

**VicWest Food Security Collective**  
**2012 Project Report**  
**Patti Parkhouse, Project Coordinator**

The VicWest Food Security Collective is a group of **volunteers** who work on projects to strengthen production, consumption and access to food that is safe, nutritious, affordable, locally produced and environmentally and economically sustainable. There is much work to be done in building our neighbourhood's secure food system. Our goal each year is to **increase** our participation in existing projects and **create** new projects. The biggest benefit from our efforts is the resulting community building, both within the individuals who participate and for the whole VicWest community. Our moto is...cultivating community by growing and sharing food!

If you would like to assist in any of the projects or have ideas on how the Collective can grow to support a sustainable VicWest food system please contact Patti [vicwestgarden@yahoo.ca](mailto:vicwestgarden@yahoo.ca)

**New projects**

Website – [vicwestfoodsecurity.org](http://vicwestfoodsecurity.org)

Launched in November, our new website will include Collective project information, learning resources to support urban food production, and report on food activities in Vic West. Louise, Leanna, Hannah, Teresa, Ava, and Aaren will continue to add content and improve the website design.

Hereward Park Community Orchard

In September the Collective and partner Transition Victoria Captial Nut Project won a contest with Southern Vancouver Island Permablitz to design a permaculture community orchard/food forest in Hereward Park. Two community design events in October identified the current park use and collected ideas on enhancing and increasing food production that will complement the use. Once the design is completed in January, the team can begin the search for funding and the application process with the City to build the orchard.

Banfield Park Community Orchard

The 2012 Victoria Official Community Plan identifies the City's commitment to expanding food production in public places. In November the Collective partnered with the City to operate a pilot program to introduce and test a community orchard model in City parks. The 10 tree orchard will transform the green space between the tennis courts and Craigflower Road to an engaging **Place** that will encourage community participation. The community will design, plant and maintain the trees and harvest the fruit. The City will purchase the trees, install irrigation and mow the lawn. Planting will occur in February to early March.

## **On going projects**

### Community Dinners – Ava Christl, Project Coordinator

Five dinners were hosted at the Centre during 2012. We celebrated Mardi Gras, Earth Day, the Summer Solstice, the Autumn Harvest and held a wonderful outdoor “Dinner in White” event.

You are invited to “A Mid Winter's Night Dream”, the 10<sup>th</sup> Vic West Community Potluck Dinner on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm at the Centre.

In the spring 2013, we will host a free community feast. To raise funds for this event the Potluck Team are offering a “by donation” gift wrapping service during Santa's Breakfast on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

### Community Kitchen – Ava Christl, Project Coordinator

The Kitchen brings people together to prepare food. Largely inactive this year, with big plans for the future. Aspirations to create relationships between the food we grow and the food we eat through presentations, workshops and classes.

### VicWest Grow-a-Row

VicWest gardeners participated in Grow-a-Row, a project in partnership with the Compost Education Centre. Community members donated produce from their gardens whenever the yield could be shared, with the donations supporting the Rainbow Kitchen which is now located in Esquimalt.

### VicWest Urban Farmers (VWUF)

VWUF is a network of people who support each other in growing food by sharing knowledge, seeds, and plants. Activities include monthly Growing meetings/workshops, a library, seed and plant exchange, and summer garden tours. The March Tour de Coop introduced many to the delights of backyard chickens and the May VWUF plant sale provided a supply of healthy food plants for VW gardens. Membership blossomed to 91 this year and there are more budding VW farmers out there! If you would like to learn more about growing your own food consider joining VWUF.

### Vic West Corn Roast

September 16 was the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Corn Roast, a celebration of community, local food and Spiral Café's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. The event was a great success again this year – the BIGGEST and BEST EVER people said. This year it was a true corn roast thanks to the new **Red Wheat Bread Bakery's** wood-fired oven – thanks Byron! Along with the 400 cobs of sweet roasted local corn, the BIG crowd enjoyed Byron's pizzas, local apple-pear juice (pears from the Raynor Park tree) and Vic West homemade apple pie while listening to the musical friends of Spiral Café. The pie judges had a hard time deciding (second pieces were required!); the results are: 1<sup>st</sup> – Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Rosemary, 3<sup>rd</sup> – Dawn. People could express their artist talents by assisting the Art Questers' in the creation of the natural structure that still stands in Raynor Park or by building a zucchini car or lantern at

Esquimalt Lantern Fest table. Thanks to the volunteers and businesses for your support.

VicWest Tea Garden – at the Centre Community

The Tea Garden really grew in 2012 providing herbal tea for community events and the public. The strawberries were particularly popular with the children from the Centre programs and the deer! Special thanks to Cherie for her on-going care and attention of the garden.

Rayn or Shine Garden, Raynor Street, behind Spiral Cafe

Featured this year at the garden was a dedicated Grow-a-Row bed – thank you Ava! The gardeners' commitment to soil building with the addition of on-site grown compost shows success in high yields and quality crops. The garden is always open, come be inspired by fruits and vegetables our 9 gardeners grow organically on what once use to be a parking lot. Special thanks to Mary Ann for her continued dedication and hard work to keep the garden growing!

Banfield Commons

More people are discovering the wonderful perennial food growing in this permaculture food forest in Banfield Park. Deer also have been grazing in the garden, their favourite being the figs, therefore installation of plant cages will be necessary to protect this human prized fruit. The garden continues to become more self-sustaining requiring only minimal weeding and watering, a characteristic of good permaculture design and practises.

Evans Street Orchard

More sheet mulching and guild planting in this boulevard orchard were done to improve the growing conditions for the trees. Special thanks to Stuart and Jack & Lori for the continued support in the orchard.

Bridges Park Community Garden, in Railyards

Letters of support from the Railyards' strata councils, the City and VWCA have been received. Hopes are that these letters will demonstrate the community's desire for food production space in the park so the developer will include an allotment garden in his Bridges Park plans.