



Our mission:
With a spirit of celebration, we develop and deliver education and public programs that increase food growing and food security for people of all ages in Tofino and surrounding communities.



IMPACT REPORT 2021

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Tofino Community Food Initiative conducts its programs on the ancestral, unceded territories of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. We acknowledge that the practices we draw on and teach are not traditional to this place and that, with colonization, Indigenous people lost access to the land on which we live and work. The TCFI is committed to cultural inclusion and reconciliation, and to stewarding the land on which we are guests.

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The quiet days of winter are when every gardener looks forward and looks back. We look back to see what worked in the garden and to remember what challenged us, and we look forward with enthusiasm to the growing season ahead. As a board, we are doing the same. We're proud of what our staff, volunteers, and student growers accomplished in 2021 despite the year's many challenges—you'll see some of the highlights in this report—and we look forward to 2022.

Just as a gardener plants a bit of hope with every seed, the TCFI does so with our programs and projects. We're germinating a few new ideas for 2022, but also bolstering what we already do well. And we'd love you to get involved—take a tour of the school garden, participate in a workshop, volunteer at a garden work bee, engage with us on social media, let us "glean" your excess fruit, donate to the organization or a specific program that interests you, or get in touch with your ideas for programs and events you'd like to see. The TCFI board and staff are keen to share our skills and enthusiasm with you as we work to support food growing and food security in our region. The pandemic has put these goals into even sharper focus for us, and we look forward to supporting one another—and growing growers of all ages—in 2022 and beyond.

The TCFI Board of Directors: Leah Austin, Cindy Hutchison, Adrienne Mason, Josie Osborne, Dan Price-Francis and April Robson.

WICKANINNISH SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAM

Now in our sixth year of partnership with the Wickaninnish Community School, and with the collaboration of teachers, volunteers and community members, our school garden programs are thriving! In 2021, we expanded our programs, supporting teachers in providing more opportunities for outdoor learning and social cohesion amidst the pandemic.

Through experiential learning, children, adults, and elders gain improved food literacy, a strengthened relationship to the natural environment, and a curiosity towards healthy and whole foods, while producing sustainably grown, local food for themselves and their community. This year, the importance of building resilience and self-confidence within our community became particularly emphasized in our changing and uncertain world.



A closer look at how we've grown ...

- We facilitated a free, weekly program for six classrooms, collaborating with teachers to meet curriculum outcomes.
- We provided subsidized After School Garden Clubs, twice a week for children in kindergarten and grades 2-4.
- We piloted a free, weekly Intergenerational Garden Club, bringing together five community Elders with students to share knowledge in the garden.
- We hosted seasonal, weekly volunteer days to share the learning and growing journey with our entire community.
- We harvested for the school lunch program. Surplus and summer season harvests were made available by donation at Gaia Grocery.
- We completed a 13-panel Indigenous foods mural - an artistic collaboration between Ivy Cargill-Martin, Grace George, Chelsey Naka, and students.



IN THE WORDS OF PARTICIPANTS ...

"I love this program and it is something we look forward to weekly. I am learning so much as an adult, and I hope the students learn to love garden at a young age so they have confidence to continue on and be more sustainable as adults (something I lack)."

— Wickaninnish Community School Teacher

"Not everybody grows a garden anymore and it's really nice to do things with the kids so that they learn how to plant a seed and see it grow, and eventually maybe pick the fruit, make a salad from the lettuce. [The school garden] is kind of a nice social setting in a town that really doesn't have much for seniors."

— JoJo, Elder and Intergenerational Garden Club participant

"A lot of our students don't have a lot of exposure to a variety of foods, and so to see them come into the Food Forest where everything is edible and their willingness to try absolutely everything is amazing. To have a program like this is just strengthening our community."

— Kristin Bruhwiler, Kindergarten Teacher

"We are growing gardeners, we are growing farmers, we are growing stewards of the land here at the Food Forest. They are excited, they are engaged, they are stimulated and they are getting filled up with healthy foods in their belly to keep them going throughout the day. They are our most valuable resource."

— Paula Robertson, School Garden Coordinator (pictured above)



GROW LOCAL PROGRAM



Every year, we host a series of gardening workshops that provide our west coast communities with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle the challenges of growing in our temperate rainforest environment. This past season, we offered three in-person and seven virtual workshops, as well as sharing Grow Local tips through social media and our monthly newsletter.

