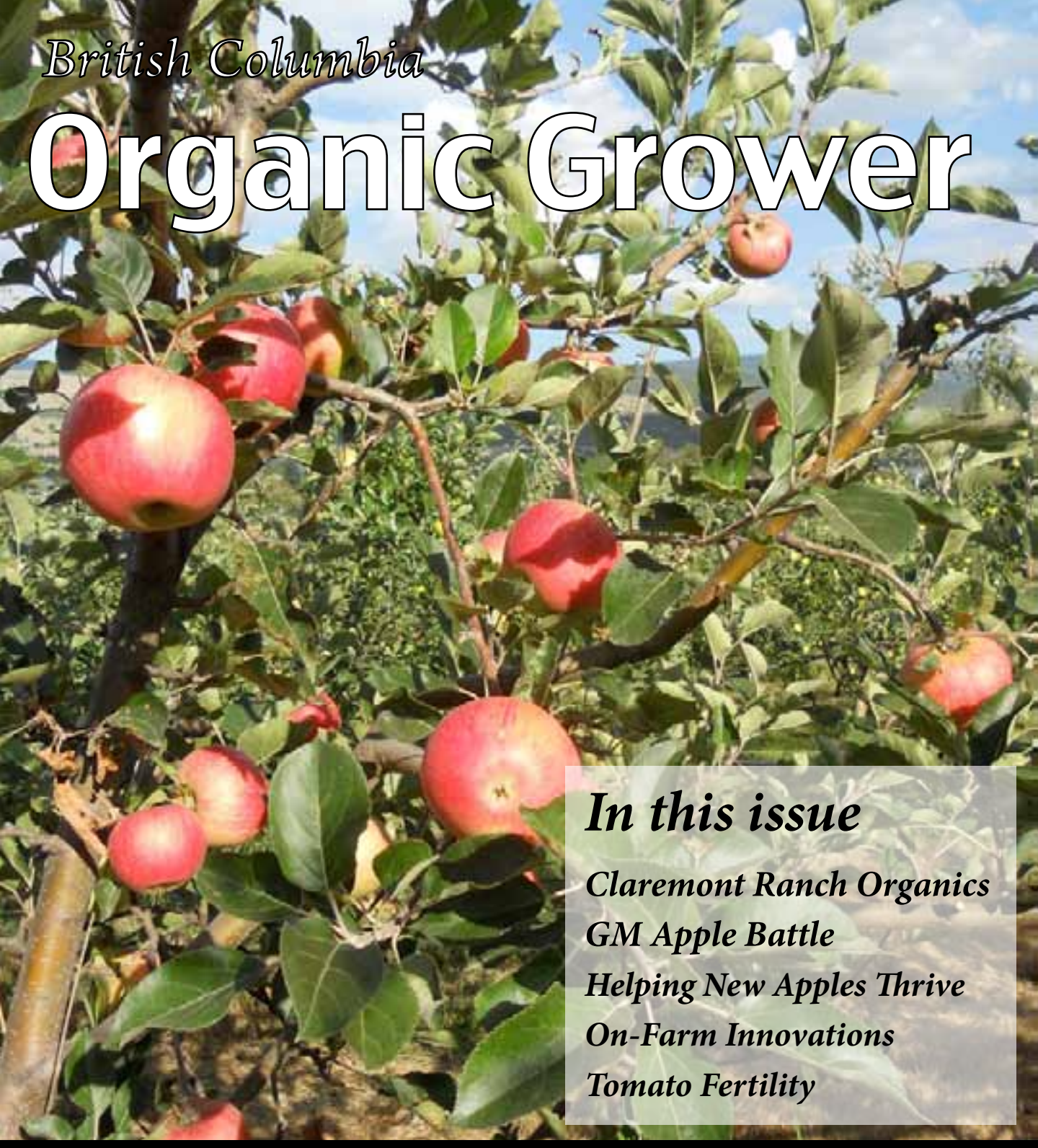

British Columbia

Organic Grower

In this issue

Claremont Ranch Organics

GM Apple Battle

Helping New Apples Thrive

On-Farm Innovations

Tomato Fertility

Journal for the Certified Organic Associations of BC - Fall 2012

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Certified Organic Associations of BC

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In This Issue

President's Letter 3
Administrator's Report 4
Editor's Note 5
Featured Blog: Just Another Weed Patch..... 6
Farmer Focus: Claremont Ranch Organics.... 8
People Points 29
Events and Announcements 30
COABC Order Form 31

Diving into farming and succeeding: *Molly and Matt's Claremont Ranch Organics is featured in Farmer Focus on page 8*

Features

Organic Labelling Q&A 11
Defeating the GM Apple 12
On-Farm Innovation..... 14
Tomato Fertility 16
Helping Fruit Trees Thrive 20
National Organic Week 22
Food Policy from the Ground Up 24
Organic Certification research project 28

National Organic Week is September 22-29! *Find out what's happening in your area on page 22.*

BC Organic Grower

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On the Cover: Apple orchard at Claremont Ridge Organics. Credit: Spring Gillard

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President's Letter

"I think that the power is the principle. The principle of moving forward, as though you have the confidence to move forward, eventually gives you confidence when you look back and see what you've done." *Roberty Downey, Jr.*

This has been a very challenging year. As I reflect on the work done I feel that I am spinning and not moving forward. The COABC has shown leadership in Canada's organic sector. We have done what we have done with dedicated volunteers and little money. We can no longer rely on volunteers to do all the important work that needs to be done. It is too important, however the COABC has limited funds as our income is from our membership and a few sponsors.

The COABC will be working on a Strategic Plan for the organic sector this fall. We need to move forward with confidence and vision. What is your vision for the COABC? What do you expect from the COABC? What can you do to help the organic sector of BC be more visible?

Organic is the fastest growing agriculture sector in the world. BC is no exception. In BC there are new organic farms and businesses popping up all the time. Not all of them are certified within the COABC umbrella. Those certified by other agencies still benefit from the work of the COABC, because the COABC is mandated under the Food Choice and Quality Act to work for the entire organic sector.

The COABC dedicates up to 10 per cent of its fees to organic sector research and development. We need everyone in BC's organic sector to participate in planning and to contribute financially so the BC organic sector can develop and continue as leaders in Canada.

The COABC needs our membership to participate in advertising and promotion. Reflect on what you are doing. Share your successes with the rest of us. Send information to the BCOG for publication.

Have a great autumn and remember to CHECK your product.

Mary Forstbauer
president

Administrator's Report

By Jen Gamble

COABC is celebrating the third annual National Organic Week by partnering with the Organic Okanagan Festival to host an apple panel. The panel, featuring orchardists and others, will discuss the threats posed by the introduction of the GMO apple. In addition to the panel, the festival will feature a certified organic farmer's market and a green living expo. If you are in Kelowna September 23, join us at Summerhill Winery. Otherwise, look for an organic week event in your area and show your organic pride!

The introduction of the GMO apple by the small BC company called Okanagan Specialty Fruits is strongly opposed by the organic sector. To voice our opposition, COABC has highlighted the threat of GMO's in our food system in the autumn issue of Edible Vancouver. We have also sent a letter to the Union of BC Municipalities supporting a motion before them to request that the provincial government make BC a GE-free zone. These various actions are meant to work in concert with the efforts of others to keep the GMO apple issue in the public eye.

If you are looking for information about the resistance to GMO technology in Canada see the article by Lucy Sharratt, CBAN coordinator (on page 12) and visit their site at www.cban.ca.

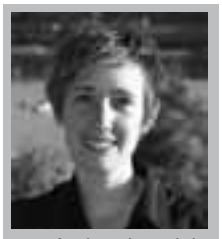
Welcome to the new Minister of Agriculture! We look forward to working with the Honourable Norm Letnick, taking over for the Honourable Don McRae who is now the Minister of Education.

www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca
Twitter: @coabccanada
Facebook: Certified Organic Associations of BC

Last Quarter Achievements

- Finalized 2nd Quarter Financials
- Held the first Small-Scale Certification Research Project Consultation
- Submitted Small Project grant to Investment Agriculture for a Strategic Planning session

Editor's Note



Andrea Langlois, editor

moss dance, layout

A friend returned my copy of Michael Pollan's The Botany of Desire this week. In this book, Pollan recounts the introduction of the apple to North America, following the historical trajectory of the illustrious Johnny Appleseed and the many years of planting and grafting that led to an apple sweet enough to be sent to school in children's lunch bags and not destined solely to be made into an intoxicating drink.

