The Good Food Summit is helping our community build a better food network, one story at a time. ♦



# Caldo Verde

## A TALE OF GREEN SOUP

BY KELLIE WYLLIE

THIS WEEK UNWRAPPED AT A FRENZIED PACE. IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT AT last. The sun set just after four, although the sky gave way to dusk an hour before that. Gage, our black border collie—lab, sits at the front door and demands a walk; his wiry tail twitches back and forth. The fridge looks empty except for a box of orange juice, a head of celery, and four chorizo sausages. But the vegetable garden has kale and leeks, and the freezer is stocked with chicken broth. A basket of potatoes and a braid of garlic hang in the garden room. I decide to make a pot of caldo verde soup. I put a bottle of white wine in the fridge to chill before Gage and I walk to buy a baguette from a small grocer in Cadboro Bay, a neighbourhood of Saanich.

The Portuguese claim caldo verde as a national dish. The green soup originated in the Iberian Peninsula, the southernmost region of Europe split between Spain and Portugal. Iberia is famous for cork oak, the last lynx population in Europe, and black pigs. Under strict agricultural regulations, each pig requires a minimum of five acres of organic oak woodlands or savannah to graze. The sustainable agro-ecosystem—Spanish, holm, gall, and cork oak trees—can be traced back to the arrival of the Phoenicians in the eighth century BC. The pigs feed on the acorns dropped by the oak trees, and, in turn, they protect the biodiversity created by the establishment of the ancient farming system.

Iberian ham (jamón ibérico) and pork is renowned as the finest in the world. When the Romans drove the Phoenicians out, they carried on the existing agricultural traditions. The Roman Empire collapsed; yet, as so often happens, many cultural practices remained. The recipe for chorizo sausage is one custom that the Iberians passed down from generation to generation.

In the summer of 2016, my husband and I hiked the Iberian Peninsula for a week. We trekked by pastoral farm after pastoral farm where the pigs are raised. We walked between waist-high stonewalls on paths that divided farmers' fields. We marvelled at the cleanliness of the land, the healthiness of the animals, and the sustainability of the agricultural practices, and we admired the oak trees, especially the cork oaks with their burgundy trunks where the bark had been removed. The movement to protect farmland and farm animals in Iberia seemed to be more advanced than our efforts on Vancouver Island. Some days we would stop in a village for lunch and order a bowl of caldo verde soup. Every restaurant served its own version of the green soup garnished with chorizo sausage made at a nearby farm or in a small salumeria.

I REMEMBER EATING MY MOTHER'S POTATO-BACON SOUP THE WINTER when I was five. We lived in a mill town of about 600 people on the Columbia River in the Selkirk Mountains. The sawmill had burnt down that winter, and the whole town struggled financially. Most families had chicken coops. When my father cleaned ours, he spread a layer of sawdust to counter the stench of the chicken manure. He grew vegetables in the front and back yards, the potatoes on mounds of soil. I don't know where my parents bought the back bacon, or even if they bought it at all. Perhaps they traded 50 pounds of potatoes for 50 pounds of bacon? A huge piece must have hung frozen in the woodshed, because all winter, we ate potato-bacon soup for lunch and dinner. The pork ran out near the end of the season, and it simply became potato soup. I don't recall if I tired of the taste, but I do remember that two or three times a week my mother would pull hot loaves of bread from the woodstove oven. After it cooled a little, she would pass us thick slices on which we spread butter churned from cream from the neighbour's cows.

I am an organic gardener. The potatoes that I chop into half-inch cubes for the caldo verde were grown last summer in 10-litre felt bags. There are five raised vegetable beds in my garden, but I grow the potatoes in bags so that I don't need to rotate the crop each year. I use the raised beds for the year-round gardening that's possible here on the West Coast. This year, I planted red bliss potatoes on the recommendation of an article about caldo verde in *Cook's Illustrated* magazine. The waxy potato holds its shape, and the sugar and starch content is lower than other potatoes like Yukon Gold.

