



Plant a Row - Grow a Row

Growing extra food to help those in need!

Plant a Row - Grow a Row is a national initiative that began in 1986 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Since then, it has been successfully established in over 85 communities across the country. The premise is simple - why not grow an extra row of vegetables to help those in need!

Victoria, with its mild climate and optimum year-round growing conditions, is a perfect fit to be the latest community to join this grassroots movement! With growing social concerns surrounding homelessness and access to fresh, local produce, our community can easily become part of the solution!

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I join?

Any gardener can join by calling the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre (GVCEC) and we will take your contact information so we can contact you once courses, Community Harvest Celebrations, and drop-off times are confirmed. We will also be providing advice and guidance to help those new to gardening.

Do I have to be a Fernwood gardener?

Although the pilot year is designed for Fernwood residents in regards to the drop-off location and the local shelter that the food is going to, any gardener is welcome to join if they are willing to drop-off the food during the allotted times at the Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group (Fernwood NRG). Alternatively, we will be encouraging non-Fernwood residents to contact local transition houses and food banks in their neighbourhoods to ask if food is able to be donated to them directly.

What if I am a beginner gardener?

Growing food is something that takes a little practice and guidance and we are happy to help! The GVCEC will have a couple of free courses at the beginning of the project specifically to help beginners have a successful gardening experience. We will also be hosting regular Community Harvest Celebrations where you can "pick the brains" of more experienced gardening participants. The GVCEC and project partner Lifecycles Project Society both operate hotlines for gardeners and

composters to offer advice and guidance. The hotline of the GVCEC is (250) 386-9676 or email sitemgr@compost.bc.ca and the hotline of the Lifecycles Project Society is (250) 590-4141.

What if I want to learn more about winter gardening?

Whether you are a beginner or an experienced gardener, many Victoria gardeners want to learn about gardening through the winter. We will be hosting a free course for participants on winter gardening in June. We will email participants with confirmed dates.

What are some other benefits for participant gardeners?

We want Plant a Row-Grow a Row to become a community building tool for all participants and we will be hosting regular Community Harvest Celebrations to give participants an opportunity to get together and trade stories and tips and maybe make some new friends along the way!

Where and when will I drop-off my food?

Once the produce starts coming in, hopefully sometime in June, we will begin weekly drop-offs at the Fernwood NRG. The staff and volunteers there will track and weigh the food before it is donated. We will be confirming details of the drop-off times closer to the date.

Where will the food go?

In this first year, part of the fresh produce will go to Fernwood NRG's Best Babies program which helps at-risk mothers with prenatal and postnatal nutrition. The remainder (approximately 75%) will go to Our Place Transition Shelter on Pandora Ave.

What if I have problems growing food?

We are here to help! If you are having problems, we will work with you to ensure a successful harvest. The first step is to contact the hotlines of the GVCEC and Lifecycles Project Society and the knowledgeable staff and volunteers can discuss your specific issues with you. The hotline of the GVCEC is (250) 386-9676(WORM) or by email sitemgr@compost.bc.ca and the hotline of the Lifecycles Project Society is (250) 590-4141. If we can't assist over the phone/ email we will try to find other ways to help you.

What are the goals in the pilot year?

For the pilot year we want to sign up 100 participants and donate 1 tonne of food – so tell all your friends and neighbours!

What is the plan for subsequent years?

We hope to expand this program to 5 neighbourhoods next year, each being “anchored” to a neighbourhood community association.

Neighbourhoods can then “compete” to see who can sign up the most participants and donate the most food! Hopefully within 3 years this program will be CRD wide and self-sustaining.

How can I get my garden started?

Looking for seeds or seedlings? The GVCEC carries a diverse range of local and organic seeds and we will also be hosting our 7th annual Organic Plant Sale where local organic growers will be selling their seedlings. The Organic Plant Sale will also have free courses on growing tomatoes and salad greens, live music, coffee and snacks, and composting merchandise at 10% off. Last year more than 1,000 people came so don't miss it this year – Saturday, May 15th from 10am-1pm.

When will food drop-offs end?

We will stop drop-offs based on the volume of food. If we keep receiving an abundance of food, even throughout the winter, then we will continue with the drop-off schedule. This is our greatest hope!