

FOOD NOT LAWS

New Experiments in
Foodways for our Colonial,
State-Capitalist Context



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The Events of March 2010...

March 24th: A call-out had circulated, inviting people to the Petch Fountain in front of MacPherson Library to participate in a Teach-out and a workshop on direct action. No one could have predicted the events that followed...

12:00h: The Resistance is Fertile convergence began, with free food, music, and speakers about the issues of colonialism, corporate control, space reclamation, and alienation from our food at UVic.

12:30h: Participants began digging up the soil and planting a garden, erecting raised beds with fencing above and below ground to keep away rabbits. **Over 500 people participated in and attended the event.**

14:00h: Police arrived and warned participants that they could arrest anyone who continued gardening and 'destroying private property'. Participants formed a circle to protect the gardeners, and construction continued. The police took photos and video footage, gathering intelligence on the identities of the rogue gardeners. Eventually the police left.

14:30h: A group of elementary school children arrived and began working on the garden with other participants, building gardens, planting, and sharing knowledge about food production.

17:00h: After five hours of gardening, several raised beds had been constructed, with mulch to insulate from frost, and rabbit-proof fencing. Other beds featured rock borders and intricate designs, reflecting the hard work and creativity of participants. Most people left for the day, but some stayed to keep watch and protect the garden.

March 25th 01:00h: In the middle of the night, UVic administration arrived with Grounds Management, Campus Security, Saanich Police, and three bulldozers to destroy the garden. One person stood in front

of the bulldozers in an attempt to protect the garden, and was arrested for “assault by trespass”.

02:00h: It took University officials approximately an hour to destroy, dismantle, and dispose of the vegetables, native plants, soil, fences, stones and other materials that were used to construct the garden. Word spread quickly about the destruction and people began organizing immediately.

08:00h: As students and faculty passed by the garden, many were confused about why it had been destroyed, and students and faculty made signs and crosses that would explain what had happen to passersby. A number of people stopped to lay flowers where the garden had been, and the space began resemble a graveyard, with fresh graves of soil, level with the surrounding grass, where the beds of vegetables had been.

13:00h: People met in front of the garden, formed a circle and spoke to each other about the destruction of the garden. They joined arms and sang songs while. Students decided instead to go to the administration building and meet with the administration immediately.

13:20h: By the time students arrived at the administration building, all entrances were locked and members of Campus Security and Saanich Police were standing at the ready nearby. Officers assured students that the police presence was for their safety, and that they were ‘keeping everyone safe’.

14:30h: A number of students came together to discuss Wednesdays convergence and plan the next steps. Although many students had never met each other, students built trust with one another, created an agenda, and began to form affinity groups around different activities. **It was decided that there would be another convergence on Wednesday March 31.**

March 25-30th: Students and community members worked to spread the word about the March 31st convergence, writing press releases,

doing interviews, holding class talks, and developing a website documenting the events. (see vfnl.wordpress.com). It was agreed that the ideas, people, and discourses that made the garden possible were too diverse to represent: none of us could speak for all the gardeners, but we could all speak about the garden.

March 31st, noon: **The gardening started again.** This time, police were already on hand. Reporters representing local, provincial and national newspapers and television were also in attendance, along with hundreds of students, faculty and community members. Once again, speakers talked about problems of food insecurity, colonialism, and corporate capitalism, situating the garden as a response to these problems. Then the digging began. In the same place, gardeners turned over soil, constructed raised beds with fencing, and planted vegetables and native plants. Police stayed back, watching the events and recording it with video cameras.

March 31st-April 8th: Some of the gardeners stayed at the university overnight: guarding. This continued for over a week, with students and community members taking shifts to watch the garden, maintain it, and protect it. It was not clear to anyone what this 'protection' would involve, but it succeeded in warding off drunk and destructive students who passed by the garden on the way home from the campus bar.

Workshops: The gardeners began organizing workshops at the garden. An experienced activist presented a workshop on **consensus-based decision-making** that he had learned after visiting the Zapatistas, and another local activist shared her experience in **anti-poverty activism**. Three faculty members had agreed to hold workshops by the time the garden was destroyed for the second time. Another group organized an **open forum on the gardens**, with small, facilitated discussions on specific issues that had been raised, including vandalism, private property, food security, and direct action.

April 9th, early morning: Grounds management workers arrived again and dismantled the garden, except this time, they dug up many of plants, put them in pots, and kept them at Campus Security, along with shovels, signs, and other materials that had been left at the site. A fence was erected around the perimeter of the former garden (now a flattened patch of dirt) that read: **AREA UNDER RESTORATION: DO NOT ENTER.**

By this time, most students were in the middle of exams, and many were leaving for the summer. No new garden has been constructed (yet). Grass has been seeded and grown where the garden once was, and one can see faint outlines of the former garden beds. If you learned about the garden through media reports and press releases, it appears to have been a protest, albeit an atypical one. According to a number of articles, students wanted more gardens on campus, so they built one in the middle of the campus as a symbolic demand for more gardens. From this perspective, the 'protest' was entirely ineffective: the garden was destroyed, and UVic did not agree to construct any new gardens.

What was the garden 'for'?: More interesting than any single reason behind the garden is the diversity of reasons, problems, and issues that the garden raised and responded to. Some gardeners emphasized the problem of **food insecurity**, pointing to the growing dominance of corporate agribusiness our reliance on it. Others emphasized the **ongoing colonial occupation of Indigenous territories** in British Columbia, and the ways in which these territories were being progressively exploited for natural resources. Some pointed to the **problem of bureaucracy**, and the ways in which it stultifies creativity with proceduralism.