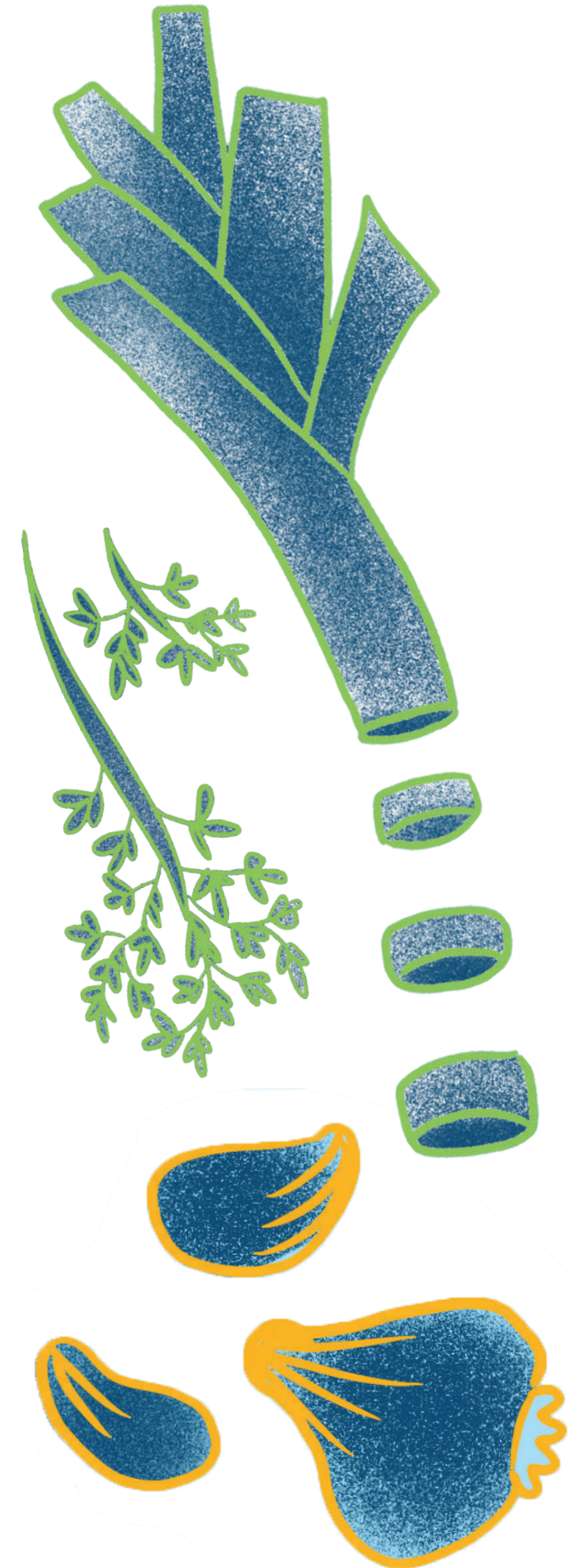
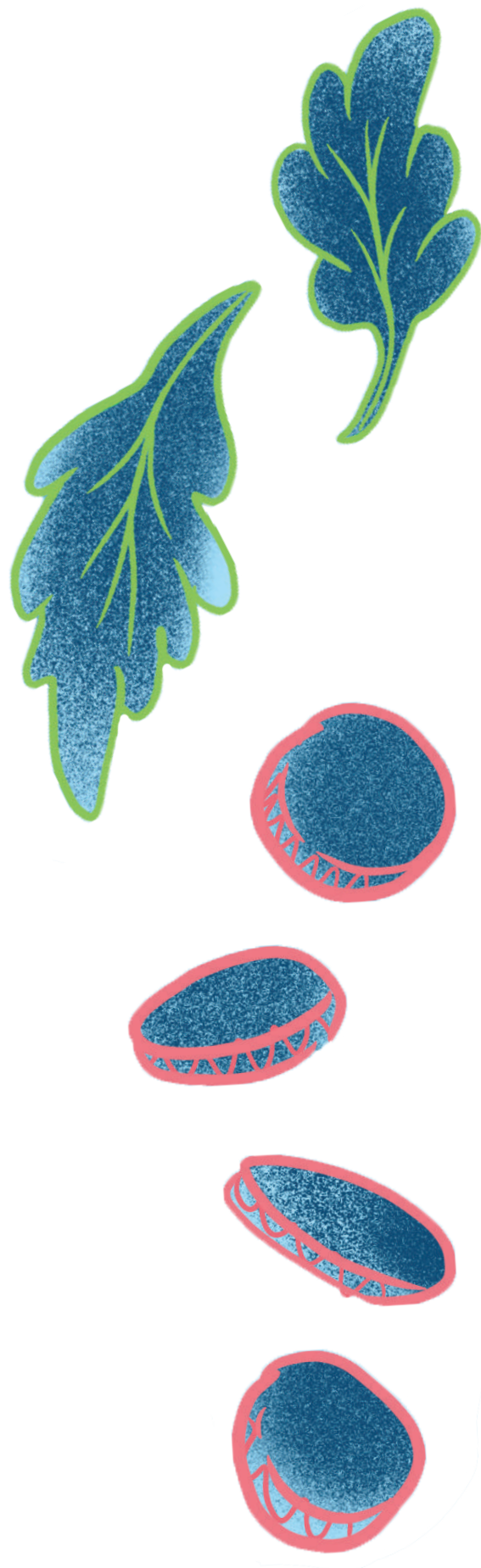
The leeks in my garden resist my attempt to harvest them as their long white roots grab onto the soil. I knock the two plants that I pulled for the soup against a stone wall to get rid of the dirt. I clip off a dozen lacinato kale leaves before I head back to the kitchen. Gage prances beside me. The long, thin kale leaves are dark green, almost black. I like this type of kale because it is the easiest to chiffonade—stems removed, stacked, rolled, and sliced into thin strips.

In the kitchen, I peel the garlic and slice the leeks. I bought heads of garlic from Salt Spring Seeds, a small company committed to the preservation of heirloom plants. I peel the chesnok garlic's papery pink-and-purple striped cover and mince the cloves. I rinse the leeks under cold water, cut off the roots and thick green stems, and quarter and slice the white stalk that's left. The garlic, leek, and small-diced celery go into a heavy red enamel soup pot, where I added olive oil a few minutes earlier to heat. Delectable aromas infuse the air.

The Portuguese use collards to green their soup. On the same farms where the pigs are raised, there are often a few citrus trees, a vegetable garden, some chickens, and sometimes an Andalusian horse or two. Each day that we hiked, we experienced a blend of complex farm odours—manure mixed with the fragrance of lemon and orange blossoms and earthy soil. Most farmers on the stony peninsula still butcher and cure their own meat, another nod to their commitment to sustainable agriculture. To make the chorizo sausage, farmers, butchers, and chefs empty, clean, and fill pig gut with chopped pork, pork fat, and smoked paprika.

The garlic for my caldo verde grew in a raised bed bordered by a wattle fence woven with willow whips. Wattle fences were popular in medieval Europe. The Cluny Museum in Paris uses them to edge raised beds planted with the same flowers that are woven into the 16th century Flanders tapestries inside. Willow loves to grow—copse it in the fall, and by spring it will have sent out a multitude of long, flexible branches ready for harvest early in the summer.

I wove my wattle fence using willow that my friend Joan grows in



large quantities for basketry and live-willow fence installations. Its double twill pattern undulates in a semicircle around an old Douglas fir stump and a rugosa rose—roses love garlic. At the end of October, I planted garlic cloves between rows of winter carrots. Some time in November, the cloves will send out long, thin leaves, but the garlic won't be ready to harvest until the following August or September.