And what would Johnny Appleseed have to say about the Artic GM Apple? Or about the work of soil ecologists Louise Nelson and Molly Thurston who toil away in the Okanagan, seeking to uncover an ecological approach to improving soil fertility? Science can be used in many ways and the future will certainly hold an interesting story for the relationship between scientists and the apple.

To have an issue of the BCOG with a focus on the apple seems ironic this year of all years, when the well-known Apple Festival on Saltspring Island has been cancelled due to a cold spring and tent caterpillars interfering with apple blossom pollination. Or perhaps it just reminds us to savour each bite of our local apples a little more this year.

We hope that you can also savour this issue of the BC Organic Grower, as the season winds down from packed planting schedules to the joy of harvest. You'll find some great on-farm tips from Robin Tunnicliffe within these pages, alongside the faces from the fields of Claremont Ranch Organics and Just Another Weed Patch Farm, and new research on fertilizers for organic hoophouse tomatoes.

Comments, ideas, and photos always welcome at editor@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

The Biggest Nut on the farm

By Hannah Maia Roessler

Chestnuts, walnuts, heartnuts – Just Another Weed Patch Farm is much more than their modest name tells you. Jeff Rietkerk and Sonya Zupanec and their young son Thor are the stewards of the farm, the Weedpatchers if you like, and they are tackling some interesting experiments and exploring innovative ideas with their new agroforestry demonstration project on Gabriola Island. The family of three is transforming a 2-acre pasture into an oasis of nut trees, pigs, honey and vegetables.

"Lots of people think of needing to clear land of trees in order to farm, but we come from a different perspective where trees are entitled to the land" says Sonya in a phone interview from their Gabriola Island farm. "For us, agroforestry and agriculture are joined at the hip. And we're tree fanatics."

The family has 250 nut trees, alley-cropped with vegetables and roamed by pigs and bees. Styrian pumpkins are being grown primarily for the seeds, which will eventually be pressed for pumpkin oil, and are a staple for the family.

On the horizon for 2013 are the swallow bellied Mangalica pigs, a fuzzy-haired heritage breed from Hungary, as well as some hair sheep. Both will be their "work horses" in the silvopasture system. Flowers, field crops and bees add to this mixed bag of abundance and will provide additional income as they wait for their maturing nut trees to yield. The Weedpatchers plan for these crops to sustain them for the next ten years or so, along with off-farm work, until the nut-trees yield their bounty.

While they are growing some of the more familiar nuts such as walnuts, chestnuts and hazelnuts, they are also experimenting with several unique varieties. The list of Yellowhorn, Northern pecan, Japanese heartnut, Gingko biloba, and Korean pine nuts makes my mouth water.

This crop-plan is even more ambitious and exciting when considering that the Weedpatchers are self-taught, gaining insight and inspiration from permaculture, agroforestry, biodynamics and organic-practices, as outlined under the BC Organic Standards.

While they are currently not certified organic they are following standards with future certification in mind for when their production really kicks in, and they are even incorporating "beyond-organic" ecological considerations, such as maintaining songbird nesting habitat.

"Our son, the biggest nut on the farm, inspires us to leave some sort of landscape and habitat legacy for his and the next generation to enjoy," says Sonya.

Such small-scale examples of agroforestry are perfect for the Gulf Islands, and even Vancouver Island, where small farms (10 acres or less) are more common than larger-scale operations. The Weedpatchers believe in the importance of imparting the varied lessons that they are learning through this growing adventure, articulating to others the mistakes they have made and how they've learned from them.

"[We] want to share so others can learn," says Sonya. And in order to do so, they have started a blogsite at www.justanotherweedpatch.com where they share the trials and tribulations of their work. It is not just a way for them to share outwardly – as the blog is a way to allow others to connect with them – and share their experiences in turn.

"We get a lot of input as we put out output," explains Sonya with a laugh. "This also makes us feel less alone, as we can feel a bit isolated out here. The internet is really good for that, for connecting us with people."

They have spent an enormous amount of time and energy researching their project, and they are taking great strides to experiment with new varieties. And, lucky for us, they are letting us know just how they're going to do it too. Their blogsite has bi-weekly updates with their experiments, ideas and progress, along with a list of the varieties they are growing, and a soon-to-be posted site plan.

I, for one, am excited to see some new nuts on the horizon. Doesn't a Gabriola Island Japanese Heartnut sound delicious to you?

Hannah Roessler has farmed in Nicaragua, Washington and B.C. on organic farms, permaculture projects, mixed crop cafetals, and a biodynamic vineyard. She is finishing her M.A. in Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. Her blog www.farmersfilmanac.com is a site where growers can contribute techniques and practices through videos or photos.

justanotherweedpatch.com

Claremont Ranch Organics

The Claremont Ranch Organics crew at Feast of Fields. Credit: Molly Thurston

By Spring Gillard

I first met Matt and Molly Thurston in 2007 at a talk I gave on food security for the Central Okanagan Community Gardens Society (COCGS) in Kelowna. The couple had just leased some land on a one-year trial basis from a local farmer. New farmers need access to land, but with diminishing farmland and rising prices, it's getting harder and harder to get it. Farming someone else's land is one solution. I met with them at their home and farm in Kelowna this summer.

Matt and Molly met at the University of Guelph where they both got their agricultural degrees. Matt was from Oshawa originally, but Molly grew up in Kelowna, so after graduating in 2005, they returned to her hometown. Matt's first job there was with a landscaping company. Molly joined COCGS, the community garden group, and met one of the founders and organizers, Bob McCoubrey, the farmer they would lease the land from two years later.

So in 2007, Molly and Matt became orchardists, tending the nearly eight acres of mixed fruit: pears, peaches, apricots, plums and apples, including 35 heritage varieties. They moved into a small house on the property. They also added a new member to their family to mark the occasion, Abby the Australian shepherd.

It was a challenging and intense year for the couple, with a huge learning curve. In addition to managing the orchard, they were holding down full time jobs. It helped that they lived right next door to their mentor Bob and his wife Sharon. After the year, they decided to move off-site and bought a house of their own in Kelowna. They continued to lease the orchard for the next several years, with a hiatus one summer to catch their breath. Living off-site had its challenges too, but with Bob's guiding hand and generous help with irrigation, they managed.

They also tried a few things on their own. They added laying hens one year. "Now we had to water them three times a day," said Matt. They also cultivated a small market garden, upgraded some of the equipment and drew on the skills they had learned at agricultural college. "We learned a lot just by doing," said Matt.

"The first time we discussed buying the orchard with Bob and Sharon was in 2005," said Molly. "But they still thought one of their kids might be interested in taking it over. And, we were only 25, so not totally ready to make the commitment. Our friends were out having fun every weekend and we were working on the farm."

In 2010, the subject came up again and the couple felt more settled and ready to commit to the long term. Matt was working for Farm Credit Canada by then and Molly had gotten on with the Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative. "Our friends and family were supportive then too," said Molly.

The couple began to craft a purchase agreement with Bob and Sharon. They took their time, all four of them carefully considering various scenarios, coming up with a very creative financing plan. Over the course of six months they worked out a deal that they were all happy with, parts of it in writing (like the new on-site cold storage unit), others on a handshake (painting the house). Without Bob and Sharon's flexibility, willingness and desire to pass the torch to these young farmers, Matt and Molly would not have been able to afford the land.

"It's great when you see their eyes light up. They feel so satisfied and proud that the vegetables they have chosen to plant are now growing."

In January 2011, Matt and Molly became owners of the orchard that is certified by the North Okanagan Organic Association (NOOA). While the agreement stated that Bob and Sharon had four years before they had to move from the larger house, they bought a place (nearby!) the moment they got the down payment. The young farmers moved into the larger home that fall and rented out the smaller one. Both homes are over 100 years old, with a carport originally designed for parking a horse and carriage. There's also an old root cellar on site.

