



ACTIVITY REPORT

YOUNG
ROOTS
FARM

2022



WHO WE ARE

A small-scale ecological farm on a summer camp, Young Roots Farm at Camp Amy Molson is a nourishing, accessible learning space nestled in the foothills of the Laurentian forest, on unceded Anishinaabe and Kanienke'ha territory. Our goal is to motivate youth to eat, think and act for a greener future, and to strengthen our communities from the roots

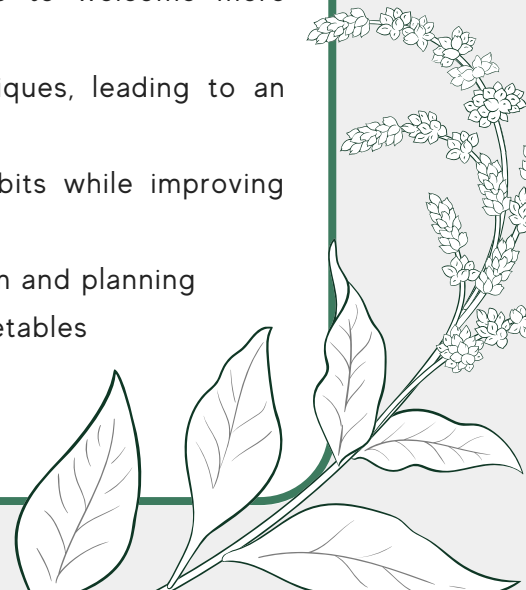
Guiding Principles

- Connect youth to the land in meaningful ways
- Food is Power
- Valorize traditional knowledge and decolonize

2022 was Young Roots Farm's (YRF) 12th year of being at Camp Amy Molson and its 5th year of having a permanent farm space on camp. We were happy to run almost like a pre-pandemic summer. During three full 14-day sessions, and our in-farm events, we were able to seed, transplant, grow and harvest a large variety of plants, deliver engaging and meaningful lessons, and most importantly grow and have fun with our campers and community.

Our 2022 goals were:

- Improve overall infrastructure for durability and be able to welcome more people into our farm
- Improve our organic pest control and fertilization techniques, leading to an increase in our yields
- Encourage campers to eat healthily and create good habits while improving essential skills
- To introduce and implement seed saving into our curriculum and planning
- Introduce campers to new, culturally-relevant heritage vegetables
- Continue our path on becoming carbon neutral



A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

**657.37 KG
VEGETABLES
HARVESTED**

**DELIVERED
ALMOST 100
LESSONS**

**COMPOSTED
OVER 3000 KG
OF FOOD WASTE
& BROWN
PAPER**

**HOSTED OVER
300 CAMPERS
AND 50
FAMILIES**

**SERVED 30
SALAD BARS**

**PARTICIPATED
IN 4 MARKETS
TOTALING
\$2575**

**PRODUCED 97
CANS OF
PESTO
TOTALING
\$970**

**CREATED NEW
PRODUCTS: TOTE
BAGS, TOMATILLO
SAUCE, KETCHUP,
CHUTNEY, AND
SALVES**

**HOSTED 7
ADDITIONAL
PROGRAMMING
VISITS**

INFRASTRUCTURE

Fortunately, every year our farm gets bigger and our season gets longer. In order to start seeds earlier and have an earlier harvest date, we **built a heated propagation table** that is chipmunk and squirrel-proof. This provides our seeds and seedlings a warmer and more controlled space, protecting them from pests, and leading to healthier growth and greater yield.