Once the celery, leeks, and garlic in the red pot are soft and begin to brown, I add the kale, potatoes, and chicken stock. The chickens for the stock come from Thistledown Farm on Salt Spring Island—a Gulf Island known for agriculture and art. Thistledown is one of several farms nestled high in Rainbow Valley between Mount Maxwell and Mount Erskine. The view east from Thistledown overlooks Georgia Strait and the Coast Mountains. It is a small farm with two horses, Jane the dog, and numerous barn cats. A large flock of market chickens arrive as day-old chicks twice a year. The hay fields provide mulch for the vegetable gardens and food for the horses. There are fruit trees, short white columns of beehives (which threatened to swarm last year), and—like almost everywhere on the West Coast—blackberries. Vehicles ranging from a pickup truck to a restored yellow Volkswagen Beetle dot the driveway. The immaculate farmhouse looks like a home that Martha Stewart might choose to live in. LeeAnne runs the farm. She's 50-something and 5-11, with legs as long as the Thompson River.

Twice a year, we get a call from LeeAnne telling us that the chickens are at the abattoir and will be ready for pick up at the farm later that day. She used to raise Cornish cross hens, a large

white breed. They took about 12 weeks to grow, but she noticed that she lost approximately 25 percent of her flock before they matured. She made inquiries to a local vet, who explained that the Cornish cross had been bred for its large breasts. He suspected that the birds died from heart failure—the oversized breasts are too large for their tiny hearts. LeeAnne questioned the ethics of raising suffering chickens and switched to sassos, a smaller heritage breed from Quebec. The rusty-red chickens take four weeks longer to mature. To a farmer, that's a risk because it means the chickens have to be fed for an additional month, and the cost is passed onto the consumer. It takes time and money to raise sustainable food, and in this fast-paced world, we often no longer have the patience to wait.

We arrive at Thistledown with a cooler filled with ice packs and pick up the fresh chickens, which we will finish butchering at home. Like the farmers on the Iberian Peninsula, my husband and I waste nothing. After the chicken has been cut into thighs, drumsticks, and breasts, we gather the leftovers, which include the necks, wing tips, breastbones, and skin. I make a bouquet garni of thyme (from the herb garden), whole coriander, and peppercorns. I put it all into our 20-quart stockpot, add vegetables and water, and bring the ingredients to a slow simmer. I cook the stock for several hours, cool it, and remove the layer of pale-yellow fat that collects on top and sieve the broth before I bottle it in one-litre canning jars and freeze it.

I THINK I KNOW WHEN I BECAME AWARE OF THE ETHICAL issues that surround the sustainability (or unsustainability) of our food. In my early 20s, I ate dinner at The Cannery, an elegant restaurant on the docks in East Vancouver. I sat at a linen-covered table in the elegantly converted industrial building that looked out over Burrard Inlet and the North Shore Mountains. Dressed in black and white, the waiters set the tables with cutlery, including deep-bowled soup spoons and fish knives. The fish knife surprised me with its scalloped blade and small end point, which could pick small bones from cooked fish. I discovered that the fish knife's thin blade could slip between the fish skin and flesh and separate it without a whisper of protest.

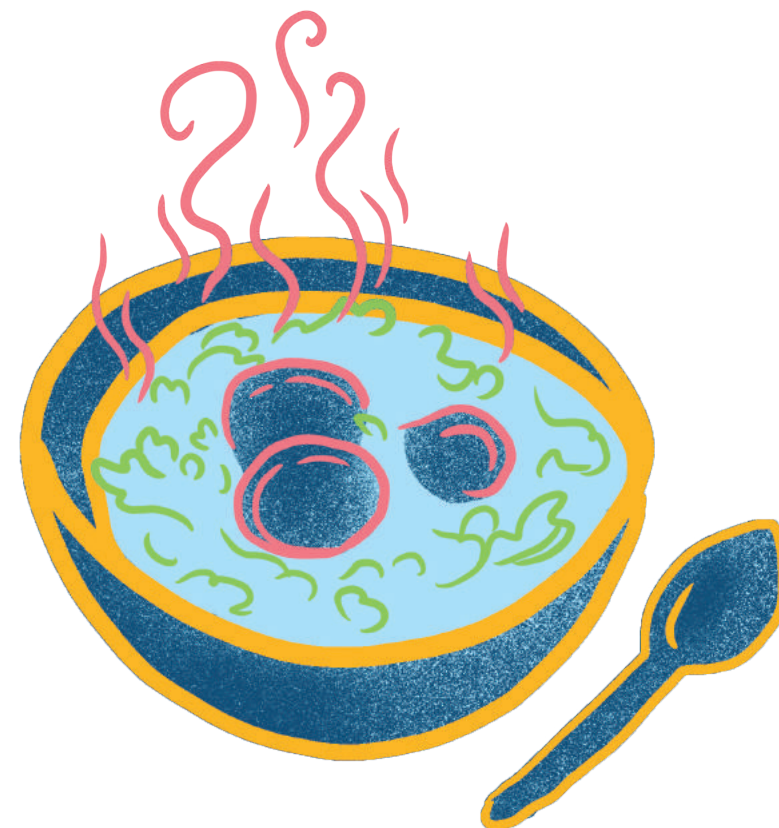
I grew up a Catholic, and Catholics eat fish on Friday, so eating fish wasn't new to me. I ice-fished with my father when we lived in the Selkirk Mountains. I remember how we'd bundle up in layers of clothing before we set out on a gravel road to the lake where we caught rainbow trout. As soon as they were gutted and cleaned, we threw two or three into melted butter in a cast iron pan that we had heated over a small fire on the shore. Nothing compares to the smell of fresh, pan-fried fish sizzling in butter on a cold winter day.

But The Cannery menu was more exotic. I had never heard of fish mousse, moules marinière, or salmon wellington served with pinot noir butter. I choose turtle soup as a starter. I don't know what compelled me to make that choice, but I do know that I regretted it after I chewed the first small cube of turtle meat. I wondered why I chose turtle. I knew that they had inhabited the earth's oceans for over 65 million years and that they often live to 100 years or more. I knew the turtle had been severely over-harvested the world over. And yet there I sat, devouring a morsel of one.

I can remember which side of the table I sat on, the shape and

colour of the bowl, and the cutlery the waiter brought. I think about how unlikely it is to remember a bowl of soup eaten 40 years ago until I realize it was the moment that I became aware of the cost of unsustainable practices in food production.

