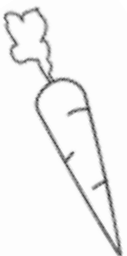
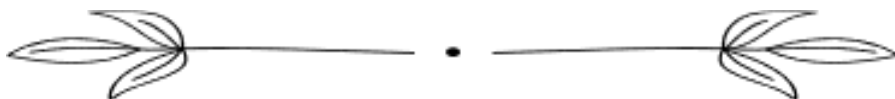
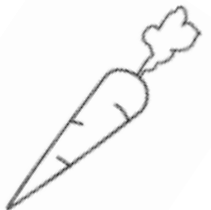
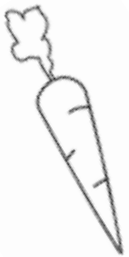
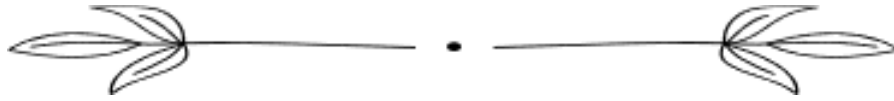


Young Roots Farm Report 2020



Introduction

In 2020, despite a global pandemic, Young Roots Farm provided programming for 105 participants throughout 5 day camps, 4 days of farm camp, and a Farm to Park program. Just under 900 kg of food was produced and used for lesson plans, farm camp, a fall harvest event and to raise funds through farmers markets. Although there were significantly less people on site contributing to the composting system this year, 4m³ of food waste and brown paper towels were composted. Removing this organic waste from the landfill spared the atmosphere of 525 pounds of methane greenhouse gasses (McGill, 2020)



With a transition of farm coordinator duties from Liang to Lynea, the goals of the farm program were the following:

- Maintain continuity of farm programming through the Farm-to-Park program, Harvest Event, and Farm Camp
- Provide programming for day trip programming adapted to Covid-19 restrictions

- Use funds from Tremplin Santé and the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (Gov't of Canada) to improve camp's capacity to provide local nutritious food to campers (including construction of refrigerated storage, purchase of salad bar and freezer and more).
- Build a composting outhouse and other structures around the farm
- Grow mushrooms and establish perennial mushroom growth
- Grow heritage varieties of vegetables for seed saving
- Manage the forest that surrounds the garden for safety, optimal growth and lumber
- Establish new value added products for our markets

Most goals were achieved to completion and brought lots of learning, challenges, and sparked many new ideas that could contribute to the farm program in coming years.

Covid-19 Adapted Programming

For a camp that has been running a very busy overnight camp for several decades, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a variety of challenges to C.A.M.'s processes and structures. It was difficult to know what would be allowed over the summer with COVID-19 regulations changing daily. There were many times where we thought we would not be able to have any in-person contact with the families or campers of C.A.M., but with Liang's help, we managed to open the door for safe contact through our Farm to Park event.



After this event, we began doing day trips to camp where participants would be picked up in Montreal in the morning, and dropped off in the evening. There were 5 day camps total, giving us time between these sessions to adapt to COVID-19 safety measures. Most activities were held outdoors, many staff had safety kits on them with hand sanitizer and first aid items. C.A.M. provided all staff with masks, and all meals were eaten outdoors. These day trips gave the new coordinator the opportunity to slowly try some of the lesson plans, as well as develop some new lesson plans that were adapted to new COVID-19 measures, while simultaneously being fun, thought-provoking, and conversation starting.

Events

Farm to Park

Farm to park was created in order to keep a sense of community and provide support to the camper's families. Using the soccer field at Westmount High School, camp staff set up a full afternoon of activities to connect with the kids while distributing full meals for families of 4 made with farm produce to parents. Extra farm produce was distributed to families as well. This was a one time event where 70 meals were made for around 20 families.



Farm Camp

Farm Camp had 5 participants this year, which gave us time to give them the focus they needed for their personal projects. Kai: "This year the participants flourished in personal projects ranging from cooking with farm fresh ingredients to building with natural materials. Participants remarked on new knowledge and skills in relation to food and nature. There was also a high level of youth participation in the fall farmers markets."



Harvest Event



Despite a massive rain event that happened throughout this day, the event was a hit. With the most delicious warm beverages, sourdough pizza sandwiches on our cob grill, an indoor soup station for warming up, and the infamous roasted corn and other BBQ items, the flavours were notable. During the BBQ, there was some heart warming bluegrass played by the Pudding Chomeur, however, they were not able to plug their gear in due to the rain which affected their sound significantly. The DJ set by Peggy Howard was likely one of the funnest dance sets of the summer, if you ask the staff, and really carried us through the rest of the event. Activities were planned throughout the day for the kids and a free raffle was played at the end of the event, sending folks home with full bellies, new gifts, and warm hearts.

Lessons Learned

Although this event was carried out by an incredibly competent group of senior staff, there were some lessons learned on the specifics of throwing an event during both a pandemic and a rainstorm. The pandemic made it so that being indoors was risky for breaking the COVID-19 rules that were put in place to protect our health, which meant that people would need to stay outside where it rained for most of the day. It was incredibly difficult to gage how many people would show up and our capacity to keep them both warm and safe. Logistically, some things may be helpful for future harvest - and other C.A.M. - events. Things like a mess tent or any medium to large sized festival tent could have helped for both the folks attending and the musicians. Although it is always a hard decision to make, it may also have been wise to change the date of the event so that we could have potentially avoided the challenge of being both in a pandemic and in a rainstorm.