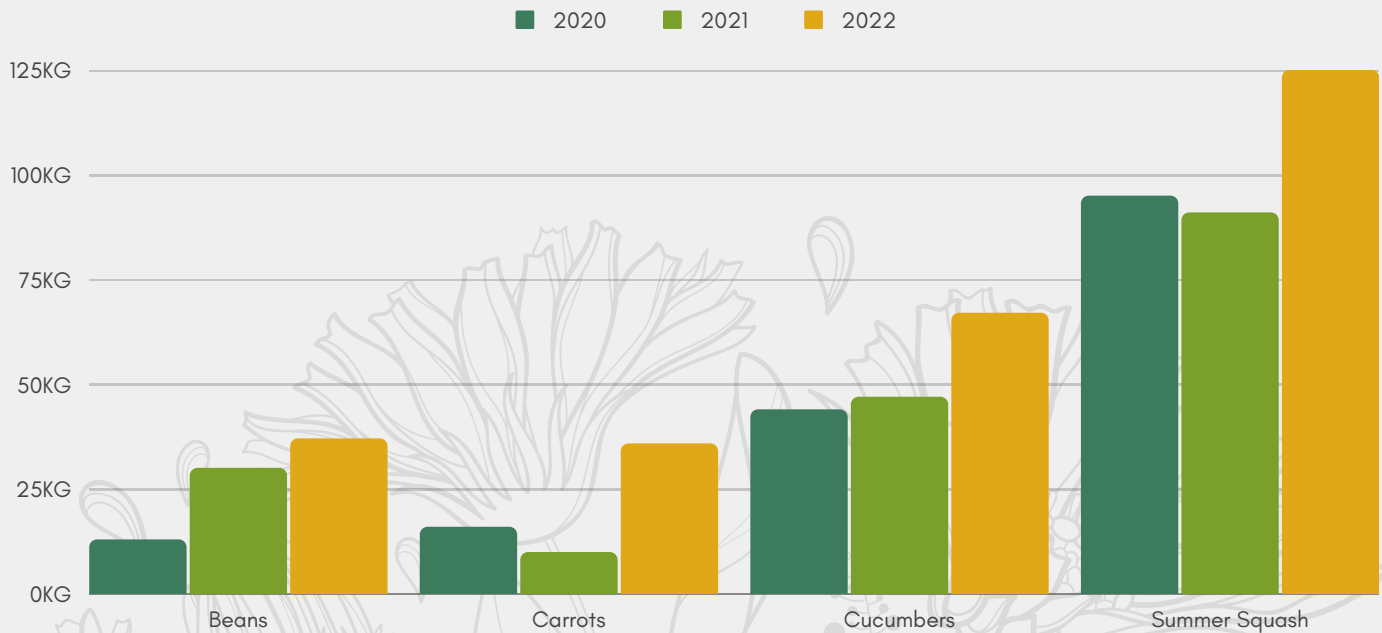
In May there was a storm that left the farm team without power for 10 days, however, it also provided us with great fallen trees to create a new classroom and have a base for our outdoor roof. We want our farm to be able to accommodate as many visitors as possible, so this year **we made our classroom space bigger** and cut up the fallen trees into small stumps that now serve as seats.

With cedar found in camp, lumber milled from camp, and leftover tin from our outhouse, we were able to **build a roof for our outdoor cob kitchen** in order to protect it from the changing weather and make our cooking station even more appealing to campers and visitors.



We **reinforced our shade gazebo** that had fallen over the winter and added a misting system to this area in order to avoid heat exhaustion for both campers and staff during hotter days at the farm. We also built and added more trellised areas which created more shade for the campers and support for the plants.

ORGANIC PEST CONTROL, FERTILIZATION AND YIELD INCREASE



As year 5 of our farm being permanently in this location, rodents and bugs have now understood the ecosystems at our farm and some have set up well-established communities. One of our main focuses this year was detailed pest observation and control, as well as balanced soil fertilization leading to an increase in yield.

In our crop plan for this year one of our emphasis was companion planting, such as the three sisters (being this our most successful year growing them) and flower gardens to increase pollinators and bug predators.



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT



OUR CURRICULUM KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND STRONGER OVER THE YEARS. WE STARTED OUR 2022 SEASON WITH A BINDER OF 50 LESSONS, WHICH HAS NOW GROWN TO 73, THANKS TO THE DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND CREATIVITY OF OUR STAFF.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The L.I.T program is essential to the farm. We designed new market products such as coasters, and cheese platters. Together, we attended markets outside of camp in which campers got the opportunity to understand and see a business-oriented side of the farm.



This year we harvested 10 KG of basil, 18 KGs of garlic scapes, and produced 97 jars of pesto



At the end of the season, we preserved over 20 thousand litres of food. Giving us a total of 100 jars, 90% of which were sold at fall markets, and the rest were distributed within the community and staff.



SALAD BAR



For the second year in a row, the YRF team took care of managing our award-winning salad bar. It was created in order to encourage campers to try new vegetables as well as the consumption of healthy foods, reduce food waste, and aid in the development of essential skills. Over the 30 salad bars we served this summer, campers were able to help with the process of preparing most of the ingredients for the salad of the day, and later on, communicate with their cabin mates to create their own salads, suited to the children's particular taste.

CARBON NEUTRALITY

Awareness rises every year, and this seems to have been the summer in which we have composted the most. With almost **3000 KGs of food composted and diverted from landfills**, our two-year-old forced-air compost system was the most visited spot at our farm, not only by campers but also by fungi, bugs and raccoons who tried to sneak in every night!



Last year we created a garbage display in which we taught campers about the impact of garbage and the carbon emissions it creates, and encouraged them to pick up garbage around camp and help keep it clean. Even though campers were engaged, we realized that it focused mostly on the problem rather than going to the root.