I LEAVE THE CALDO VERDE TO SIMMER WHILE I GRILL THE sausages on the barbeque. They were made at the Village Butcher in Oak Bay, which purchases animals from local farmers that commit to ethical food management. Once the sausage is cooked, I bring it into the house to cool while I set the table. I cut the baguette, ladle soup into two white bowls, and top the soup with the sausage. I think about discovering caldo verde in Iberia, the beauty of that landscape, the farms, and the complex connections we make with the environment and other cultures. As we sit down to the steaming bowls of green soup, Gage waits on his dog bed and whines for a taste. ♦



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# BETTING ON THE FARM

NEW LEGISLATION REUNITES THE ALR AND CURBS SPECULATION. BUT WILL IT HELP B.C.'S FARMERS?

BY CAMERON WELCH

WHEN THE B.C. NDP BROUGHT FORWARD THE AGRICULTURE Land Commission Amendment Act this November, it was never a question that Bill 52 would reunite the province's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) into a single zone again, after the Liberal government had split it four years ago. That part was a given. A crackdown on waste dumping and restrictions of dwelling sizes to 500 square metres (5,400 square feet) were expected too.

But could these changes return B.C.'s farmland to being used primarily as productive soil, rather than as investment property? That remains the big—and still unanswered—question.

Dave Barrett's NDP government created the ALR in 1973 to restrict non-agricultural land use in a 4.7-million-hectare zone comprising about 5 percent of B.C.'s land. When the Christy Clark government split the ALR in two in 2014 through Bill 24, Zone 1 maintained stricter use restrictions intended to protect farmland from development and speculation in B.C.'s population centres: the Island, South Coast, and Okanagan. The second half of the new ALR, which applied to the nearly 90 percent of the original ALR land located in less-heavily-populated areas of the province, allowed property to be considered for uses other than farming. This change raised concerns the land might be opened up for resource extraction.

But one election later, fears that mining and heavy industry might exploit remote agricultural land has taken a backseat to concern over the warping of Zone 1 farmland from food-producing resources into luxury real-estate investments—the gentrification of B.C.'s food supply.

When the ALR task force launched by Agriculture Minister Lana Popham surveyed the agriculture industry, respondents' biggest worry was about speculation on farmland for the purpose of building homes. And speculation has been the main

topic in mainstream discussions of B.C. farmland for the past several years. One plot in Richmond made headlines when it sold for a hundred times its assessed value in 2017, fetching \$9.2 million on an assessed value of under \$85,000 (official assessment numbers are tied to only the value of the farmland). Popham has cited this purchase in her promotion of the new bill.

## STOPPING MEGAMANSIONS

BILL 52'S HEADLINER IS THE LIMIT ON HOME SIZE. THE CLAUSE is intended to prevent new owners from turning acreages into large plots for "megamansions," with the land's intended farming function secondary to its main value as luxury real estate. Individual municipalities enacted house size restrictions of their own following high-profile sales of ALR land at spectacular prices, although not all councils went far enough. The City of Richmond capped sizes at 10,700 square feet in early 2017, but rejected advocates' demand to cut that limit in half, to 5,382 square feet, in May 2018. Voters pushed the issue again in the municipal elections, and Richmond council passed the more stringent restriction in early November—a somewhat redundant move, given that it came three weeks before the 5,400-square-foot limit became provincial law.

A 2016 *Globe and Mail* report found that speculators bought at least 73 of the 122 farmland plots sold between August 2015 and July 2016. Not only was farmland treated as valuable residential land, it was often even more appealing than regular residential land thanks to the lower property taxes of a farm designation. And although the likelihood of getting approval to remove purchased land from the ALR for major development was slim, a 2018 white paper introduced by Richard Bullock, the former chair of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), concluded

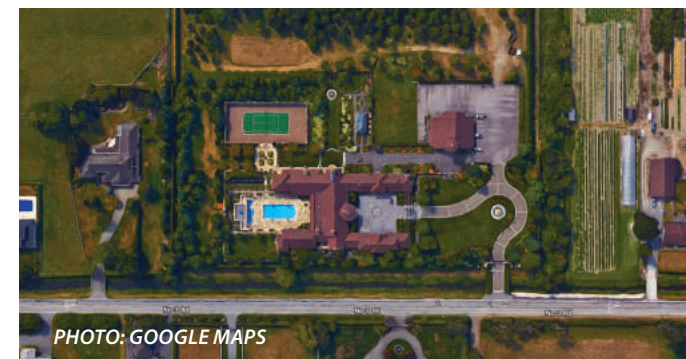


PHOTO: GOOGLE MAPS  
LUXURY HOME IN THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE IN RICHMOND, B.C.

that the massive increase in value that would result was enough to attract investors. (The ALR is overseen by the ALC.)

Residential-use purchasers were not simply in competition with farmers, they were handily outcompeting them. A 2016 Vancity report compared the point above which farmland stops being financially viable to farm (\$80,000 per acre) with the actual prices of Metro Vancouver farmland: \$150,000 to \$350,000 per acre for parcels under five acres, about \$110,000 to 120,000 for 20 acres, and \$50,000 to \$80,000 for more than 40.

## PROTECTING OUR SOIL

NATHALIE CHAMBERS IS A FARMER, AN ADVOCATE FOR LAND stewardship, and a recently elected Saanich city councillor. She and her husband raised funds to buy Madrona Farm, the land they farm, and put it into a farmland trust to ensure it would

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"We are in a speculation gold rush. We're commodifying and liquifying our essence, which is our soil."

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be cost-controlled and used as to grow food in the long-term. Madrona is now part of The Land Conservancy, a charitable non-profit land trust that was created in 1997 with the mission of protecting B.C.'s biodiversity. Popham, a Saanich resident and MLA for Saanich South since 2009, helped the couple with their first fundraiser to make the purchase.

Chambers is thrilled with Popham's approach to securing the province's ALR. "We are in a speculation gold rush," Chambers says. "We're commodifying and liquifying our essence, which is our soil."

