

Education Coordinator Report 2010
Yellowknife Community Garden Collective
Educational Program



By Caroline Lafontaine

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Education Coordinator Role

The Education Coordinator organizes educational workshops. The main tasks this year were to find speakers, prepare and post posters, translate posters, send posters and messages to the communication coordinator for distribution to the YCGC membership and radio stations, and support the workshop facilitators. The role of the coordinator also includes doing research and providing up-to-date information about gardening methods, innovations and other gardening topics as time permits.

2009-2010 Workshops

This year we continued with a series of workshops similar to last year and investigated the possibilities for the upcoming year. Lone Sorensen was the main facilitator and was also in charge of the mentorship program. Other facilitators included: Joyce Gilchrist, Jessica Mace (companion planting), Shannon Ripley (soil), and Gerald Enns (construction of composters). The format that works well is a 45 minute workshop: 10 to 15 minutes talk per subject/person, question period, and a hands-on activity in the garden. It is recommended that this format be used in the future.

Participation in the workshops ranged from 12 to 20 people at each session. The workshops presented this year are listed below.

Date	Event
March 24 th	Seed Selection, Ordering & Swap Workshop: People learned which garden vegetable varieties grow best in Yellowknife and about companion planting. Selected seeds for the coming season. No one brought seed to swap. Held at Rosella's place.
May 12th	Soil Health & Planting Workshop: An up-close glimpse into the life of your garden soil and the plants you want to thrive there! At Lone's because of the rain. We discussed soil, nutrients, compost.
July 20th	Potluck and Garden Maintenance: Lone discussed the importance of weeding, thinning and feeding your plants. The poster was translated and posted at the Association franco-culturelle de Yellowknife and was on air at radio Taiga. Held in Garden 2.

Arrangements to conduct a workshop on "Take care of your garden, take care of your back" was postponed due to timing issues. Physiotherapist Sandra Mann will be in the garden in May 2011 to promote caring for your body while preparing for the gardening season. Ergonomic tools will be available. The event will coincide with National Physiotherapy Month.

Reaching the Community and Across Cultures

The session on how to maintain our garden included participation from the community as it attracted non-members, including many francophones and two interns from the environmental program offered at Centre for Northern Families (CNF). The promotion was extended to the Association franco-culturelle de Yellowknife and Radio-Taiga. Interest in gardening was obviously triggered in the young women from CNF and the two interns may get a plot next year.

Community Garden at the National Level

A journalist from Radio-Canada, Evelyne Asselin, interviewed the coordinator about her personal gardening and participated in the workshop at the end of July. Evelyne produced a series of 5 documentaries in the NWT for C'est ça la vie!, a program focused on the life of people in Canada. The documentaries were shown on TV the week of October 18-22 and can be viewed on the Internet at http://www.radio-canada.ca/emissions/c_est_ca_la_vie/2010-2011.

The documentary featuring the garden was presented on Monday, October 18th, 3rd documentary of the hour.

New Initiatives and Workshops

The coordinator has grown tobacco for the second year and a partnership with the Sacred Circle Project is underway.

Discussion on the possibilities of supporting the Weledeh School were discussed. The book "Get growing!" was bought to support the people that will be involved.

Jolie Mayer-Smith and Linda Peterat, (Eds), Get Growing! Activities For Food And Garden Learning, A Teacher Resource For Elementary And Middle Grades: Really Small Vernon Press, 2010, ISBN 978-0-88865-672-8, 220 pages, 8 1/2"x11", \$25 CAD plus taxes, shipping, and handling

Lone Sorensen is very excited about the idea of bringing the Collective into the classroom and will help as needed. Next year's coordinator should attend the upcoming meeting with the school and other Collective representatives (likely in November 2010).

2010-2011 Suggested Activities

Workshop series on various subjects
School mentorship program
Art at the gardens project

A tentative workshop plan for the upcoming year was developed. Next year's coordinator will send out the workshop list to the membership via e-mail during the upcoming weeks.

2011	January	Seed Ordering Workshop. Identify schools and classes that want to garden.
	February	Meet with classes: develop garden plans. Seed Selection, Ordering & Swap Workshop (need someone) .
	March	Meet with classes: develop garden plans and plant early starters.
	April	Spring social
	May	Soil Health & Planting Workshop (Shannon and Lone) "Take care of your garden, take care of your back" (Sandra Mann) From this point on, mentoring program starts – Frequency: as needed.
	June	How to Use Garden Tools Workshop. (need someone) Outdoor Composting Workshop (need someone) . Maintaining a successful garden. (need someone) . Garden celebrations - Potlucks in the gardens. (need someone) .
	July	Garden Maintenance Workshops. (Lone) Garden celebrations - Potlucks in the gardens. (need someone) .
	August	Garden celebrations - Potlucks in the gardens. (need someone) .
	September	Worm Composting Workshop (Diane Boudreau). Fall Harvest Celebration.

The Education team members are also thinking about developing an assistance program for schools and teachers. The book "Get Growing!" was recently purchased to help in that sense. We are thinking about looking for funding for the project if needed. An art project at the Weledeh garden would also be possible and needs to be discussed.

Potluck in the garden. The question was put out to the members whether they would be interested in a monthly potluck in the gardens? It will be discussed at the spring social.

Recruitment of Facilitators

A sign-up sheet was available at the AGM to recruit facilitators for workshops for the upcoming year. If you or one of your friends have experience or knowledge on a subject area related to gardening (insects, plants, etc...) and would like to share your information for 10 minutes next season, please leave your name, e-mail address and the subject on the sign-up sheet or email the coordinator at lafontaine-caroline@hotmail.com. It eases the task of the coordinator and promotes community sharing! (Sign-up sheet attached to report.)

Permaculture Plot Update

The permaculture plot (Site 1, plot 11 – Caroline Lafontaine and Snookie Catholique) was again very productive this year. After the winter, all the material that covered the plot had decomposed with only stems remaining which were removed in order to weed. The spinach seeds had survived and we discovered seedlings under the remains. We ate spinach in June. We noticed a better soil structure which we disturbed in order to weed and we redesigned the garden to have more surface area. The lesson of the year to create a permaculture garden in the North: 1) the team needs to keep up with the weeding to keep the soil structure or else the soil needs to be dug up; 2) such plots in a community garden are challenging due to isolation of the plot in an environment that does not sustain the system, for example the incoming seeds from other gardens.