

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Urban Farming Forum, AGM & Social

8:30 AM – 9:00 PM Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC

8:30-9:00	<b>Registration &amp; Coffee <i>Breakfast is NOT Provided</i></b>		
9:00-10:15	<b>Welcome, Update from the City of Vancouver &amp; Keynote Address   Room A</b> <b>Curtis Stone, Green City Acres: Farming in the City</b>		
10:15-10:30	<b>Break</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Room A</b>	<b>Room B</b>	<b>Art Gallery</b>
10:30-12:00	<b>Lessons learned the hard way: Urban farmer tell all panel</b> Mark Seiling, Barefoot Farms Katie Ralphs & Ruth Warren, City Beet Farm Susheela Kundargi & Katie Selbee, Farmers on 57 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Integrating seed production into farm business</b> Melanie Sylvestre, UBC Farm	<b>Are you ready to start a business?</b> Vancity
12:00-1:30	<b>Lunch</b>		
1:30-3:00	<b>From lawn to productive mini-farm</b> Curtis Stone, Green City Acres	<b>Farm Aesthetics, Functionality, and the City: Blending traditionally rural tasks and contemporary urban culture</b> Baldwin Hum & Ted Sandstra, Quadra Architecture	<b>Ten things a lender looks for in a business plan</b> Vancity
3:00-3:15	<b>Break</b>		
3:15-4:45	<b>Interpreting your soil samples</b> Dr. Art Bomke, UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems	<b>Designing and Delivering Urban Farming &amp; Food Workshops in Vancouver: Lessons learned towards community collaborations</b> Tara Moreau, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, UBC Botanical Garden & Vancouver Food Policy Council Lisa Gledhill, SPEC Ross Moster, Village Vancouver & Vancouver Food Policy Council Gillian Drake, Van Dusen Garden	<b>Aquaponic farming in the city</b> David Sayson, Canadian Aquaponics
4:45-5:00	<b>Break</b>		
5:00-6:30	<b>Vancouver Urban Farming Society Annual General Meeting   Room A <i>Dinner Provided</i></b>		
6:30-9:00	<b>Social <i>Cash Bar Service Available</i>   Room B</b>		

To register for the forum and contact us visit [www.urbanfarmers.ca](http://www.urbanfarmers.ca)

## 9:00-10:15 Welcome, Update from the City of Vancouver & Keynote Address

The morning will start off with a welcome from the Vancouver Urban Farming Society and an update from the City of Vancouver on their urban farming policy developments.

### **Keynote Address: Farming in the City** **Curtis Stone, Green City Acres**

Curtis Stone (owner/operator of Green City Acres) will take you on a tour of his urban farming operations in Kelowna, BC. Starting the business in 2010, Curtis will demonstrate how he commercially farms on less than a half-acre of land that he doesn't own, in the city. Starting the farm on a shoestring budget of \$7,000, he turned that investment into \$22,000 his first year, and nearly doubled the profits and scale of the business for four years after. In this lecture, you'll get a front row seat into the day to day operations of his farm and also see how the social, ecological, and economic benefits of it have had a net positive impact in the neighbourhoods he farms in.

### ***About Curtis Stone***

*Before starting his urban farm in the fall of 2009, Curtis had absolutely no previous experience in farming or even gardening. Up until 2008, he had been living in Montreal, trying to make a go at being a working musician. It was many years ago, when he heard the old cliché, "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem". That was a turning point for him in that he knew that it was important for us to be active participants in our society, rather than just being by-standers. But it wasn't until Curtis discovered Permaculture while searching around on the internet for sustainable building methods that it opened up a Pandora's Box of information and inspiration for him. From there, he knew that he wanted to live in a way that was life affirming, not destructive. He left Montreal in March of 2008 to return to his home town of Kelowna, BC, to try and pursue this kind of life style. It was a bike tour down the west coast from Kelowna to San Diego in fall 2008 where he visited off-grid homesteads, eco villages, and urban farms that inspired him to try to make a difference through his own actions. Upon returning from the trip totally inspired and ready*

