

Food for Thought

2016 marks the 30th year in which York Region Food Network has been changing the conversation about hunger and food insecurity in our community. We have been expanding our programs, outreach and advocacy to ensure that more and more people have dignified access to healthy food. In 2015 we served over 120 people a healthy, hot breakfast on Tuesdays, sold over 1200 Good Food Boxes and provided garden space for 250 community gardeners feeding over 1000 people.

Our programs feed people by bringing them together in non-stigmatizing and comfortable environments where everyone is on equal footing. We help build food skills by making spaces for people to garden and grow their own food, offering workshops like food preservation and cooking on a budget, and providing community kitchen programs where people come together to prepare a meal that they will share together over laughter and conversation.

We also raise public awareness and educate on long-term responses to hunger and poverty; responses that address all the factors that cause hunger in our communities including affordable housing, adequate employment, education, accessible childcare and social assistance policies. We know that food access programs will not address food insecurity – only income can do that. But we also know that good food connects us and helps us be more resilient.

As a Good Food Organization, we believe that good food has the power to build health while connecting and inspiring people to become engaged in issues that matter to them. We rely on donations to support our activities that promote food security, and foster collaborations to create a healthy, accessible and sustainable food system.

Thank you for your support!

Joan Stonehocker, Executive Director



Readying the Gardens for Spring

It's mid-April as I'm writing and there's still snow on the ground. It doesn't yet feel like spring has sprung, though subtle signs are popping up everywhere. This morning, a robin was singing at the top of a tree outside our office building as finches flitted about overhead. It was a comforting and welcome sight.



The gardens are just starting to thaw a little and form their yearly mud puddles. With spring arriving so late, I get frequent emails from my community gardeners asking about opening dates. Normally the gardens open in mid-April but, with the ground still mostly frozen, I doubt most will be able to get started yet. I, too, can't wait for the soil to warm and be able to get my hands dirty. This will be the first year I'll be teaching my young cousins about gardening, too, and I can't wait.

There are things to do right now, though, to prepare for gardening season. One of these is starting seeds. There are many seed resources online that can help to guide you. It's good to start tomato and pepper seeds, for example, 6-8 weeks before planting outdoors. Using a good soil-less mix and a grow light, you can get the jump on the growing season and have your home-grown transplants ready when spring finally comes.


Bronwen Fitzsimons, Urban Agriculture Coordinator



Board Members wanted!

Are you interested in food security and healthy food systems? We are looking for dedicated people with varied backgrounds to join our Board. Fundraising and legal skills are of particular interest at this time. If you want more information, please contact Joan Stonehocker at joans@yrfn.ca

*Join us for our Annual
General Meeting*

Thursday, June 9th, 2016



Meals in Under 30

Thursday June 16, 11am - 1pm
York Region Food Network
350 Industrial Parkway S., Aurora

Looking for dinner inspiration? Pressed for time? This free workshop offers fast and flexible tips and recipes to get delicious, healthy and beautiful dinners on the table in under 30 minutes. Enjoy lunch with us and leave with dinner for you and your family.

Summer Salads

Tuesday June 21, 11am - 1pm
York Region Food Network,
350 Industrial Parkway S., Aurora

Salads can be so much more than just lettuce. This free workshop offers sensational salads & dressings - perfect for easy entertaining and BBQ season. Salads will use the best of what's grown locally.

To reserve your place, contact Kate at kateg@yrfn.ca or 905-841-3101 ext. 206

**GOOD FOOD
WORKSHOPS**

York Region
**Food
Network**

For more information about YRFN's programming, visit www.yrfn.ca

Thank you to our funders!



Spring Garden Tips

Transplanting

Plants that are seeded in small pots need to be transplanted. Outdoor soil should be ready for these transplants as well as for sowing seeds directly.

Helpful Information

- Seedlings are sensitive! Handle gently, hold them by the leaves not the roots or stems. Wait till seedlings have developed two sets of leaves. Leave soil around the roots, transplant the seedling into the soil, pat soil around stem, and water immediately.
- Some plants do not transplant well; therefore, they should be planted as direct seeds. Examples are carrots, radishes, parsnips, garlic, and other root vegetables, peas and beans.
- Salad greens and cucumbers are easily damaged and must be transplanted with great care.

Hardening off

It is important to move seedlings/plants outside during the day and bring them in at night for 7-10 days to gradually increase their tolerance to the changing temperatures and environmental conditions.

Lynne Koss, Seeds for Change

York Region Grows

Seed libraries are sprouting across York Region, and it is becoming easier and easier for everyone to grow food. Often found in public spaces like libraries or community centres, seed libraries are places for community members to gain free* access to vegetable, fruit, flower and herb seeds. Seed libraries germinate for a variety of reasons – some start as a way to encourage people to garden and grow their own food, others are to develop a network of seed savers and create locally adapted varieties of a range of fruits and vegetables.

Each seed library works independently, but the basic process is you checkout seeds once or multiple times throughout the growing season. Sow and care for your seeds, while learning best practices through all the available community information and workshops (see: [Lake Simcoe South Master Gardens](#) and [York Region Food Charter](#)). Enjoy the veggies and fruits of your labour throughout the growing season, and return some of the seeds you save to your seed library.

Take advantage of your nearby seed library for the 2016 growing season!

York Region Grows Seed Libraries

- [Newmarket Grows Seed Library](#) (use your NPL card)
- [Richmond Hill Grows Seed Library](#) at Richmond Hill Central Library
- [Markham Grows Seed Library](#) at Milliken Mills Public Library and Cornell Public Library (use your MPL card)
- [York Region Food Network](#) Grows Seed and Equipment Library (available to all)

*Each seed library works independently. Many seed libraries are free or cost a nominal fee to users.

Kate Greavette, Food Charter Coordinator

Indoor Seeding

- Cucumber
- Kohlrabi
- Pumpkin
- Watermelon

Transplanting

- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Chard
- Chives
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Onions
- Parsley

Direct Seeding

Outdoor

- Beets
- Carrots
- Chard
- Chives
- Corn
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Spinach
- Rutabaga
- Turnips



The Great Canadian GIVING CHALLENGE

JUNE 1ST - 30TH 2016

DONATE TO ANY REGISTERED CANADIAN CHARITY AND AUTOMATICALLY ENTER THEM TO WIN \$10,000

GivingChallenge.ca



What's the BIG Idea 2.0?

Learn How a Basic Income Guarantee Can Address Food Insecurity

Food justice requires more than community responses. MPP Chris Ballard will share the Provincial plans for a Basic Income pilot. Come and join the discussion!

When: Thursday, June 16, 2016, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Refreshments 6:30-7:00

Where: Town of Newmarket, Council Chambers
395 Mulock Dr., Newmarket

To register for this free event, visit
<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/whats-the-big-idea-20-tickets-25550703843>
or call 905-841-3101

Join York Region Food Network's Fundraising Campaign

I support YRFN's work to improve access to affordable, nutritious food for all people of York Region.

I have enclosed my donation of: \$50 \$100 \$250 Other

Please make cheques payable to York Region Food Network.

YRFN will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations over \$20. Registration 87044 7315 RR0001

Name: _____

Address: _____

To donate by credit card, visit our website at www.yrfn.ca and click on the link to CanadaHelps.org, a secure website where you can make a tax deductible credit card donation to YRFN.

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