Molly and Matt Thurston. Credit: Spring Gillard

As we sat out in the peaceful, pastoral backyard, sampling some of the earlier apple varieties, I learned that more than 600 people had just flowed through their property a couple days earlier. Claremont Ranch Organics hosted the annual Okanagan Feast of Fields. It was an annual fundraiser for the non-profit group Farm Folk City Folk, but an inaugural celebration for the new owners.

"We couldn't have done this without Bob. He had already established all the markets, built the relationships," said Matt. Claremont Ranch sells to a few local chefs and at farm gate, but their primary market is Urban Harvest, a local organic produce delivery company. "A lot of people owe their livelihoods to [Urban Harvest owners] Lisa and David," said Molly.

Matt and Molly seem to have found the right balance. Even though they both still have jobs off the farm, they find the orchard manageable now. They handle most of the work themselves, except for the occasional apprentice, carrying on the tradition set by their friend and mentor.

Spring Gillard is a communications consultant, SFU sustainability instructor and author of Something's Rotten in Compost City, A Primer on the Politics of Food *(Smashwords Edition 2011). She blogs at* www.compostdiaries.com.

Organic Labelling Q & A

By the Organic Federation of Canada

Q: How does the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act apply to "organic" products that are not certified under the Canadian Organic Regulations?

A: There are no intra-provincial organic regulations in the majority of Canadian provinces but the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for the administration of the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act which applies to food and feed. In Section 7 of the Labelling Act, it says that:

7. (1) No dealer shall apply to any prepackaged prod uct or sell, import into Canada or advertise any prepackaged product that has applied to it a label containing any false or misleading representation that relates to or may reasonably be regarded as relating to that product.

Section 20 goes on to describe the punishment measures when an offence is committed:

20. (1) Subject to subsection (2.1), every dealer who contravenes any of sections 4 to 9 is guilty of an offence and liable:

(a) on summary conviction, to a fine not ex ceeding $5,000; or

(b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine not exceeding $10,000.

The Organic Federation of Canada (OFC) and the Canada Organic Office are currently discussing how CFIA inspectors are trained to conduct an audit when a retailer, trader or producer is accused of falsely adding the "organic" designation to a non-certified product that does not seem to comply with the organic standard. While organic inspectors are trained to recognize whether a product can be labelled as organic, CFIA inspectors who inspect products may not be familiar with the Canadian Organic Standards.

"It is of great importance that our sector gain confidence in the system of enforcement and be able to defend it when accusations of fraudulent activity arise," says Ted Zettel, President of the OFC. The results of the coming discussions will be shared.

In the meantime, anyone can lodge a complaint if a non-certified "organic" product does not seem to be complying with the organic standards by visiting the CFIA website Food Labeling section at www.inspection.gc.ca

From the Organic Federation of Canada's Info-Bio July 2012 Newsletter.

DEFEATING the GM Apple

By Lucy Sharratt

Apple growers in BC now face a direct threat from genetic engineering (genetic modification or GM), in the form of a request to approve a GM "non-browning" apple.

Orchardists need only look to the experience of Saskatchewan organic grain farmers, who lost the use of organic canola due to GM contamination, and to Eastern corn farmers, who manage the risks of cross-pollination from GM corn, to see the possible impacts of a GM apple. While the GM apple may not spread as quickly and widely as GM canola did, or as GM alfalfa will (if allowed onto the market), the GM apple would nonetheless threaten organic certification and, perhaps more immediately, consumer confidence in organics and in the purity of apples generally.

Unlike the GM crops commercialized thus far in Canada (corn, canola, soy and white sugarbeets), the GM apple is being pushed by a small BC company, not a powerful corporation like Monsanto. Despite its small size, the company Okanagan Specialty Fruits could however wreak just as much destruction as any large multinational biotech company.

The GM "non-browning" apple is engineered to keep from going brown after being cut. The apple is designed for fast food and food-processing companies, so they can use sliced apples in packaged foods. Okanagan Specialty Fruits has asked Canadian and U.S. regulatory agencies to approve GM Golden Delicious and GM Granny Smith apples but say they will engineer Gala and Fuji apples next. The company also states their intention to produce non-browning GM cherries and pears.

Confusing public relations

The company's plans for the GM apple are confusing. The GM "Arctic Apple," as the company calls it, was initially intended as a processing apple. Now, however, the company talks about the advantages of the fresh GM apple including for baking and juicing. According to the company the benefits will include fewer culls post-harvest and less shrinkage for retailers.

The company has put out some messy public relations in an attempt to have this GM apple seen as less scary than other GMOs. The company talks about "apple-to-apple" transformation, saying that they only moved apple DNA around, suggesting that the gene transformation is therefore benign and not at all "Franken."

The company has, however, silenced a gene in the apple that controls browning by inserting a range of genetic sequences. Modified apple DNA is inserted along with genetic sequences from at least three different species:

1. A regulatory gene switch from a plant virus (Cauliflower Mosaic virus promoter: CaMV 35S);
2. A terminator sequence from a bacterium (*Agrobacterium tumefaciens* taken from its Nopaline synthase gene: nos);
3. An antibiotic resistance marker gene from a bacterium (*Streptomyces kanamyceticus*), here the nptII gene (which confers resistance to the antibiotic Kanamycin).

If an apple tree is pollinated with GM pollen, the new genes would be present in the resulting apple seeds. But the company says the risk of contamination is "almost nonexistent." They say that bees will stay close to their hives and that "dense orchard plantings and buffer rows make it very difficult for bees to maneuver far." However, there are approximately 450 native bee species in BC and the Yukon and small orchards support a great variety of these species. The knowledge of local orchardists is needed to challenge these corporate communications.

The company also refers to "grower stewardship standards" that they say will define buffer distances between GM and non-GM apple orchards. However, with GM so far, the burden of buffer zones has been borne by organic farmers. There's no guarantee that the company will set up such standards or that they will be able to enforce them.

Similarly, Okanagan Specialty Fruits says they will ensure that the fresh apples are labeled (via Price Look Up Codes) and that processed foods with 5 percent

GM apple will include the "Arctic Apple" logo. Aside from the fact that the logo is not labeling, there's no reason to believe this small company can follow up with this promise. Why would large processing companies give precious (expensive) packaging space to an obscure logo that, additionally, would invite consumer backlash if recognized?

BC grower rejection is the key

BC orchardists have already rejected the GM apple. In 2001, BC growers stopped the GM apple from being field tested and, as a consequence, the company has had to test all their apple trees in the U.S.

The U.S. Apple Association "does not support the approval of this product" and says, "Consumers like their apples and are not calling for these new 'non-browning' cultivars." The BC Fruit Growers Association and the Washington-based Northwest Horticultural Council also oppose the GM apple. In fact it seems the entire apple industry chain, including the leading supplier of sliced apple products in North America (Crunch Pak), is opposed. The question is: Does it matter?

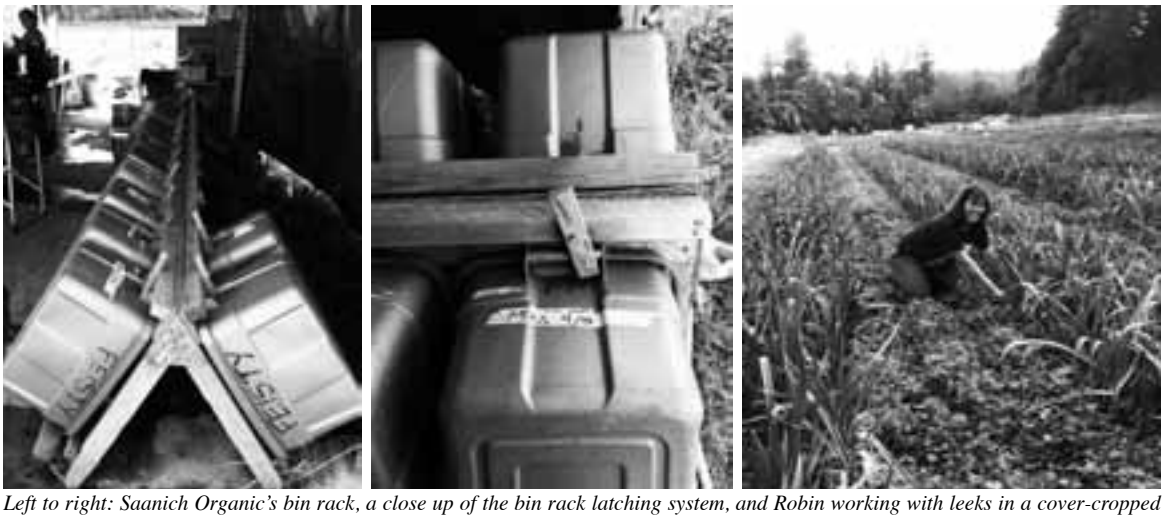
The GM apple could be approved in the U.S. this year or early in 2013 and the company says the apple could be approved in Canada in 2014. A regulatory decision to allow the GM apple onto the market does not, however, consider the impacts on growers or the views of consumers. Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will approve the GM apple if they conclude it is safe to eat and safe for the environment. The fact that the GM apple risks organic certification, that it could wreak havoc on markets for all apple producers, and that no one in the apple industry wants it, is literally irrelevant in regulation.