Inspired by the Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, this year **we created a Love Letter to the Earth Wall**, in which campers could start building a relationship with the land and at the same time it becoming a safe space for them to process their feelings: if they felt upset, we invited them to pick up something from the land (rock, leaf, flower, etc), offer it to the wall, and compost the feeling so that it could become positive for later, instead of polluting their body and heart with garbage. At the end of the summer, the wall was full of letters, flowers, and all kinds of objects. With this, we hope our campers are building healthier and stronger relationships with both themselves and the land.



YOUNG ROOTS CITY

YOUNG ROOTS CITY IS A PROGRAM THAT WAS BORN OUT OF YOUNG ROOTS FARM AND WITH THE IDEA OF BRINGING CARBON OFFSET INTO THE CITY. LYNEA ABOUMRAD, YRF'S FORMER COORDINATOR, AIMS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO THIS UNIQUE TYPE OF PROGRAMMING, AND TAKE THE FARM'S MISSION A STEP FURTHER BY GIVING PARTICIPANTS A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OVER THEIR GARDENS. YOUNG ROOTS CITY WAS LAUNCHED THIS YEAR AS A PILOT PROJECT THAT SERVICED TWO GROUP HOMES AND ONE COMMUNITY CENTER IN MONTREAL.

THIS GROWING SEASON THERE WERE ROUGHLY 30 PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN YOUNG ROOTS CITY. WE HAVE GROWN ABOUT $\frac{1}{2}$ M3 OF FOOD, AND HAVE COMPOSTED 1M3 OF FOOD WASTE THAT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE BEEN DISPOSED OF INTO LANDFILLS. SOIL TESTS HAVE SHOWN AN IMPROVEMENT IN SOIL NUTRIENTS AND BIOLOGY WHICH NOT ONLY IMPROVES CITY ECOSYSTEM HEALTH, BUT WILL INCREASE GARDEN PRODUCTIVITY IN THE YEARS TO COME.





SEED SAVING AND HERITAGE VARIETIES

At YRF we aim to reconnect children's intimate reciprocal relationship with nature, and we felt that seed-keeping was the next step for this. For 2022, one of our biggest goals was to expand our seed-saving knowledge, skills, and teachings.

We acquired some culturally relevant seeds from the seed-keeping company True Love Seeds, and introduced new and different vegetables to our campers, such as cucamelon (mouse melon or Mexican cucumber), Italian Cucuzza, tomato Plate d'Haiti, Palestinian Summer Squash, Mississippi Pea, and Elinista Okra, among many others.

We built a heated propagation table to start our seeds, a seed-saving screen, and a winnowing station and we were able to save 16 different types of seeds. Not only does this increase camper's understanding of sustainability and strengthens their relationship with the land, but it also creates more independence for our farm.



EVENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

At YRF our relationship with the land extends to creating and strengthening relationships with the community. Our work outside of the camp sessions is as important as with our CAM family.

Apathy is Boring - RISE exchange

For the past two years, YRF has established a relationship with youth from AisB's program RISE. Our farm coordinator gave a talk to their beginning-of-the-year cohort, and we hosted their coordinator and mentors to be out of the city, enjoy the space, transplant basil, put up bed stakes, and exchange ideas.



Native Montreal day

In collaboration with Michelle Desruisseaux, former CAM alumni, we were pleased to welcome, Native Montreal to our camp. The farm team welcomed them into the farm for lunch and a tour and served some farm produce as a snack. We then guided them through the water trail adjacent to the farm and led them to the lake where they spent the rest of their visit.

Tyndale day camp

This was the first year Tyndale St. George's day camp visited our camp. It is always such a pleasure to have outside visitors come to the farm. Tyndale's campers were beyond excited to tour our farm, and get to snack on some of their favorite vegetables and some were brave enough to pet and feed the chickens.



Media

Through media outreach sponsored by TD Friends of the Environment grand, we were very fortunate to have different media outlets reach out to us and spread the word about our program. At the same time, one of our staff members was able to spearhead our social media presence, which grew exponentially this year.

