

# Food Bank Farm Newsletter

contributed by Ayushi Shah

## Interested in farming? Here are 4 ways to get involved.

Have you always wanted to start a garden but never had the chance to because you grew up in a big city with no backyard? Don't know where to start, so you contacted the Food Bank Farm (FBF)? Whoops, I'm just telling you my story. But hey, it works. There are several great opportunities for you to get involved this spring and summer to learn about farming and getting connected with experienced farmers within the Sault! There are opportunities for everyone! Whether you're experienced or a beginner, check out these opportunities below!

- 1) Start your own garden! You can join the Grow-A-Row project and plant some extra veggies right in your own back yard. Contact [planning@foodbankfarm.ca](mailto:planning@foodbankfarm.ca) and read below for more information!
- 2) Volunteer at the FBF. You can help seed, harvest, weed, organize and package veggies and much more! Contact Colin at [colin@foodbankfarm.ca](mailto:colin@foodbankfarm.ca).
- 3) Share your backyard garden stories with us! Did you have a successful backyard garden last year? We want to share it on our next newsletter! Share your tips and tricks with the community of growing gardeners, and become a mentor to those learning for the first time.
- 4) Attend the New North's Greenhouse "Hello Spring!" event on Saturday, April 28th, 2018 from 10 AM to 3 PM at 719 Airport Rd. It's an opportunity to learn all about the local garden

community! You can purchase local farmers market veggies, support our pollinator initiative, and participate in family gardening activities, plus MORE. Come have some fun!



## You can grow-a-row!

The Food Bank Farm (FBF) worked hard last year to harvest an estimated \$13,000 worth of food for the Soup Kitchen in the Sault Ste. Marie area. This community initiative would not have been accomplished without the volunteers that put in their time and donations to keep the farm running all farming season. Through these rigorous efforts, the farm grew to maximum capacity! However, this year, we want to provide even more fresh produce to meet the needs within our community. We are asking YOU to help!

Do you have extra veggies growing in your garden and want to give back to your community? Join a growing community of home gardeners with a collective goal to increase produce distributed to local low-income families, here in the Sault!

Grow-A-Row is a community initiative where home gardeners grow an extra row of vegetables in their backyards. The FBF will provide guidance and organize weekly produce drop-off locations. During harvest season, starting in the first week of July, you can drop off your fresh grown produce at one of several convenient drop off locations. We will wash, sort, package and distribute the produce to those in need in the community.

If you are interested in participating, email [planning@foodbankfarm.ca](mailto:planning@foodbankfarm.ca) to be added to the email list. We will provide you information on location and times for each drop-off event (including where we will be and when). If you're unable to grow-a-row of vegetables in your backyard but would still like to volunteer for the FBF, email Colin at [colin@foodbankfarm.ca](mailto:colin@foodbankfarm.ca). We're looking forward to growing this farming community, and together aim to reduce food insecurity in Sault Ste. Marie.

## Getting started on your own garden

People often wonder what veggies are most required by the community Soup Kitchen and the FBF. We recommend that you to grow what you have experience growing in your space. If you are flexible, growing carrots, tomatoes and onions, would be great help. Additionally, being able to donate herbs such as thyme, basil and cilantro would assist in creating flavourful meals. These herbs & veggies can be used in multiple recipes and are highly requested by the Soup Kitchen. The best time to start gardening is now! Whether it be an herb garden on the window sill or small trays of indoor seedlings!



Do not be discouraged if your seedlings or seeds are unsuccessful at germinating or surviving. This year has been difficult with the prolonged winter and low temperatures. Cold temperatures can disrupt plant growth if greenhouse or indoor temperatures are inconsistent. Another option is to start your garden by ordering transplants from a garden centre or from the farmers directly at the Mill Market. When the

ground thaws and warms up, you can insert these transplants right into the ground at proper spacing (as indicated on the container) and fresh veggies should be at your fingertips within a few weeks!

## Gardening do's and don'ts!

Do's	Don'ts
Use organic seeds	Use harmful pesticides, herbicides, etc.
Prep the soil prior to seeding	Work the soil when it's wet
Know your soil's pH level	Plant too many seeds in once space
Teach children about gardening	Encourage picking up unfamiliar bugs
Purchase native or non-invasive seeds	Plant invasive ornamental plants as windbreakers
Wear sunscreen, and proper protective clothing and footwear	Strain your back!
Plant in areas that receives lots of sunlight	Start a large garden that will require a lot of maintenance work (if it's your first time!)
Space out your seeds and plant at appropriate depths	Use noisy gas or electric tools early in the morning
Create walking paths to reach all parts of the garden, without harming the plants	Walk into your garden beds
Water when needed, deeply and thoroughly in the mornings	Over water the plant frequently