It's the voice of growers and consumers together that will make these considerations politically relevant. The Similkameen Okanagan Organic Tree Fruit Growers Association has already joined other local groups in sending a powerful letter to Okanagan Specialty Fruits (see www.cban.ca/apple). Most consumers don't view browning as a problem but as helpful information about freshness and a 2012 survey commissioned by the BC Fruit Growers Association and the Quebec Apple Producers Association found that 69 per cent of Canadians don't want the GM apple.

The GM apple exposes a classic problem of genetically engineered food – it is simply unnecessary.

Lucy Sharratt is the Coordinator of the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. www.cban.ca/apple

On-Farm Innovation
from pitchfork to seed table



Left to right: Saanich Organic's bin rack, a close up of the bin rack latching system, and Robin working with leeks in a cover-cropped row. Credit: Robin Tunnicliffe and Caleb Huffman.

By Robin Tunnicliffe

It's easy to overlook the small innovations on every farm that have evolved over the years out of necessity, like the long handled fork in the field that serves as a sprinkler stand, or the bare boxspring mattress that serves as a seedling table. Farms spawn invention, and seeing other people's innovations will often spur on our own thinking. In this spirit, I'm sharing some of the everyday innovative practices that serve us at Saanich Organics.

28-bin draining rack

We use a lot of Rubbermaid™ bins on our farms. We use the harder plastic harvest totes in the field, but it's been tough for us to find an affordable substitute for the stackable bins with tight fitting lids. After washing veggies, we put them in a Rubbermaid™ for transport up to the cooler. Yet there has always been the problem of water pooling in the bottoms. We used to lean one on its edge against a post and have the others like dominoes all draining in a row, until the inevitable would happen: a bin would pop open and a scramble would ensue to prevent all the bins from spilling their contents.

Now we just clip the bins into our draining rack, designed and built for us by Ian Franks, an apprentice from a few years back. Even heavy bins sit well on both sides of this A-frame structure. They stay clean and out of the way.

End to flea beetles

Flea beetle populations have been building on our farms, thanks to our heavy salad production and our over-wintering brassicas that feed them in early spring. We find that we can still pull off blemish-free beds of salad greens if we religiously do the following:

A. Practice proper crop rotation, so that the soil isn't full of flea beetle eggs to begin with.

B. Seal hole-free reemay completely around the beds leaving no gaps. This means diligently shoveling a solid barrier of soil along the entire edge of the reemay, and patching every hole with red tuck tape. It sure doesn't look pretty but it works. Repeat after every harvest. Don't use rocks or they'll tear the fabric.

C. Promptly turn under beds after they are done so insects can't feed and breed in the bed.

D. Human error gets us when we fail to convey the importance of this practice to new helpers on the farm, or when the wind catches the row cover and tears it. After harvesting from the beds on hot days when flea beetles are active, it's important to hand water the greens to flush out the beetles that have gotten in while you were working, and then reseal immediately with a solid barrier of soil. Even the smallest tears must be taped up!

"Farms spawn invention, and seeing other people's innovations will often spur on our own thinking."

Sowing cover crops

We started off seeding cover crops in pathways, mostly dwarf white clover, in order to have some terra firma to stand on during the mucky winter harvests. However, it works so well and looks so great that we've started doing this for most pathways. The clover flowers and attracts pollinators, it's nice on the knees when harvesting and transplanting, and it cares for the soil. It takes a few passes on the rototiller to get rid of it in the spring, but it hasn't been a big weed issue for us.

Inter-sowing clover works well in some crops as well, such as kale, corn, winter squash. It's not so good on low growing crops, like chard and lettuce because it can harbour slugs in the early stages. It's also not good for crops that are very sensitive to weed pressure like onions and broccoli. We have thrown it into mature crops for the winter, like overwintering broccoli and cabbage, and even in carrot beds that we know will be harvested soon, so that there will be some cover for the soil in winter.

Mesh-free bean trellis

There are five different farmers working with Saanich Organics. We are always learning from Chrystal and Ilya, apprentices of ours many moons ago who now have their own farm, SquareRoot Organics. When I went over to harass them in late August for material for this article, Ilya replied, "We're just too tired to innovate." I had to laugh.

Most of their innovation is in systems, but an easy idea I took from them was a mesh-free bean trellis. I've proved year after year that rebar and plastic mesh trellis doesn't work. Chrystal and Ilya invested in some good 10-foot T-bar which they brace at angles at each end of their 100ft beds. They tie a strand of bailing twine every 10 feet horizontally along the top and bottoms of the posts to serve as a frame. They then tie vertical lengths of jute every foot along the top and bottom bailing twine strands. The beans climb up these lengths. At the end of the season they slide the jute knots of the bailing twine and compost everything. No plastic waste!

www.saanichorganics.com

Different coloured bins for different uses

This seems like a very simple one but it has been saving us headaches in our boxing room. We used to have the problem of one farmer wandering in and setting down flats of strawberries next to someone else's, and neither farmer had an accurate count of how many flats they had brought. It was a guessing game.

There was also the scenario of stacks of flats in the truck, and having to look through them to see which of them are strawberries, and which are cherry tomatoes. Obviously tape labels work well too, but when days are full, details fall to the wayside and then they're extra work. Now each farm has different coloured bins, and I have two tones of the same colour. I can easily look in the truck to see which flats need to go straight to the cooler, which ones stay out.

Forms for all functions

Heather is our supreme multitasker on the farm. She always has kids to pick up from activities, canning on the stove, a visiting farm tour and then a phone call to take from a chef. So what's her solution to creating sanity and a smooth running farm? Forms!

Heather has harvest forms, with many columns to include orders, comments, who harvested what, etc. She has market inventory forms, end of box packing night check off forms, box customer sign up forms, tractor time forms, you name it and she'll make the form.

In a busy system with many hands, lack of communication creates more work. A simple piece of paper can serve as a great reminder for folks in the field, and peace of mind for the farmer when she's signing off an order. Paper doesn't work for everyone, but it can be a valuable tool. Heather generously shares her forms, and she's posted them on our website for you to peruse at your leisure.

Robin Tunnicliffe is a farmer with Saanich Organics on Southern Vancouver Island. She is co-author of All the Dirt: Three Farmers, Three Stories, One Business, *published by Touchwood Publications. Robin sits on several boards of directors, including USC-Canada, and she holds an MA in Food Policy from the University of Victoria.*

Fertility for Organic Tomatoes

Above: Pollock fruit. Below: Black Cherry fruit. Credit: Andrew Riseman

Do organic tomatoes have a fertilizer preference?

By Greg Rekken and Andrew Riseman

Hoop houses are a cost effective technology – enabling season extension and intensive, sustainable production of high value crops. This is particularly true for urban and peri-urban agriculture where land values necessitate increased production intensity.

In addition, urban centres challenged with surplus organic waste production present re-use opportunities for local food production. Composted organic waste materials, along with cover cropping, is one strategy for fertility management. However, seasonal management and costs of on-farm fertilizer production may warrant the use of commercial products.

Overall, organic fertilization programs should be tailored to the cropping system in terms of relative nutrient concentrations, mineralization rates, and pest and disease suppressing capabilities. Our study, conducted in 2010, assessed the impacts of hairy vetch, kelp, and composted poultry manure organic fertilizers on hoop house tomato production.

