

GREENING our communities

through Live Green Toronto Grants

FoodShare

PROJECT:

Growing the Edible City

Growing the Edible City is aligned with FoodShare's mandate to effect positive change by improving how food is produced, distributed and consumed.

FoodShare

The goals of the Growing the Edible City project were to help community partners implement and demonstrate new approaches to growing urban food, and build understanding of how these approaches reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change. Through six components, the Growing the Edible City project helped develop innovative solutions to complex food system problems.

FoodShare was founded in 1985 by then Mayor of Toronto Art Eggleton and others to address several related issues. Along with co-ordinating emergency food services and collecting and distributing food, FoodShare advocates for policies that promote employment and income levels that allow people to meet their basic needs.



For more information about
Growing the Edible City,
visit foodshare.net or
email info@foodshare.net.

“Thank you so much for teaching me about urban agriculture, and for making it easy and fun! I pledge to grow as much as I can in the space I have, to eat locally and organically, and to build my own bike-powered generator at my home.”

Participant

 **TORONTO**

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Livegreen
Toronto

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In one year, the six components of the Growing the Edible City project reduced carbon emissions by almost two tonnes and contributed to the advancement of urban agriculture at the local, provincial and national levels.

FoodShare created three very successful and labour intensive 'edible landscapes', delivered edible landscape workshops, gave tours to more than 400 people and produced 247 kg of food in their first season.

FoodShare built and distributed 30 composting units to various community sites and trained people to use them. Each unit processes 25 kg of compost per week. The compost will sequester more than 1.5 tonnes of carbon each year.

FoodShare also constructed vermi-composting furniture, or as they called it, wormiture. Sometimes it's difficult to find a place to store a worm composter, so why not incorporate it into something you can sit on? FoodShare built two vermi-composting benches and a coffee table, all from found materials, and quickly created enough rich compost for a garden.

Because food production requires pollinators, FoodShare worked with Toronto Beekeepers Cooperative and FoodCycles to expand projects already underway at Evergreen Brick Works and Downsview Park and initiated a partnership with Toronto Botanical Gardens. Staff at Evergreen, FoodCycles and Toronto Botanical Gardens who have learned about beekeeping will now educate others about bees, their role as pollinators, and the importance of biodiversity. Hundreds of people have visited the beekeeping sites and attended workshops. FoodShare's contributions have helped the Toronto Beekeepers Cooperative to expand to 40 members, and aided the production of more than 1,000 lbs. of sweet honey.

2009 Capital Grant (\$41,500)



FoodShare built a bicycle-powered wood chipper and shredder which was quickly repurposed into a blender.

FoodShare's foray into aquaponics included the development of an aquaponic unit that people could use at home. It won first prize in the 2010 EcoAction Challenge, hosted by Earth Day Canada. A feasibility study on the construction of a larger aquaponics system at Downsview Park is underway, as is training for other organizations, individuals and universities. FoodShare delivered aquaponics workshops and led more than 550 tours.

Did you know?

Aquaponics is a sustainable food production system that combines a traditional aquaculture (raising aquatic animals such as fish, crayfish or prawns in a tank) with hydroponics (cultivating plants in water) in a symbiotic environment where the two parts of the system support and nurture each other. The effluent that builds up in the fish tank is filtered to clean the water, and this filtered material feeds the plants. FoodShare's pilot aquaponics project reared tilapia and raised a variety of plants.

Challenges

FoodShare's projects were innovative and experimental. The aquaponic prototype, for example, required much trial and error as did building wormiture and the bicycle-powered woodchipper. They also found the maintenance of the edible landscapes to be very labour intensive.

What's next

FoodShare will continue to drive innovation in the urban agricultural sector and share their experiences with other organizations.

"Because of FoodShare, I will grow more of my own food and share this information with others!"

Participant