*to do something involved in sustainable agriculture, but not exactly sure what yet, a friend of his directed him towards SPIN farming.*

*The stars must have aligned at that movement because once Curtis discovered that there was a way to farm that required very little investment, no need to own land or heavy machinery, he was confident that he could do it. He spent the rest of the fall and winter of 2009 studying SPIN farming and various other gardening and farming books, and then decided to go for it. With a little bit of money saved from a 6 month season of tree-planting, he had everything he needed to start a farm. After completing a successful and profitable first season in 2010, Curtis is a case study example that the methods taught in the SPIN farming models, are simple and easily transferable to anyone, including those who have no experience.*

*Through the off-season, Curtis works as public speaker on food related issues, and is a consultant for multiple community food projects throughout Kelowna. In September 2010 he was awarded 'gardener of the year' from the city of Kelowna's Communities in Bloom.*

## **10:30-12:00 Morning Concurrent Sessions**

**Lessons learned the hard way: Urban farmer tell all panel**

**Mark Seiling, Barefoot Farms**

**Katie Ralphs & Ruth Warren, City Beet Farm**

**Susheela Kundargi & Katie Selbee, Farmers on 57<sup>th</sup>**

Vancouver's Barefoot Farms, City Beet Farm, and Farmers on 57<sup>th</sup> operators will spill the beans on urban farming. What have they learned the hard way after several years of urban farming in Vancouver and Richmond? How do they access their land? What practices have and have not worked for them? Come hear what advice they have for aspiring and beginning urban farmers and bring your questions for them.

## **Integrating seed production into farm business**

**Melanie Sylvestre, UBC Farm**

We need more seed growers in BC and urban farmers can definitely participate in increasing our bulk seed capacity. This session will seek to inspire farmers to integrate seed growing into their practice using a mix of theory, practical organizing as well as hands on skills. Urban farmers can also think about becoming members of the new BC Seed COOP and have an added winter income. The seed saving community is growing fast and there is currently a lot of support to get into the practice. Attendees will walk away with a seed saving resource sheet.

## **Are you ready to start a business?**

**Vancity**

This will be the first in a two part series during the forum by Vancity's Financial Literacy department introducing business basics to urban farmers.

You have a great business idea. Your research indicates that you'll have a large enough market to make a profit. That's a great start – but – do you know what it takes to be a successful small business owner? And, do you have those qualities?

In this seminar you will:

- Learn about the current entrepreneurial landscape in BC
- Identify many of the qualities that successful entrepreneurs share
- Identify where your own entrepreneurial strengths and, possibly weaknesses, lay
- Learn strategies to help you increase your “entrepreneurial rating”

This seminar is a must for anyone considering starting their own business.

## **1:30-3:00 Early Afternoon Concurrent Sessions**

### **From lawn to productive mini-farm**

**Curtis Stone, Green City Acres**

Curtis Stone is the owner of Green City Acres, a commercial urban farm based out of Kelowna, BC. In this workshop, he'll walk you through the process in which a 2,000 square foot lawn can be converted to a productive mini farm. He'll discuss the technical process of conversion, and the economics of production. This talk will be useful for anyone who is curious about how much food can be harvested from an average lawn space or anyone who is interested in commercial urban farming. Curtis will demonstrate that your average lawn can be a considerable source of revenue, generating \$18,000, or a significant source of food for the community.