For over a decade, researchers and practitioners have successfully experimented with hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa Roth*) mulches for tomato production. In contrast to bare soil or black plastic, tomatoes mulched with hairy vetch exhibit delayed leaf senescence and reduced disease incidence and severity, resulting in longer harvest periods and increased yields.[1]

Hairy vetch grown tomatoes, receiving half the nitrogen, out-yielded those grown with black plastic.[2] However, these effects were not solely related to nitrogen source. Reduced soil splashing achieved with physical mulch barriers only partially explains disease suppression as hairy vetch, which also stimulates tomato immune system and concentrations of anti-senescence hormones, exceeded the suppression capacity of black plastic.[2,3] In total, a variety of factors are likely responsible for the beneficial effects of hairy vetch mulch, including a moderated soil environment, weed suppression, nutrient and phytohormone release during decomposition, and possibly stimulated populations of plant growth regulating bacteria.

"This project highlights the importance of considering not only nutritional demands but also growth habit, lifecycle and existing soil fertility..."

Giant Pacific Kelp (*Macrocystis spp.*), common to coastal British Columbia, is used as an organic fertilizer, supplying plants with both essential nutrients and plant growth hormones. Kelp stimulates plant growth when used as a soil amendment or foliar spray, though these effects are concentration specific.[4] It is possible that hairy vetch and kelp may stimulate plant growth in a similar fashion.

Poultry manure is a common nutrient source on organic farms with many market gardeners incorporating poultry into their rotation. However, composting is preferred to reduce pathogen load, plant injury and potential ground water contamination. In addition, with its high phosphorus content, poultry manure can be a valuable long-term soil amendment.

The objectives of this 2010 research study, conducted at the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm in Vancouver, were to determine whether fertilizer source differentially affects hoop house tomato growth and whether these responses were cultivar specific. Two cultivars of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicon L.*), Black Cherry and Pollock were grown in a complete randomized split block design consisting of four fertilizer treatments, replicated three times.

Black Cherry is an attractive and popular cultivar with dark shoulders. Pollock, originating from Bonnie Best, is a northern BC-bred cultivar producing medium sized tomatoes. Both are advertised as indeterminate varieties, however during this trial Pollock appeared semi-determinate.

To represent the range of locally available fertilizers, treatments included: 1) Hairy vetch green manure; 2) composted poultry manure; 3) Ecofert® Ecogrow 3-3-4 (EcoCert approved) liquid fertilizer; and 4) a no treatment control. All fertilizers were applied at 100 kg-Ntotal ha-1. Hairy vetch and composted poultry manure treatment beds were amended twelve days before transplanting. EcoGrow was applied in 16 weekly split applications via drip irrigation.

All treatment beds were mulched with black cellulose plastic and plants were pruned to a single leader. Fresh weight and shoulder diameter were recorded for all fruit, harvested twice weekly. Soluble protein content and percent soluble solids were measured for the first harvested fruit.

Credit: Andrew Riseman

Results

Black Cherry exhibited continuous growth over the entire season, while Pollock growth slowed after fruit set. Statistically, only one fertilizer/cultivar combination had a significant effect on vegetative growth; EcoGrow treated Pollock plants produced more vegetative biomass than all other combinations, which did not differ.

Harvest of Black Cherry fruit began 53 days after transplanting and continued for eleven weeks until trial termination. Abundant green fruit remained on all Black Cherry plants. All three fertilizers produced similar yield increases over the control (Table 1). Pre-treatment soil fertility may have been adequate until week 7 when harvests from hairy vetch and poultry manure treatments began to exceed the control.

EcoGrow harvests began to exceed the control by week 8, eventually matching the other fertilizer treatments by trial's end. EcoGrow supplied plants continued to yield well through the final weeks of the season, while weekly yields diminished in the other treatments. Low, continual doses of EcoGrow may account for the variation in harvest distribution.

Table 1: Black Cherry Per Plant Marketable Yields

Treatment	Yield (g)	No. Fruit	Mean Fruit Weight (g)	Mean Fruit Diameter (cm)
Control	2888.7 b*	159.8 a	25.7 a	3.3 B
Hairy vetch	3721.0 a	197.1 a	25.9 a	3.4 a,b
EcoGrow	3702.8 a	192.6 a	26.0 a	3.5 A
Poultry Manure	3669.7 a	184.6 a	27.2 a	3.5 A

*Values with different letters indicate significant treatment differences (α = 0.05)

Harvest of Pollock fruit began 60 days after transplanting and continued for 10 weeks until all fruit had ripened. Pollock did not respond differentially to any of the fertilizers. Interestingly, the control treatment produced marginally higher yields and fruit counts, but had a lower average fruit weight (Table 2). Poultry manure produced slightly larger fruit than the other treatments.

Harvest distribution over the season was similar across treatments. Pre-treatment soil fertility may have been sufficient for Pollock with its shorter, semi-determinate lifecycle. This is supported by the observation that Black Cherry did not show a treatment yield response until week 7, at which time the entire Pollock fruit load was set.

Table 2. Pollock Marketable Per Plant Yields

Treatment	Yield (g)	No. Fruit	Mean Fruit Weight (g)	Mean Fruit Diameter (cm)
Control	4829.4 a*	29.1 a	156.8 a	7.2 A
Hairy vetch	4657.3 a	27.6 a	161.2 a	7.2 A
EcoGrow	4589.0 a	27.4 a	162.9 a	7.2 A
Poultry manure	4399.1 a	24.5 a	174.0 a	7.4 A

*Values with different letters indicate significant treatment differences (α = 0.05)

Both cultivars displayed fertilizer responses for soluble solids and soluble protein content (Table 3). Control and hairy vetch treatments produced significantly more soluble protein in Black Cherry than the other treatments, whereas the EcoGrow treatment reduced soluble protein content in Pollock fruit.

Soluble solids (oBrix) is an easy to measure metric associated with tomato flavour, where higher values generally equate with tastier tomatoes. Overall, Black Cherry fruit had higher soluble solids content compared to Pollock, regardless of treatment. In addition, all fertilizers increased soluble solids content over the control treatment (Table 3).

Table 3. Tomato Fruit Quality Parameters

Treatment	Soluble Protein (µg/mL)		Soluble Solids (°Brix)	
	Black Cherry	Pollock	Black Cherry	Pollock
Control	332.3 a*	313.9 A	5.4 c	4.0 b
Hairy vetch	295.8 a	295.1 A	5.7 b,c	4.1 a,b
EcoGrow	106.8 b	84.0 B	5.9 a,b	4.2 a
Poultry manure	102.8 b	291.9 A	5.9 a	4.1 a,b

*Values with different letters indicate significant treatment differences (α = 0.05)

Fertilizers did not affect leaf senescence in Black Cherry or on Pollock's lower canopy. While the mid-canopy of Black Cherry did not senesce, Pollock plants were almost completely senesced by seasons' end. Interestingly, poultry manure accelerated mid-canopy senescence of Pollock. Overall, Pollock leaves senesced at a faster rate compared to Black Cherry.

The purported disease suppressing capacity of hairy vetch was not observed when incorporated as a green

manure. However, without a mulch application for comparison, we cannot determine if the purported benefits are realized in this climate.

Conclusion

Our research demonstrated that a range of organic fertilizer sources can produce equivalent yields in two tomato cultivars. Black Cherry responded positively to all fertilizers while for Pollock, no treatment outperformed the control. In addition, all fertilizers increased soluble solids content in both cultivars, indicating that improved soil fertility has a positive effect on fruit quality.

While Pollock produced overall higher yields in terms of weight, cherry tomatoes with a longer harvest period and sold by the pint may prove more profitable. Production and marketing realities will determine appropriate cultivar selection. This project highlights the importance of considering not only nutritional demands but also growth habit, lifecycle and existing soil fertility are important considerations in developing a cost-effective, nutrient management strategy.

Andrew Riseman is an Associate professor of plant breeding and genetics in UBC's faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Academic Director for the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm. Greg Rekken is a plant science graduate student in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems with 20 years of agricultural experience from around the globe.

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Helping new trees thrive in organic orchards

Louise Nelson, left, and Molly Thurston, right.

By Nicole Boudreau

When she moved from Saskatchewan to British Columbia eight years ago, Louise Nelson brought over 100 strains of soil bacteria with her that she wanted to test against tree fruit replant disease, a disease that affects young trees planted in old apple orchard blocks.