Chambers gets animated when she talks about agro-ecology, a field she studied for the past 16 years. The volume of her voice spikes when she brings up either the magnificence of Island land or our collective betrayal of it. She calls southern B.C.'s soil the best in Canada for growing food and cautions that stronger ALR policy alone isn't sufficient to preserve that fertility—especially when the reserve itself doesn't always encompass all of a region's good farmland. "Do I think the ALR or any mechanism is sufficient to protect what I know exists in this soil? No."

Her priorities as a councillor include ensuring all good farmland is protected by the municipality's Urban Containment Boundary (which sets out which land is developable in the

city) and pushing for the Capital Regional District to either implement a previously passed farmlands trust or send it back to Saanich so council can implement it. But there's only so much Chambers can do locally. When it comes to the ALR, she wants stronger soil protections and reviews of business licences.

Speculation for residential housing isn't the only concern she has with ALR land use. She wants the province to also target misuses of agricultural land for industrial purposes spurred by the rising price of industrial land. "We need to respect our zoning," she says, "because if we're not watching our zoning, often people push the envelope of what is permitted and then, again, the price goes up."

Bill 52 focuses on curbing one form of industrial misuse: construction dumping. In a November 19 press release explaining the bill, Popham cites the 191 fill-related cases heard by the ALC in 2018—almost half of its total enforcement and compliance cases—as evidence of rampant dumping. Popham writes that, due to high returns for accepting construction waste and other dumping (up to \$200 a truckload and up to hundreds of thousands of truckloads), "some people find it more lucrative to farm fill rather than food." Her ministry's response includes up to a \$1 million fine and up to half a year of jail time for illegally dumping fill or removing soil from ALR land.

For Chambers, though, soil protection goes beyond eliminating such flagrant abuses. She opposes the building of dwellings and greenhouses on top of all high-quality soil. She believes that protecting the Island's soil quality is not only practical for maintaining food production but also a duty that British Columbians have to land that was cared for responsibly for thousands of years.

"The Garry oak ecosystem is the source of fertility in the Saanich Peninsula. We need to emulate the land practices of the original Coast Salish that were the stewards of these lands," says Chambers.

## STRIKING A BALANCE

ADAM OLSEN IS THE GREEN MLA FOR SAANICH NORTH AND the Islands and a member of the WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation. He is also hyperconscious of the damage done to the peninsula's ecosystem. He narrates a history of settler-era land use that unfurls as a short-sighted tragedy: centuries-old forests chopped down to create farms, the local ecological structure and water system thrown out of equilibrium as a result, and then those same farms discarded only a few decades later to build suburbs.

Unlike Chambers' hardline approach, Olsen believes the new law needs room for exceptions and allowances. He supports the ALR changes but feels the next challenge will be to add nuances that enable variety within farming practices without opening the door for real estate. For years, farmland has been under such threat from speculators that its protectors in government couldn't concede an inch.

"I think about this in the [rural-urban] context of Central Saanich, where I was a councillor," says Olsen. "We can't let anything happen for fear that our food producing is going to be greatly diminished, because we saw strawberry fields in the 1970s and '80s turn into entire neighbourhoods."

Olsen thinks the restrictions would be more comprehensive





MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE LANA POPHAM JOINED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM YOUNG AGRARIANS TO ANNOUNCE BC LAND-MATCHING PROGRAM.

and flexible if, instead of going by size and number of houses, the rules focused more on a “home plate” (i.e., the footprint and impact of the non-farming uses including driveway size, quality of covered soil, etc.). The bill limits the number of residences to one, unless the ALC can be convinced another is “necessary for a farm use,” but Olsen doesn’t see why three smaller well-placed homes wouldn’t be just as good as a single large house with a long driveway and landscaping.

Delta South MLA Ian Paton, a dairy farmer and the B.C. Liberals’ agriculture critic, also believes footprint is more important than total size. He proposed an amendment that would have tied the limit to only the first floor and put it at 3,600 square feet while restricting the location to the corner or the lot, 60 metres from the road. But it was defeated. Placement rules are coming in the new year in the regulations package. According to Popham, these rules were too region-dependent to enshrine in the initial bill.

“People have asked why we didn’t put this into legislation, and that’s because we needed the flexibility,” says Popham. “So a farm in Delta that’s all flat would be completely different from a farm in Cranbrook that may have steep sections in it.”

Whether farmland is being farmed is more important than the number of people and houses on the plot, argues Paton, so he supports allowing smaller second homes for farmers’ grown children who want to keep farming but need their own space. The problem with the infamous Richmond megamansions is that the owners often aren’t farmers, and Paton believes that even within active agriculture land, there’s a double standard when it comes to occupancy and housing.

“[For] the greenhouse industry, it’s basically ‘fill your boots’ when it comes to bringing in basically permanent trailers for migrant workers,” Paton says, arguing that multi-generation farmers such as South Asian families in the Lower Mainland should be equally able to use their land for housing.

Olsen is mindful of the potential ethnocentrism of rules that

assume single-family occupancy is the normal and universal way to live on a farm. “Different cultures live differently than each other,” he says. “I come from Indigenous communities, from First Nations communities, where we’ve got multiple generations, multiple families living together, and that’s a normal thing. I come from a longhouse culture.”

“The South Asian community, where you have multiple families providing supports for each other—there are huge benefits to this. There’s less need for senior care, there’s less need for child care. There are more family members working on the farm.”

Raised frequently in media analysis around Bill 52, the ability to live together with extended family on a family farm came up at a raucous late-November town hall in Delta. But the new bill does provide a straightforward way for landholders to get exemptions to house size and land-use restrictions. Municipalities will pass applications for larger sizes along to the Agricultural Land Commission, which will approve requests from farming families but not developers.

The criteria the ALC will use to sort the farmers from developers isn’t clear yet but will be set out when the regulations are released. The long-term stability and functioning of the commission was a key concern among the task force’s survey respondents, so Popham will introduce a second bill dealing with the ALC in the next legislative session.