Infrastructure

Cold Room

In September, we used a grant from the Local Food Infrastructure Fund _____ to build a cold room. The cold room uses coolbot technology, which is a gadget popular among farmers that reprograms a conventional window air conditioner unit to refrigerate a highly insulated room. We cleared out the space in our shed, and built a coldroom with a 4 by 8 foot interior. This created a whole bunch of vegetable storage, and allowed us to build something that fit elegantly into the space we had.

Outhouse

Using lumber from our own forest and milled to size, a much overdue compost outhouse was built with the help of Kai's carpentry skills. This addition to the farm will allow for future visits to the farm to be less disrupted by long trips back up to the camp washrooms. A hand washing station and rainwater collection system will be the final touches added in 2021. The "deposits" in the outhouse will be topped with straw and leaf cover to create compost that will integrate human waste into a gift for our surrounding ecology. And as a rustic and beautiful structure we hope it will inspire meditations on the cycle of life for generations to come!



Salad Bar

A salad bar was purchased with funds from LFIF and Tremplin Santé. Due to Covid-19, the salad bar will be ready for integration into camp programming in 2021.

Permanent Trellising

As some of the climbing perennials grew out of their trellising, the farm took this opportunity to put in some creative structures for them to climb on.





One of our grape trellising structures is in construction, however, come spring it will be a gazebo-type area which would provide both refuge from the sun for humans and ample space for the vines to climb on.

Growing Projects

Mushrooms



This year we have harvested just under 1kg of a combination of pink and blue oyster mushrooms. These were grown in 20L buckets sawdust and were fairly low-maintenance. King Stropharia mushroom spawn was inoculated in the early summer under a dead tree just east of the outdoor classroom. This spawn should yield fruit by the spring of 2021!

Seed Saving

The Farm Educator, Ionawiienhawi, had brought a very small amount of Robyn's Egg corn to the farm in the spring - a special gift given to them by a friend. The hope was that we could

preserve this corn by trying to grow its seed bank. Although some of this corn was involuntarily donated to local critters, we managed to harvest 5kg of corn from just a small packet of roughly 20 seeds. A similar intention was placed on the scarlet runner beans that were planted alongside this corn. We also managed to grow this seed bank by a small fraction but unfortunately do not have very accurate records of this.

New Farm Products



Some new additions to our value added products were made this year. One popular one was pickled turnips. Although they made us just a few hundred dollars this year, they really caught the eye of passers by at markets and had people returning to us in need of restocking their fridges with these pickles. For such an easy crop to grow, I believe we got a lot of value out of them through both lesson plans and markets.

A second addition was Toom. This lovely garlic sauce only had one small opportunity to shine at a market. It sold decently well and takes quite a bit of effort and skill to make. Making this product in the future might be better for lesson plans than it is for markets.

Thinning/Milling Pines

During the fall of 2020, the farm team thinned the pine stand just north of the farm along with the help of a friendly neighbour. The reason for this was to reduce pine crowding and stimulate understory and biodiversity in this forest stand. The second reason was to mill these pines to produce lumber for next year's building projects. One of these building projects includes a second composting system to alleviate the labour intensive process of composting food waste created by 200+ people daily.

Soil Health

Date	10/01/2020	Block 1 (Beds 0-4)	Block 4 (Beds 11-14)	Block 5 (Beds 20-25)
Soil comp	Rest is air/water	17% sand, 2% clay, 1% loam	28% sand, 4% clay, 2% loam	30% sand, 4% clay, 3% loam
pH	ppm	6.9	6.4	6.6

P	ppm	86	13	30
K	ppm	572	111	231
Ca	ppm	2773	969	1589
Mg	ppm	220	130	173
Mn	ppm	14	11	14
Cu	ppm	0.9	0.5	0.7
Zn	ppm	6.8	3.1	6.1
B	ppm	1.6	0.6	0.9
Na	ppm	82	28	30
CEC		22	17	15
P/AI		8	1	3
Organic Material	%	17.27	9.19	8.34
Bio activity		good	good	good
Density	g/cm3	0.59	0.93	1.02
Drainage		good	good	good
Moisture	%	37	24	23
Compaction		medium	medium	medium

Legend

	Good
	good-med
	med
	med-bad
	bad

Markets



On the last day of farm camp, the campers helped harvest vegetables for a market in the city. There they learned how to display a market table, how to talk to customers, and how to manage transactions. Because of the fact that Farm and Wilderness camp is free for participants, part of the programming is to involve them in the fundraising for this camp. This year they made a promotional video for the Young Roots Farm instagram and invited friends and family to stop by our market stand. Two of the participants came back for a second market to participate and hang out.

Budget 2020

Summary of 2020 Budget

	Sums
Expenses	\$ 48,624.81
Grants	\$ 7,525.00
Sales	\$ 4,706.00
Balance	\$ (36,393.81)

Reflections/Lessons Learned

Even through this year's grim global conditions, the farm managed to provide some solace for many folks and still got to live out its legacy of connecting humans to the land, as well as being a safe place for both kids and adults alike.

Liang reflections:

Continuity with staff

Making program more sustainable

Lynea Reflections:

- Convo with Kai about having a committed farm manager and a committed program director. Might make the farm more sustainable if it could be more productive/bring in more revenue.
- Thinking about how to bring up gender identity to kids. Lots of kids asked me questions that I wish I could have answered better.
- Things I think we should invest in: A square so people can pay with cards at markets ← this makes buying things more accessible and also generates lots of data! We might also need a new or used tent or we should look into fixing the tent that we currently have.

References

<https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6956>

<https://mcgillcompost.com/blog/how-much-does-compost-weigh>