Replant disease happens around the world, but what causes this problem is not understood. When growers pull out old trees out of their orchards and put in their places new varieties, the new trees do not always thrive. Some explanations have been proposed, with one theory suggesting that perhaps when the same species are grown in the same place for a long time, a population of soil pathogens may be built up that negatively affects the new seedlings.

Gerry Neilsen, an AAFC researcher at Summerland's Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre (PARC), showed that replanted trees respond well to the addition of phosphorus. Given the importance of phosphorus in young tree establishment, Louise Nelson and other researchers have focused on improving the availability of phosphorus in organic production systems, where synthetic sources cannot be applied.

Dr. Louise Nelson

Nelson's approach, as a microbiologist, was to use soil bacteria that can efficiently solubilize phosphorus (P) and make it available to plants. So Nelson and Neilsen, along with Masters of Science student Molly Thurston, tested the large collection of Saskatchewan soil bacteria in the laboratory and in greenhouse trials to find out which strains were the best P solubilizers. The five most effective strains are currently being tested in the greenhouse and on certified organic farms in the Okanagan Valley.

Their research project, one of thirty Organic Science Cluster activities, is certainly in tune with organic tree fruit producers' needs and principles. In organic production, rock phosphate is probably the most common source of phosphorus, but the phosphorus in rock phosphate is not readily available to the plants. Phosphate solubilizing soil bacteria inoculated onto seedlings at planting may play a vital role in improving the growth of replanted trees in organic orchards.

The project's field trials are now underway. Last spring, young apple trees were inoculated with P-solubilizing soil bacteria at two sites in the Okanagan Valley. A second inoculation is planned for this spring.

"The zones around the roots are where the action is, where there may be beneficial microorganisms as well as pathogens. This is where we have to maintain the right balance," says Louise Nelson. "Much of my career has focused on using soil microorganisms to enhance plant growth and incorporating these into more sustainable practices. Organic agriculture fits very well with my interests, as we need to look at more sustainable practices to continue to be productive in agriculture."

Louise Nelson surely knows about soil bacteria. She studied microbiology at the University of Western Ontario, did her PhD on arctic soil bacteria at the University of Calgary, and her postdoctoral work at McDonald Campus of McGill University and the University of Oxford in England. In Saskatchewan, she worked at the National Research Council of Canada, Agrium Inc. and the University of Saskatchewan, studying symbiotic nitrogen fixation and other bacteria that promote plant growth. She is now a professor, researcher and the Associate Dean of Research of the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences at the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus.

Two passionate soil ecologists in British Columbia

In BC, Nelson's focus has shifted to horticultural crops, particularly the tree fruit industry, where she partners with Dr. Gerry Nielsen and co-supervises graduate student Molly Thurston, who is also convinced that sound soil management is the basis of organic agriculture.

Molly Thurston - Graduate Student

Thurston has observed variability in the phosphorous-solubilizing ability of the bacteria that she has analyzed. She was able to identify the most promising ones to bring forward for orchard replant trials with "Nicola," the new apple variety that was developed in the breeding program at PARC.

"As phosphorus can be limiting, we are trying to improve the efficiency of phosphorus uptake from rock phosphate, bone meal and compost in order to provide soluble P to the root system of the young trees" says Thurston, who did her undergraduate studies at the University of Guelph, where she was a student in the first organic agriculture course offered in 2003.

Thurston is also employed as an extension agent for the Okanagan Tree Fruit Cooperative, where she enjoys giving advice and guidance to growers in the tree fruit industry. Born in the Okanagan Valley and an organic farmer herself (see profile on Claremont Ranch in this issue), Thurston believes that similar yields can be achieved in organic and conventional orchards, though organic production often requires more hand labor, in the absence of the chemical tools available to conventional producers.

"We have our fair share of insect pests in BC, like any other part of the country, but growing apples organically is very achievable and not overly cumbersome if you have the right tools to manage the issues that come up," confirms Thurston, adding that the dry climate of the Okanagan Valley also helps to prevent fungal diseases.

Louise Nelson and Molly Thurston are excited by the progress of their project. They continue to measure the effects of the P-solubilizing bacteria in the lab, the greenhouse and the field.

In her spare time, Louise Nelson enjoys gardening, cooking, making bread, and reading novels by Canadian women authors. Molly also enjoys reading and she likes to run, both on trails and in the forests around the Okanagan.

As an organic producer herself, Thurston feels that her research is both timely and relevant to the replant challenges facing organic tree fruit producers. Together, their goal is to overcome this problem with ecological solutions.

Nicole Boudreau works for the Organic Federation of Canada and wrote this article on behalf of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada with funding provided by Canada's Organic Science Cluster (a part of the Canadian Agri-Science Clusters Initiative of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Growing Forward Policy Framework). The Organic Science Cluster is a collaborative effort led jointly by the OACC, the Organic Federation of Canada and industry partners. For more information: oacc@nsac.ca *or* 902-893-7256.

September 22-29, 2012

By Stephanie Wells

September 22-29 is National Organic Week, when farmers, chefs, manufacturers and consumers pull together to celebrate the environmental, economic and social benefits of organic production.

First launched three years ago by the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) and the Canadian Organic Growers (COG), Organic Week has taken off with a wide variety of events across the country to raise public awareness of organic agriculture and products.

Regional and community groups are organizing all kinds of special events to support the growth of organic. From farmers markets and farmer's fields and retail stores, events include organic food and drink tastings, movie screenings, restaurant specials, retail campaigns and community feasts. In 2012, restaurant chefs and schools have been invited to help consumers see the many ways they can go organic.

The official Organic Week website www.organicweek.ca lists these events, as well as sponsors, where to buy organic products and links to multimedia. If you have an idea or an event, we want to know about it. Send us an email at info@organicweek.ca. You can follow Organic Week on Twitter (@organicweek) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/organicweek).

The week is a great way for farmers and processors to show their commitment to organic agriculture and for marketers to educate customers on the many important reasons to choose organic products. We're delighted that Organic Week now draws attention all year long, with the strong online and social media presence listing hundreds of organic events and special retail offers.

Stephanie Wells is a Senior Policy Advisor with the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA).

COTA is a membership-based organization dedicated to promoting and protecting the growth of organic trade in Canada to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy.

Canadian Organic Growers is a national charitable organization that believes organic food production is the best choice for the health of consumers and producers, for the protection and enhancement of the environment and for the sustainability of the food production system.

www.organicweek.ca

Twitter: @organicweek
Facebook: www.facebook.com/organicweek
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Left: Organic Week 2011 at Foodstock in Honeywood, ON. Right: Parliament Day delegates during Organic Week 2011 delegates included farmers, processors and traders, who met with Members of Parliament to highlight the organic sector's challenges and successes. Credit: Canadian Organic Trade Association.

Organic Week Events in BC

Sooke

Sooke Region Food CHI Society presents A Taste of Harvest garden party community feast to celebrate local food.

5pm, September 23
Sunriver Community Garden
2380 Phillips Road

www.sookefoodchi.ca

Vancouver

Eternal Abundance's Weeklong Grocery Special and Raw Vegan Dinner

All produce is 15% off for the entire week of Sept 22-29
Raw Dinner Special Menu Thursday, Sept 27 through Sat, Sept 29

Eternal Abundance is Vancouver's only all-organic grocery store and vegan cafe.

We are proud to offer all organic food, and will be celebrating Organic Week with produce specials and a special raw vegan dinner menu celebrating local organic food!

www.eternalabundance.ca

Victoria

The Moss Street Market in Victoria is celebrating National Organic Week!

On Saturday, September 29 there will be chef demonstrations, a collage of local farms and farmers, kids planting organic seeds and learning about growing, many food vendors featuring organic items on their menus, crafters creating farmer arts and crafts, a raffle to raise funds for the Canadian Organic Grower and special music celebrating organic farmers and their products.

www.mossstreetmarket.com

Kelowna

The 7th Annual Organic Okanagan Festival

Sunday, September 23
Summerhill Pyramid Winery,
4870 Chute Lake Road

Enjoy, sample, shop and learn with Activist Alley, the Green Living Marketplace, a Certified Organic Farmer's Market and much more! Festival attendees will enjoy all the entertainment including the COABC NO-GMO Apple Panel, live music, the children's entertainment and the entire marketplace with over 60 green living exhibitors. Okanagan and eco-conscious, natural and thought provoking, the Organic Okanagan Festival is your community-based event showcasing our growing green choices.