### CONNECTING YOUNG FARMERS

THE ALR BILL MAY HAVE A WORKING MECHANISM TO KEEP families on their farmland. But does it do enough to help farmers who don’t have an existing family plot? Azja Jones Martin is unsure that the new setup will do enough for her demographic.

Martin is a farmer and also works as a “land matcher” for the Young Agrarians network: she pairs landowners looking to lease and new farmers looking for plots. While she supports the restrictions on speculation, she isn’t sure they will do much more for young farmers than reassure them that the properties they lease won’t be sold for development at any moment. She doubts the new restrictions can bring land prices down enough for young farmers—most of whom lease their land—to afford to buy.

Popham acknowledges that property ownership is difficult in B.C. but believes the government’s work with the Young Agrarians on the land-matching program will give young people the opportunity to make a living as farmers despite not being farm-owners. “Land prices in general in B.C. are not affordable for new and young farmers,” says Popham. “I don’t think we can probably change legislation that allows that to happen. Land’s expensive here. Homes are expensive, and so not everyone will or not everybody wants to own a farm, but there are a lot of people who still want to farm.”

She also cites an educational program connecting young farmers with farmers easing into retirement and floats the potential to revitalize parts of northern and rural B.C. hurt by logging and mining downturns by connecting young farmers with the unused ALR land out there.

“If farmers aren’t able to live on the land, that’s a major obstacle,” Martin says, pointing to the restrictions on farm accommodations that allow exceptions for farm employees but not leasers. Popham acknowledges that limitation but notes farm

owners and their leasers could apply to the ALC for exceptions. Beyond that, Martin believes grants could go a long way toward making the jump from part-time farmer to a full-time agriculture career more feasible.

“Lots of people are getting into [farming], and I’m really excited about that,” says Martin, “but also I see so many people leaving that have put in a good four or five years and have built businesses but then give it up because they ultimately aren’t able to [scale up] to make the business sustainable in a way that lets them have at least a moderate work-life balance.”

### PROTECTING FARMLAND VS PROTECTING FARMERS

THE B.C. LIBERALS HAVE JUMPED ON THE ANGLE THAT IT’S difficult to make a living as a farmer. They argue that restricting non-farming activity on ALR land harms the side revenue streams that allow farmers to supplement their income.

Paton says that because most of B.C.’s climate limits how many months farms can be producing, other uses such as agritourism, storefronts, and artisan manufacturing should be allowed—provided they aren’t industrial activities that will damage the land. “As long as the farmer’s happily making a decent living, I guarantee you that farmland will always be there in production,” he says.

Rancher Max Winkleman argued in a *100 Mile House Free Press* editorial that Bill 52’s changes mainly address problems in the southwest of the province. Mansion speculation and dumping don’t explain why, for example, over five years, Cariboo Area G has lost a fifth of its farms and half its cattle and calves.

“If you care about preserving farmland, this bill is great,” writes Winkleman. “If you care about B.C. farmers and B.C. food production, it’s hard to see it being of any help in 89 percent of B.C.’s Agricultural Land Reserve.”

Popham is conscious of the risk of falling into what former NDP agriculture minister Corky Evans described as protecting the farmland but forgetting about the farmer. But she believes

those two concerns are more symbiotic than critics acknowledge.

“The best way as the provincial government that we can protect the Agricultural Land Reserve is to bring it into production and to make farming viable,” she says. Only half of the ALR is currently being farmed. Both Popham and Paton feel that land matching will do a lot to get the rest into use.

Olsen agrees that financial health for farmers and nutrient health for the soil are compatible, but he is adamant that food production needs to be protected against profit-driven thinking.

“We see time and time again that the value of other uses is put ahead of the value of agriculture,” he says. “Part of the governing of early civilizations was around food production, and we’ve now largely turned it over to market forces.” Olsen thinks governments have a responsibility to protect food-producing land. “It’s only in the last hundred years that we’ve been so insane as to allow other regions to entirely supply food for our communities.”

The Agriculture Ministry plans to take a major step toward reducing that dependence, creating business for farmers and localizing the province’s food production next year. The Feed BC initiative involves having B.C.’s healthcare sector purchase its food from B.C.’s growers and processors, guaranteeing a market. The shift has been slow-moving because of the coordination of two ministries, as well as various barriers and requirements that were prohibitive in past years.

But with distributors on board and a growing public appetite for eating local, the time is ripe for Feed BC and other similar initiatives. In the new year, the government will launch at least a pilot project providing an in-house market for the ALR’s products. When you’re betting on the farm, it helps to be able to stack the deck a little. For the time being, Bill 52 should at least keep the cards in play—instead of stacked up into towering houses. ♦



PHOTOS: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

# WINTER GREENS

Bring Some Garden Goodness into Your Life During the Cold Season

By ROSE MORRIS

IF YOU'RE MISSING THE GARDEN DURING THESE LONG WINTER months, here are some ways to inject the season with a little green. There are plenty of chances to bring the garden indoors for winter, from growing food inside to making herbal infusions to starting seeds for spring. Try one, or all, of these ideas, and you won't even miss summer anymore—well, not as badly, anyway.

## GROW SPROUTS

A GREAT WAY TO ENJOY SOME HOMEGROWN PRODUCE IN THE wintertime is to grow your own sprouts. It's dead easy—all you need is a Mason jar, some cheesecloth, and seeds for sprouting. First, choose the seeds. You can buy a sprouting mix or go else for mung beans, green peas, alfalfa, broccoli, or clover.

Soak your seeds in water for a couple of hours, then drain them and place them in a Mason jar. Cover the top of the jar

with a square of cheesecloth and secure the cheesecloth with a canning ring. Rinse the seeds by adding water to the jar and using the cheesecloth as a strainer to pour the water back out and keep the seeds in the jar. Repeat the rinsing process twice a day until the sprouts are ready to eat, which will take about three to seven days.