Virtual Workshops ([published on YouTube](#))

- How to Make Sourdough Bread with Laurence Fisette
- Winter Fruit Tree Pruning with Nora Swann
- Building a Brooder for your Chicks with Leah Austin
- Building a Lasagna Garden with Connie Kuramoto
- Building Soil and Pest Management with Connie Kuramoto
- Seed Saving with Connie Kuramoto
- Chicken Coops and Electric Fence Info Session with Leah Austin and Bob Hansen

In-Person Workshops

- Fruit Tree Care: Summer Fruit Tree Pruning with Connie Kuramoto and Electric Fencing with Bob Hansen
- Sprouting Microgreens for Families with Paula Robertson
- Building a Worm Composter for Families with Leah Austin



FRUIT GLEANING PROGRAM

2021 was the pilot year for our Fruit Gleaning Program, initiated and delivered in partnership with WildSafeBC. The program aimed to improve co-existence of humans and wildlife, resulting in conservation of local black bear population, increased community resiliency, and strengthened local food growing culture.

Over the course of the season, we gleaned 200 lbs of plums and 35 lbs of apples that were split equally between volunteers, fruit tree stewards, and local businesses, including Pacific Rim Distilling and the Hobbyist, to create value-added products. As we continue to raise awareness of this new program, we look forward to more gleaning opportunities for our Glean Team of 28 volunteers (and growing!).

This program also educated community members on fruit tree care, which included hosting a workshop on summer pruning and electric fencing with nine participants at the Wickaninnish Community School Garden.

In contrast to 2019 (the year that sparked the development of this program), chickens were a more prevalent bear attractant than fruit trees this season and we adapted our educational efforts to include an info session on responsible chicken keeping in our region.



GROWING RESILIENT COASTAL GARDENS



Beginning in late 2020, we set out to foster more collaboration amongst community gardens in our coastal region. Many of our coastal communities are fortunate to have existing community gardens with passionate champions that spearhead these efforts. However, many community leaders feel like they lack support. They struggle with volunteerism and engagement, as well as the many challenges that are inherent in growing food! From Hesquiaht to Anacla, by strengthening relationships between leaders of these community gardens, we aimed to elevate the knowledge base of community gardens across our coastal communities, nurture social connectedness, build capacity, and continue cultivating a mutually supportive network.

Throughout the season, we hosted three virtual gatherings where we shared our strengths and struggles, and collaborated on future actions to further support each other in our unique dream visions for our gardens. Two virtual workshops were offered to support gardeners in building their skills and knowledge and these were recorded so the workshops could be further shared publicly. One-on-one consultations with an Organic Master Gardener were also offered and provided to seven community gardens. Each garden received a sign as a visual reminder of our vision of an “Octopus Garden” (pictured right) as well as a mason bee house.

The impact of this initiative will be further witnessed in the next growing season as gardeners leverage the knowledge and skills they built during this past season of connecting and sharing.

GROWING RESILIENT COASTAL GARDENS



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Seedy Saturday Swap & Sale

April 10th we partnered with Eat West Coast and the Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild to host a one-day market to provide seeds, seedlings, and produce to west coast community members. Many gardeners, including Bodacious Oasis and Tofino Flowers, donated seeds and seedlings. Proceeds from sales went towards the school garden program.

A Celebration of Food through Film

November 19th-21st, a pay-what-you-wish virtual weekend of inspiring and thought-provoking films explored how food touches every aspect of our lives. Through powerful narratives, these films considered the role of food in culture, belonging, social equity, community, and the quest for self-fulfillment. Hosted in partnership with Clayoquot Oyster Festival, films included *Food for the Rest of Us*, *A Taste of Desire* and shorts *Westerly Wynds Farm* and *Wickaninnish Community School Garden*.

Volunteer Days (Almost) every Saturday throughout the growing season, we welcomed folks to the Wickaninnish Community School Garden as a space for learning, playing, and growing. Volunteers helped the garden flourish by weeding, harvesting, slug hunting, and watering to ensure a healthy and hearty crop for the children. Volunteers learned new skills in gardening and formed new connections with diverse community members. Produce was shared with volunteers and brought to Gaia Grocery for sale by donation.

Winter Wonderland in the Food Forest

December 5th was a festive celebration of the end of the growing season. Families and community members of all ages came together to craft wreaths and seasonal adornments for the Wickaninnish Community School Garden, creating an ambiance of magic and cheer for the dormant period of the season.



THANK YOU



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Thank you to all of our funders, supporters, volunteers, community partners, and staff. You provide the fertile ground from which we continue to grow our impact in the community.

To make a donation: tofinocommunityfoodinitiative.com/donate
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