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growing local food policies FROM THE GROUND UP

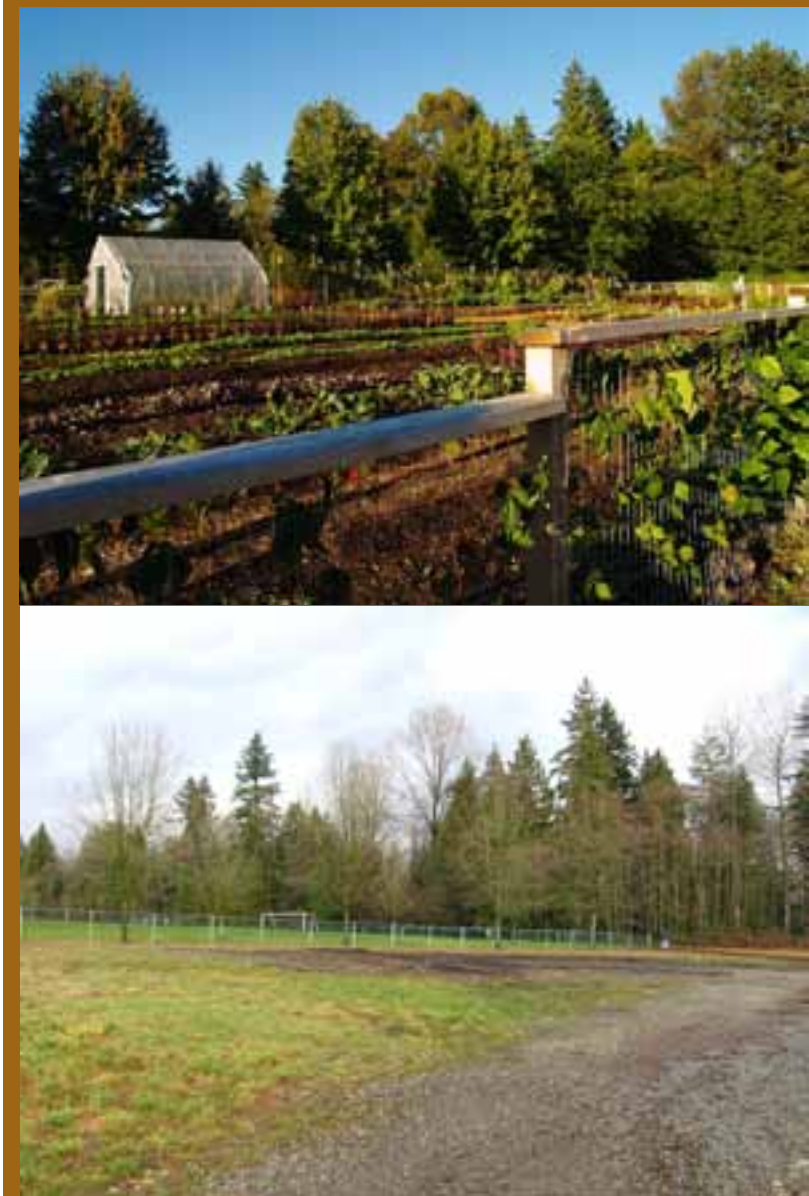
By Heather Johnstone

Many Canadians dream of a little patch of soil where they can grow food for their families. Josée Landry and Michel Beauchamp were no different – they transformed the front yard of their home in Drummondville, Quebec into a meticulous vegetable garden, only to be told they would have to tear it down. Town code states that a vegetable garden can't occupy more than 30 per cent of the area of a front yard.

Ironically, earlier this year the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, found that in Canada "one in 10 families with a child under six is unable to meet their daily food needs," noting that "people are simply too poor to eat decently." Planting a garden might be one way for families to tackle this issue. Instead, there are often a range of regulatory barriers that prevent families from doing so.

De Schutter stressed the need for a national food policy in Canada. In a local CTV story, he cites systematic barriers to access rather than an inadequate supply of food in the country as being at the root of the problem.[1]

Federal Immigration minister Jason Kenny responded negatively, and is quoted as saying, "I think this is completely ridiculous. Canada is one of the wealthiest, most democratic countries in the world. According to us, we believe that the UN should focus on development in countries where people are starving and we think it's simply a waste of resources to come to Canada to give them political lecturing."[2]



Top: Loutet Farm after, 8 months into the transformation from park to urban farm in the City of North Vancouver. Credit: Edible Garden Project. Bottom: Loutet Park before, underutilized parkland in the City of North Vancouver destined for food production. Credit: Heather Johnstone

National organizations like Food Secure Canada are working to bring food policy onto the national agenda – though with responses like Kenny's there is evidently still a long way to go before food becomes a federal priority.

The federal Ministry of Agriculture and the BC provincial government have adopted a partnership agreement, "Growing Forward," that

"one in ten families with a child under six is unable to meet their daily food needs."

is largely focused on the development of the agriculture industry. Growing Forward views agriculture as an economic sector, so doesn't consider many of the other aspects of the food system.

A more holistic approach is taken by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) that states "A community is 'food secure' when everyone obtains a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and justice."[3] As one of the 21 core public health program areas of PHSA, food security has been supported through the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI).

Municipalities, with their jurisdiction over land use policies and zoning, have a lot of freedom to create policy that supports a more sustainable food system. But food has not typically been a major focus for municipal governments, and food-related activities often don't fit into the existing regulatory framework.

In the District of Lantzville, for example, Dirk Becker and Nicole Shaw at Compassion Farm have faced an extended battle over the sale of produce from their residentially zoned property. Opposing them, former Lantzville Mayor Colin Halme is quoted as asking "why intensive agricultural activities should be allowed within residential areas when there is significant agriculturally zoned properties that are not currently being used for agricultural activities."[4] Perhaps City of North Vancouver Councillor Craig Keating is correct in saying that "somewhere in the '50s we adopted... a strategy that said: let's extinguish agriculture in the bounds of municipalities."[5]

As urban food production becomes increasingly popular (and visible) and continues to run up against these challenges, most municipalities are ready to talk about what needs to change. Often this means looking not just at urban agriculture specifically, but also at the broader food system. Staff at the City of Vancouver are in the process of developing a food strategy that looks at all aspects of the food system, including production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and waste management. This means supporting urban agriculture (they are actively engaged with the Vancouver Urban Farmers Network), finding ways to "improve access to nutritious, local, and affordable food," reducing the distance between production and consumption, and looking at how we manage food waste.

At the City of North Vancouver, municipal staff are considering the creation of a North Shore Food Charter with two neighbouring north shore municipalities, which would set the framework for future policy directions, and a North Shore Food Policy Council to provide expertise in working through the implementation and support ongoing innovation in this area. They have already made substantial progress with the adoption of policies supporting urban agriculture,[6] and by supporting the creation of Loutet Farm – an urban demonstration project on public parkland operated by the Edible Garden Project.

Any policy changes being considered by local governments will only be strengthened by looking to (and supporting) what is happening in neighbouring municipalities, and in the region. Municipalities in the lower mainland, for example, can look to the Metro Vancouver Regional Food System Strategy[7] which takes a broad look at the food system and provides specific recommendations for municipalities.

So why is this relevant to organic farmers? Urban farmers often follow organic practices as closely as possible – but urban realities make certification difficult, or impossible. Though not certified, these farmers are vocal supporters of the organic movement, and by working to raise consumer awareness, they can very much support the work of certified organic farmers in the region. Also, their visibility in communities provides a daily reminder to consumers of how beautiful carefully grown food can be.

Illegal? Really? Credit: Le Potager Urbain (the Urban Garden) www.lepotagerurbain.com

It is daunting to think about addressing each of the policy issues that are being felt by those in the food system. Zoning, permitting and licencing are complex (and can be dull). The Vancouver Urban Farmers Network has been working tirelessly to develop appropriate policy for urban farmers, and in their newsletter they explore how "projects can, and do become mired in complicated questions of process, legality, public safety… etc."[8] But their hope, and mine, is that by working through these systems now, we can save the farmers of the future from running up against the same obstacles – and hopefully support a more resilient food system at the same time.

