

AGRICULTURE AND ECO COMMUNITIES



There are many benefits of having a robust and diverse garden in an eco community. From an environmental, social and economic perspective - gardens are great places to grow, learn and share together. One of the goals of eco communities is to be as self-sustainable as possible. Growing your own food provides a low carbon footprint and minimal to no waste - as scraps can be reused as feed for animals or added to a compost to give back to the earth.

As the weather is often changing and climatic patterns evolve it is wise to have different crops that can sustain different conditions, to ensure you always have a thriving food source. Always pick crops that are known to thrive in your geography.

It is also very economical to grow your own food as the cost of seeds is relatively marginal. Growing your own food provides the added benefit of knowing exactly how your food is grown. Having a garden allows you to avoid any added chemicals or pesticides, this can go a long way in making eating healthy a reality. Food harvested from community gardens can also be shared within the community and can be utilized as a source of income.

Seed Selection and Crop Rotation

It is always recommended to use organic seeds that are not genetically modified or "GMO". Look for heirloom varieties wherever possible. It is also advisable to rotate your crops each year to avoid depleting nutrients from your soil. Consider planting crops together that complement each other's needs. For example, some First Nation communities plant corn, bean and squash together as they work well in supporting each other's growth and needs. Growing a variety of crops together helps to maintain soil fertility and can be used as a natural method to control pests.

Did You Know?

Organic farms are able to store more carbon, and can store that carbon for a longer period of time, compared to more conventional forms of farming!



Nutrients for Healthy Plant Growth

The addition of nutrients can help to ensure healthy growth of your fruits and vegetables. It is a common myth that chemicals (whether they are fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, antibiotics or other additives or preservatives) need to be added to your garden to support successful plant growth. In fact, there are many natural alternatives that can be added to your crops that have no chemicals or pesticides. Home made compost is a great example. Castings from a worm composter are excellent supplements to support your gardens growth.

Eggs and Meat

Some eco communities enjoy fresh eggs and meats that are sourced from their back yard. If you plan to raise animals on your eco community consider grass feed and/or organic feed to avoid any harmful chemicals, hormones and antibiotics. If you plan on raising chickens consider getting them when they are just a day or two old, this is an economical option and provides a world of joy watching the chicks grow to full size!

Don't Forget About the Pollinators!

Pollinators such as bees and butterflies are an important part of the ecosystem, especially when it comes to a healthy garden. Consider planting local pollinator flowers near to your garden to invite them to visit. Seeds for Eco Communities uses black eyed susan's in our business cards which is a local Ontario pollinating flower. We encourage these cards to be planted to help support pollinator health. These wild flowers require little maintenance once established, mother nature takes care of the rest.