Garden Culture Magazine

Farms.com

CTV news segment - Christine Long

This is the 8th year of Farm and Wilderness Camp –a 5-day, free-of-cost, immersive experience for campers between the ages of 11-17 that show a deepened interest in the farm– This year we hosted 18 campers, 10 staff, and 3 guest workshop leaders. In an environment where campers have more responsibilities but also more independence, the main focus is for participants to grow into active, informed, and empowered participants of their future and the Earth’s future. Their week centers on the creation of a nature-centered personal project, while also building healthy and trustworthy relationships, learning more about our farming practices, going on a camping trip, helping cook the meals, and cleaning up. The farm team delivered workshops on seed-keeping, food preservation, and shelter-building. Liang, YRF’s founder gave a workshop on permaculture, Val Gabriel, a Mohawk farmer, and farm friend, gave a workshop on clay and the importance of water, and Tatiana Castellanos, a Colombian indigenous artist, and mindful meditation teacher gave a workshop on mindful art and resources, while also mediated video journal conversations. For a full FWC Report, please visit our website.

FARM AND WILDERNESS CAMP



HARVEST EVENT

We had a record-breaking 150+ guests this fall to our 10th Corn the Roasting - The Rise and Fall of Corn. In this free-of-cost event, friends and families from the city were frolicking through the farm and camp doing different activities like harvesting, seed saving, getting their face painted, making paper lanterns, stopping by the photo booth, or just eating farm snacks and enjoying the music. Through raffles, we gave away over 20 produce baskets, and we also set up a table for those interested in buying our farm products.



BUDGET

		Actuals
Expenses	Salary	
	Farm Staff (April - October)	40240
	Admin	2000
	Salary Sum	42240
	Projects and Purchases	
	Infrastructure	940.57
	Garden	2616.14
	Lessons + Markets	453.95
	Farm and Wilderness Camp	10500
	Projects and Purchases Sum	12664.07
	Transport	
	Gas	1055
	Transport Sum	1055
	Groceries	
	Team Bonding	288.61
	Spring	1099.02
	Groceries Sum	1387.63
	Overhead	
	Gas Water Hydro	1500
		16606.7
Revenues	Sales	
	Markets	2575.4
	Restaurants	319.75
	Farm Camp Merch	500
	Sales Sum	3395.15
Grants	Grants	
	MEES	30,222
	TD	6,300
	Women in Nature	1,000
	QPIRG Concordia	\$900
	QPIRG McGill	\$250
	AFESH	\$1,000
	Arcteryx	\$5,000
	Tremplin Sante	\$1,000
	Grants Sum	45,672
Totals	Expenses Sum	58846.7
	Revenues Sum	3395.15
	Grants Sum	45,672
	CAM Balance	-9,780

REFLECTIONS

It is almost impossible to explain the magic that happens at the farm through a report. We hope that the feelings of connectedness, relationship, and community, to other humans and to all the other beings we live with, is something everyone can enjoy and have access to in their life.

After 12 years of developing Young Root's program, we have seen many campers grow with the farm and get more involved every summer. One of our aims for future years is to have more campers become part of our farm staff, for them to share their knowledge and creativity with the next generation of campers, as well as to provide a living wage to the farm staff we hire.

It is without a doubt that all the grants that we received this year were fundamental to the well-functioning and growth of the farm this year. Unfortunately, as can be seen on the budget, this year we are in a deficit. This year was unusually difficult to receive the same financial aid we had in the past caused by shortages of funds and structural changes due to COVID. It is fundamental for future years to increase emphasis on grants and wage subsidies so that the program can be financially sustainable to be able to keep providing to the community.

We aim to keep building and strengthening relationships with indigenous communities around camp, and other QTBIPOC communities and groups, as we have noticed that this brings immense growth to the farm while also creating land accessibility for city folks that don't have much access to nature otherwise.

With climate anxiety rising in children and youth, providing skills, knowledge, and empowerment in regards to food and to the land is fundamental, and to do so in a playful, non-judgemental, and appealing way such as our farm does is the key to success. In the future, we hope to create and provide more off-season educational programs to city youth and create a template for other summer camps to start their own garden.

Young Roots Farm is not only an educational ground, but it has also become a safe place for campers and staff to feel connected, while at the same time disconnecting from their fast-paced technology-oriented city life. Being immersed in nature these 14 days, children are mesmerized by the possibility of pulling a carrot out of the ground, discovering that a cucumber is prickly, cooking and seasoning their own food, watching a raccoon steal our compost, or building their own fire for the first time, but most importantly, they are fascinated and empowered by the understanding that they can do it as well.

FARM TEAM 2022



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: HAILEY DAIGLE (FARM ANIMATOR), SHAY BEEMAN (FARM MANAGER), ANA CASTILLO (FARM COORDINATOR), JANICE KWAN (FARM APPRENTICE)

SOCIAL MEDIA:
WWW.YOUNGROOTSFARM.ORG
INSTAGRAM: @YOUNGROOTS_FARM
FACEBOOK: @YOUNGROOTSFARM



THANK YOU!