### **Farm Aesthetics, Functionality, and the City: Blending traditionally rural tasks and contemporary urban culture**

**Baldwin Hum & Ted Sandstra, Quadra Architecture**

Despite the enthusiasm for locally grown food, urban agriculture sometimes runs up against resistance: "Sure, I'll buy food grown in the city, but I'm worried about my property value if a farm locates near my house." If there is value in urban agriculture, perhaps some of our standards and expectations of urban living will have to change. But maybe agriculture must also adapt to its urban context and contribute not only food, employment, and education, but some art and culture as well. This session will address questions such as: What practices do urban farmers currently use to keep their equipment safe in an urban environment? What ways can urban farms contribute to rather than detract from the visual order of the city? What can or should they do? What should best practices be? Does the City have design standards for things like raised planting beds, storage and fencing? Should it? There will be a brief presentation on a history of farm aesthetics followed by a discussion of the aforementioned questions and critical design factors for the urban environment including safety, economy, and beauty. Current practitioners will share their experiences and best practices.

## **Ten things a lender looks for in a business plan**

### **Vancity**

This will be the second in a two part series during the forum by Vancity's Financial Literacy department introducing business basics to urban farmers.

You have a great business idea. Your family and friends think you will be successful – but – have you explored the many challenges your start-up may face? Do you have sufficient funds to cover all the start-up costs? What happens if you don't have any customers in the first few months?

In this seminar you will:

- Identify the key areas for a start-up to be successful
- Identify the many challenges a start-up may encounter
- Learn to mitigate many of these challenges
- Learn to develop a well-prepared business plan
- Understand what a banker must see to approve your loan request

If you plan to ask your banker for financial support for your business, this seminar will ensure you arrive prepared.

## **3:15-4:45 Late Afternoon Concurrent Sessions**

### **Interpreting your soil samples**

**Dr. Art Bomke, UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems**

This session will be to give participants a better understanding of their soils and crop nutrient requirements, to empower them to interpret future soil test results and to introduce the fun and effectiveness of collaborative learning. The session will be run as a workshop centred on the soil test reports from various

urban farms and the experience of the farmers providing background as well as future cropping intentions. Some soil management options will likely arise from the discussions. *Participants are encouraged to bring your soil testing results if you have them.*

### **Designing and Delivering Urban Farming & Food Workshops in Vancouver: Lessons learned towards community collaborations**

**Tara Moreau, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, UBC Botanical Garden & Vancouver Food Policy Council**

**Lisa Gledhill, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation**

**Ross Moster, Village Vancouver & Vancouver Food Policy Council**

**Gillian Drake, Van Dusen Garden**

Across Vancouver there are a number of organizations that offer urban farming/gardening workshops to the public. While a diversity of workshops demonstrates a growing public interest in food systems, there are issues of market saturation, poor economic returns, varying workshop quality and inconsistent recommendations around sustainable practices. One goal for this session will be to explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of conducting workshops in Vancouver over the past 5 years so that cohesion and collaborations between like-minded organizations can target the unique needs of a community while provide high-quality information to individuals wanting to grow safe and nutritious food in the City. This will be a hands-on working session convening organizations and people that are involved with or would like to deliver urban farming or gardening workshops that promote sustainable production practices and community building opportunities. We will brainstorm about what has worked and what has not worked and explore future collaborations.

### **Aquaponic farming in the city**

**David Sayson, Canadian Aquaponics**

Aquaponics is one of the most sustainable and just ways to grow food in an urban setting. Because it uses hydroponics to grow plants, it can be done in an urban setting, producing high yields in a very small space (it can even be done vertically). Since it combines aquaculture with hydroponics, it is also very sustainable

using up to 50% less water than typical hydroponic systems and up to 90% less water than traditional farming methods. It also produces two outputs (growing both protein and vegetables) with a single input. This session is an introduction to aquaponics and how it works. It includes the science behind it and how systems are designed and built. It also covers what is involved in the day to day operation of a system.

## **5:00-6:30 Vancouver Urban Farming Society Annual General Meeting**

Your forum registration fee gets you an annual membership to the Vancouver Urban Farming Society. Stay for our AGM to learn more about what the society does and how to get involved including running for our board of directors. Board elections will be happening at the AGM. Dinner will be provided.

## **6:30-9:00 Social**

Time to socialize and talk farming, food, and life with other urban farm enthusiasts! Cash bar service will be available and DJ ROO will be spinning the tunes.