Luckily, things are changing fast; after receiving a petition with close to 30,000 signatures[9] the Municipal Council in Drummondville has since agreed to work with Landry and Beauchamp, the illegal front yard gardeners, to change the regulation. They have been invited to help shape new guidelines for urban food gardens in the municipality.

Heather Johnstone spent years learning with organic farmers on the west coast and has turned her focus to playing at urban agriculture with home-scale urban gardeners, municipalities and community builders with the Edible Garden Project (www.ediblegardenproject.com).

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www.ediblegardenproject.com

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Organic certification:

exploring issues, challenges, and options for B.C. producers

By Gunta Vitins

The Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is undertaking research to more clearly understand the needs, issues and challenges of non-certified organic producers – particularly small scale operators – that are deterring them from participating in organic certification programs.

While there are over 600 certified organic farmers and processors in BC, there are an estimated 3,000 non-certified organic producers, a number that indicates that the current certification model may not be working as well as envisioned. At the same time, it is important to assure BC consumers of the organic integrity of products bearing organic claims. Certification is believed to be the best guarantee of the organic integrity of a product for consumers, even for those who know the farmer and the farmer's production practices. Confusing messaging can erode consumer confidence in the organic label, and affect the livelihood of all organic producers.

Through consultation with a broad range of producers, including urban farmers, the COABC is seeking to discover the barriers to certification, find innovative ways to minimize barriers, and explore solutions to suit the needs of all organic producers, including alternative certification models.

The COABC has hired a team of experienced consultants to undertake the research project led by Andrea Lawseth of AEL Agroecological Consulting. The other team members are Rochelle Eisen, Gunta Vitins and Dr. Brenda Frick, partners of Resilient Solutions Consulting. The team will be consulting with stakeholders in BC from July 2012 to March 2013, through a series of facilitated workshops at conferences and agricultural events, as well as surveys and one-on-one interviews. This team will reach out to non-certified organic farmers, producers who have left certification programs, as well as to those who have considered organic certification but have chosen not to certify. The information will be collected in confidence and will be presented in a consolidated report, protecting the identity of individual project participants.

The project's first facilitated workshop took place at the BC Food Systems Network Annual Gathering on Gambier Island on July 6. Participants included non-certified organic producers, urban farmers and certified organic producers. Lively discussions ensued on the benefits of organic certification, barriers to certification, and innovative solutions. General consensus was that certification is important for consumers and producers alike, and the system would benefit greatly from outreach, education, and innovation. The consultants will use the feedback from this workshop to develop the next steps for project outreach and further consultations.

Information on the project and consultations will be broadcast on the COABC listserv and to the broader agriculture community through newsletters and social media during September, October and November.

Preliminary findings of the research project will be presented by the consultants at the COABC Annual Conference in February 2013. The project report will be completed by April 30, 2013. The COABC will consider the report findings when developing a strategy for more inclusive certification programs that are suitable for all organic producers, including small scale operators.

For more information on the research project and consultation schedule, please contact the research team:

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Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program. In British Columbia, this program is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

People Points

What type of boss are you? Part II

By Karen Fenske

In the last issue we started exploring your leadership style, how different styles impact your workers, and their varying results. While we continue to review a few more styles of leadership see if you can pick out your preferred style and consider one that you would like to "try on."

Servant/Steward Leader

An intriguing leadership style is the servant/steward leader. This leader has a deep desire to help grow others, therefore, chooses to serve his/her workers in the best way he/she can. The long-term benefit to this style is that things get done by employees who are committed and engaged because of their increased sense of significance or value. The hard part about this style can be the time it takes. You need to get to know your people and their individual needs then figure out how to support and train them by meeting them "where they are at." This style is not for the weak! You need to be comfortable with the balance of power. Developing and using this style grows both you and the employee.

Bureaucratic Leader

If you are a bureaucratic type of leader you manage according to policy and procedures, with no questions asked. This works well with workers who are doing repetitive tasks, working with dangerous goods or cash, and when liability is an issue. One of the pros to this style is that job expectations are clear, therefore relieving stress for the employees who do not like ambiguity. High levels of safety and accuracy are also standard results. Policies and procedures can provide continuity and efficiency which can be healthy for the operation. Unfortunately, workers often don't perform beyond the minimum requirements and can become demotivated and complacent because there is no opportunity to influence their job. Though bureaucracy has a place, leaders need to be alert to becoming an "enforcer" of rules instead of a motivator of people. Also the leader needs to ensure rules are relevant and legal.

Lone Rider Leader

Are you a Lone Rider? This style of leader takes over control of all tasks and has a hard time delegating. The belief is "if I want it done right I have to do it myself". Though this can sometimes be true there is a myth that one person can do it all well. Therefore the main pitfall to this style is that one person can only do so much. Also if you have workers, they don't learn to do the tasks and eventually leave because they really aren't needed. This style has its time and place but what will happen if the leader gets sick or is in an accident and can't work? There is absolutely nothing wrong with this style if you are content with a small operation, the amount of work that gets done and doing it alone.

Have you considered adding a different method to your preferred style? We often think we can't change but if we want different results sometimes we need to alter our methods. Try on something new with just one employee or for a period of time. You may be pleasantly surprised!

Karen Fenske, is the principal of StratPoint Solutions, www.stratpoint.ca.

Obituary:

JOHNNY CANUCK

Nov 9, 1941 – Jun 15, 2012
Pathfinder, country person and citizen. Artist, steward, defender of land, community and country. Dancer, sage, friend. Founding father of many farm organizations, and source of inspiration for many. Passionate lover of life, gentleman and clown.

John Daniel Wilcox's legacy is vast and deep and bright. He devoted his life to service to his country, countless volunteer hours doing his duty as citizen and organic farmer to create a vision that sustains all life. He always led by example, by his good sense of what was right and by showing what hard work and hard play gave to make a man shine. And shine he did!

Surviving him are his brother Jim Wilcox, daughter Lisa Wilcox, first wife Judith Stuart, daughters Samantha Wilcox and Emma Rubatscher (Jon), second wife Lynda Wilcox, stepson Dan Brooke (Erica), granddaughter Megan Brooke, partner Sue Earle, stepson Eland Bronstein and daughter Ella Bronstein.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC has released a Request for Proposals for the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), with approximately $2.0 million in CAAP funding available for eligible projects. The 2012 deadlines to apply for project-based funding are July 12, September 14 and November 23. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2013. Additional program information, the Request for Proposals, examples of projects funded and application forms are available online at: www.iafbc.ca

The BC Seeds Gathering 2012, organized by Farm Folk City Folk, will be held from November 9-11, 2012, at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Richmond campus. This event is a provincial gathering of seed growers, savers and activists. Small-scale seed growers, community leaders, seed networks and young urban farmers from across BC will bring their seeds to test a variety of cleaning equipment, learn, share experiences, and to form a BC Seeds producer cooperative. Participants will strategize on how to improve the quality and quantity of locally grown seed and strategize how to protect our seed from GE contamination. To register and for more information visit www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/events/bc-seeds-gathering-2012.

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Manure Spreader For Sale: Wallenstein MX80P PTO Drive, 80 bushel capacity, poly floor, fines pan included. Three speed chain drive for great spread control. Like new condition, only 2 years old. Kelowna 250-869-0016 suncatcherfarm@shaw.ca

Place your event or classified ad in the BC Organic Grower

Events are free and classifieds are only $25/issue!

For more information, contact Moss at:

bcogadvertising@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

Husky Mohawk Community Rebate Program

COABC is involved with the Husky Mohawk Community Rebate Program in order to raise additional funds for the organisation. Husky forwards 2% of the loyalty card users' purchases to COABC in the form of a rebate. All COABC members were sent a card in 2005 and a small amount of members have been using the card resulting in an average rebate of $30 per quarter. We still need more help to raise funds using this loyalty program.

If you would like to receive a card or additional cards, please contact the COABC office at (250) 260-4429 or email us at office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

COABC
Certified Organic Associations of BC

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Twist Ties 10" (15,000 per case)	1000 pc	$13.00	Full Case-$165.00		

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Natural T-shirts (Logo) M or L *	$7.25	$7.25	HST taxable		
Natural T-shirts (Plain) S, XL or XXL *	$5.00	$5.00	HST taxable		
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