## REGROW KITCHEN SCRAPS

ANOTHER WAY TO GROW YOUR OWN FOOD WHEN THE GARDEN'S dormant is to regrow kitchen scraps. There are actually quite a few things you can grow right in your kitchen from an end or a bulb leftover from the market.

Next time you buy a bunch of green onions, save the white bulb ends and place them bulb-side down in a small glass or jar. Add about a half-inch of water and put the glass in a window or somewhere with lots of natural light. Change the water every few days and watch your green onions grow. You can snip off the green parts to use and they will keep growing more. You can do the same thing with lemon grass, fennel, leeks, and more.

## MAKE HERBAL RECIPES

IF YOU PRESERVED HERBS FROM THE GARDEN OR EVEN STILL have some growing out there—praise the mild West Coast winter—you can use them to make yummy recipes, healing teas, and more.

A great way to enjoy the flavour and health properties of herbs is to make infused vinegar. Simply fill a Mason jar with the vinegar of your choosing (apple cider vinegar, white vinegar, and rice vinegar are good options) and add a small handful of your favourite herbs to the vinegar. Secure the lid on the jar and let your vinegar-herb mixture sit for five to seven days. Strain the herbs out and put the vinegar in a glass bottle. It's perfect for salads, drizzled on roasted vegetables, or as a dip for crusty bread. You can use just one herb at a time or try a combination.

Herbal teas are also wonderful and can be your best friend during cold-and-flu season. Mint purportedly soothes stomach aches, and sage can work wonders on a sore throat. You can also make a powerful bedtime tea using chamomile, lavender, passion

flower, and hops (or any combination of these—they all help the body relax and drift into a deep slumber).

If you want to try some herbal recipes but don't have any herbs left to harvest, you could try your hand at some recipes using foraged conifer needles. That's right—you can even use snippets from your Christmas tree. Herbalists are getting more and more interested in the healing benefits of pine and fir needles, and they actually have a very pleasant evergreen flavour with citrusy notes. You can add conifer needles to herbal teas, savoury dishes, or even baked goods.

Please note that while almost all conifer needles are edible be absolutely certain that you have positively identified and confirmed the edibility of any foraged plant.

## START PLANTS FOR SPRING

OF COURSE ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO GET THROUGH WINTER is to start looking forward to spring. You can start seedlings indoors so that they are ready to transplant into the garden when the time comes. Different plants have different needs in terms of when to start them, but a good general rule is to start seedlings indoors about six weeks before the last frost of the season.

Fill seedling trays or clean plastic containers from the recycling bin (with holes added to the bottom for drainage) with a sterile soil mix made especially for seed starting. It's important to use sterile soil mix as opposed to garden soil so you can be

sure that it won't contain any bugs or disease that can hurt your plant starts.

Before planting, check the instructions on your seeds. Some may need to be soaked in water or chilled in the fridge before they go into the soil. Plant seeds at the depth specified on the packet. Make sure you label what you planted. You may think you won't forget or get mixed up, but seedlings all look mighty similar, and it's easier to lose track than you might think. Wooden popsicle sticks make great labels.

Once planted, place your containers in a warm area of your house (on top of the refrigerator is perfect) and water as directed on the seed packet. When your seedlings begin to sprout, move the container to a bright area—either a sunny window or under a grow light.

Thin seedlings as needed. You may be tempted to save them all, but when they are starting to crowd each other, it is better in the long run to remove a few seedlings and give the others space than to try and grow them all too close together. When the seedlings grow their second pair of leaves, it's time to transplant them into their own individual pots.

When it is almost time to transplant your starts into the garden, take a few days where you can leave them outside for a few hours and then bring them back in, slowly acclimatizing them to the colder outside environment that will soon become their home. ♦



PHOTO: JOANA KOSINKA

**DESIGNER:** ADPP ARCHITECTS LLP

**CONSTRUCTION:** TIONG SENG CONTRACTORS (PTE) LTD

KNOWN AS “THE GARDEN CITY,” SINGAPORE, AN ISLAND city-state off southern Malaysia, has been living up to that moniker with mandated green buildings since 2008. Currently ranked second among global cities for green buildings, it aims to have 80 percent of its structures certified as sustainable under its Building and Construction Authority’s Green Mark Scheme by 2030.

According to a report by *Research and Markets*, they hit 30 percent in 2017, and they’re currently revving up to bridge the remaining 50 percent with sustainable features like efficient cooling devices, streamlined energy usage, and insulating coatings to protect from UVs. One of Singapore’s most notable examples of this sustainable architectural movement is the Tree House

Earning a spot in the 2014 edition of the Guinness World Records for the world’s largest vertical garden, Singapore’s Tree House condominium sets a sustainable example for the world to follow, saving approximately \$500,000 in both energy and water costs annually when compared to similar structures. The nature-inspired development consists of four 24-storey towers, each with 429 units, in the Upper Bukit Timah private residential estate in the city’s west side.

The Tree House’s signature vertical garden is more than an architectural trademark: it acts as a natural insulation and reduces the condominium’s carbon footprint by filtering pollutants and carbon dioxide from the air. This, in turn, reduces heat absorption and lowers the amount of energy required to cool its indoor spaces. Through this insulation, the Tree House achieves air conditioning savings of between 15 and 30 percent annually for the 48 master bedrooms that face the vertical garden wall. The buildings also use a sloped design to maximize the harvest of rainwater, which is funnelled into a self-sustaining irrigation system for the garden.

In addition to the outdoor wall, the Tree House includes laminated green-tinted heat-reducing windows, motion sensors at staircases that automatically activate lights, and lifts with variable voltage and frequency. Through its excellence and innovation, the Tree House received the Green Mark Platinum award by the Building and Construction Authority in 2010, a special award for design for maintenance at the National Parks Board Skyrise Greenery Awards in 2013, and honours in the



best innovative green building category at the MIPIM Asia Awards 2013, which honour outstanding projects in the Asia Pacific region.

ADPP Architects LLP’s ingenuity in eco-friendly architecture and Singapore’s commitment to sustainable buildings could be an inspiration for housing here in Canadian cities, where structures produce 17 percent of the country’s greenhouse gasses and 40 percent of emissions from electricity generation is for energy used in our buildings.

— EMMA SLOAN

**PODCAST PLAYLIST**

THIS IS THE PERFECT TIME TO SETTLE IN WITH ENTERTAINING AND informative podcasts to keep your mind active while the days are shorter. These are a few of our favourites.

Based out of the University of Mississippi, the James Beard–winning Southern Foodways Alliance has an equally prestigious podcast, appropriately called **Gravy**, which takes listeners through beautiful half-hour vignettes of food and culture in the American south.

While still relatively new, **The Bread Line** looks at food issues from an unabashedly socialist and environmental justice perspective, covering topics like food assistance and meals in the prison system.

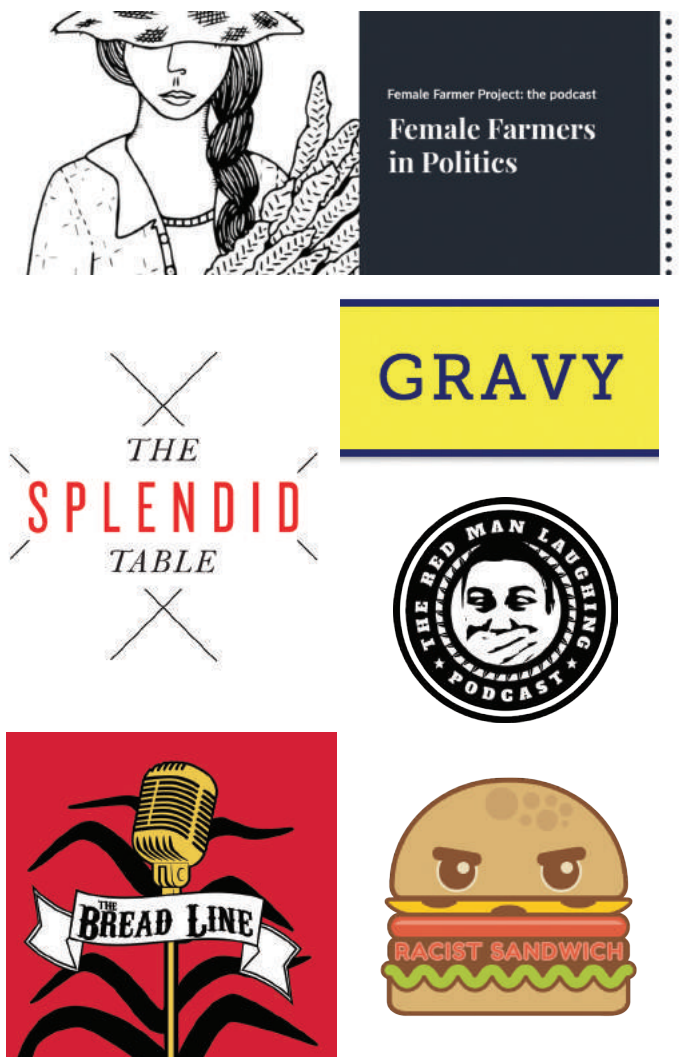
Created in the Pacific Northwest by Audra Mulkern, the **Female Farmer Project** is a multi-disciplinary platform aimed at spotlighting a group of the population often left out of the picture when it comes to farming—women. Its semi-regular podcast checks in with the different ways women handle mundane farm tasks and balance the things that tend to affect them more, like child care.

All seasons of **Red Man Laughing** are good, but this winter, host Ryan McMahon is focusing specifically on Indigenous food systems and how they relate to nationhood and resurgence. McMahon also hosts **Stories from the Land**, as a part of his Makoons Media Group, which often touches on food issues and is worth a listen as well.

Foodie culture is rife with cultural appropriation at best and blatant racism at worst. The hosts of **Racist Sandwich** delve into the complexities and pitfalls of the restaurant industry and the media that covers it in biweekly instalments.

A legend in the game, **The Splendid Table** began over 20 years ago as a live call-in show on Minnesota Public Radio, and it retains a call-in segment. Host Frances Lim recently took over from Lynne Rossetto Kasper, who started the show based on her popular book of the same name, and will steer the podcast as it continues to lead on issues in the food world.

— QUINN MACDONALD



**E-AGRICULTURE**

SELF-DESCRIBED AS “A COMMUNITY OF COLLABORATORS interested in developing and sharing open-source tools for a resilient agriculture,” Farm Hack ([farmhack.org](http://farmhack.org)) is a vast resource of open-source designs and modifications for farm tools from not only farmers but also engineers, roboticists, designers, architects, programmers, and hackers. “Open-source seeds, breeds, and technology are the fastest way to accelerate innovation and adaptation and ensure an equitable, diverse agricultural language,” reads their website.

Depending on the size of your field, you may want to invest in a drone. Their capabilities are improving all the time, and while agriculture drones can’t currently detect the difference between a plant and a weed, they can identify sick plants (because stressed plants reflect light differently), monitor for disease, and check on water saturation and leaks in irrigation equipment. For more information, check out the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report called “E-Agriculture in Action: Drones for Agriculture.”

— QUINN MACDONALD

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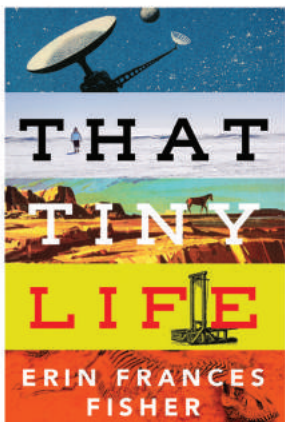
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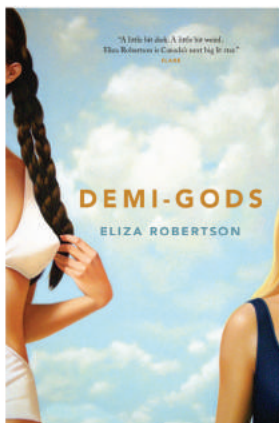
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