Some emphasized the **depoliticized nature of academic study**, in which students often have the opportunity to learn about global political problems, but never seem to get a chance to **connect these problems to everyday life**.

Some emphasized the **monotony and repetitiveness of university life**, situating the garden as a creative experiment that modifies our relationship to space. Others emphasized **creativity and direct action as ends in themselves**, and as practices of direct democracy. Some pointed to the pervasiveness and naturalization of lawns as archaic land use practices inherited from Europe. Others suggested the need for **more gardens on campus**. Others framed the event in the context of campus groups had been lobbying the administration to dedicate the **CJVI lands, a 30-acre plot of former farmland** a few kilometers from campus, as a working farm. **Many of these problems are expanded upon in this publication.**

Some students were outraged at the events, questioning what right students and community members had to construct a garden that was owned by the university. Others demanded to know who would maintain the garden, and who would get to eat the food. Some even organized a Facebook group in opposition to the gardens, entitled “Yes to Gardens, NO to Vandalism at UVic.” They recapitulated one of the main reactions to the event: the aim of more gardens was admirable, but the gardeners went about it in the wrong way...

Of all of these perspectives, experiences, and happenings, the simplest ones were selected as the ‘reason’ behind the garden by mainstream media and many others. Even sympathetic coverage of the garden portrayed it as **a simple protest for more gardens on campus**, or as an abstract demand for ‘foodsecurity’. Other connections and problems (such as colonialism, land use, private property, and corporate capitalism) were made invisible. This simplification is not coincidental: these demands are the ones that can be most easily incorporated into the current structure of corporate capitalism: we could all be a little ‘greener’, a little more ‘food secure’, and have a few more gardens. If the garden can be represented as a protest, **it can be dismissed as naïve, poorly planned, and ineffective**. Questioning private property, bureaucratic decision-making, or colonial relations were quietly swept off the table, at least temporarily...

The University Exposed

The University is situated in and sustains a fucked up system: **neoliberal state capitalism**. Universities have been criticized as hierarchical institutions, digital diploma mills, factories for corporate capitalist ideologies, and bureaucratic monsters that discourage meaningful political change. These forces come together to produce violent capitalist, colonial, unsustainable foodways.

A foodway is the amalgamation of the ways that people produce or gather food, interact with the land, and treat other living beings; it is underlain by all-encompassing belief systems that inform every day attitudes which serve to organize society. The dominant University foodway is about alienation, pollution, and greed.

The food purchased by UVIC is imported from off-island, and the large majority is produced using **industrial agriculture**. Industrial agriculture bears heavy responsibility for the loss of biodiversity through conversion of ecosystems into massive monocrops. It also bears a huge responsibility for CO₂ emissions due to the inputs of fertilizer and pesticides, which poison the environment and require large amounts of (fossil fuel-produced) energy to manufacture.

The problem goes beyond the simple equation of 'food = destruction and pollution'. Industrial agriculture is a major part of agribusiness, in which food is largely grown for export profit. Vandana Shiva explains that "since agricultural trade is based on land, water and biodiversity, and supply of land and water is

limited, export oriented agriculture policies divert land and water from production of staple foods for local consumption.”

She calls the intensifying export-oriented agriculture as “**export domination**”. It shifts the land base use from local subsistence to produce export products in poor countries at cheap cost for rich consumers in rich countries. It shifts control over resources from local peoples to agribusiness corporations, destroys the natural resource base through unsustainable use, and in the process destroys livelihoods of the small producers. These processes have led to over 200,000 suicides by Indian peasant farmers. We in the rich countries are eating the world's poor alive.

By buying the products of this system, whatever its rhetoric, the University is complicit in this picture. By not providing crucial information about the real costs of industrial agriculture, it also alienates people from the social and ecological consequences of their actions.

How do we confront these problems? We need many politics, many interventions, many attempts, all manner of experiments. Reforming the Universities, corporations and governments is one avenue, but it has serious limitations, and the channels for participation and decision-making are built to ward off radical changes that would undermine colonialism, capital accumulation, and the authority of these institutions.

One response: TEAR UP THE LAWNS. Plant gardens. Let the capitalists, administrators and politicians quake at the sight of our defiant flowers. Join with others in your community and help each other reclaim our present and our future.

POLITICS: BUREAUCRATIC, GREEN, EXPERIMENTAL

BUREAUCRACY: the collective organizational structure, procedures, protocols, and set of regulations in place to manage activity, usually in large organizations and government.

We're told that politics is too big, and we're too small: leave it to the experts, the bureaucrats, and the technicians to deal with our problems. Take the issue of the environment, or 'climate change', which has become an issue for the experts: scientists tell us what we can expect, and politicians go to summits. Should it surprise us that nothing changed after Copenhagen? Those who aren't surprised are often cynical: nothing is going to change; we're fucked. Might as well give up, and go back to your job. *Have a latte.* Of course, this is only possible for those of us with the privilege to ignore environmental destruction, those of us who depend on corporations and governments to extract, exploit and destroy plants, animals, people, and cultures. Most people in this situation would rather not think about the fact that our everyday lives—how we eat, work, and move around—are sustained by these destructive forces.

GREEN ETHICS: individual action that a person can consciously take to curb harmful effects on the environment through consumer habits.

Corporate capitalism has started to capitalize on the recognition that we're headed off a cliff. Worried about the environment? Go Green! (read: buy more stuff labelled 'green'). *Have a latte, but make sure the cup is made of recycled paper.* An ethics of simplicity and a lower 'carbon footprint' also fail to address the problem.

As Derrick Jensen explains:

Consumer culture and the capitalist mindset have taught us to substitute acts of personal consumption (or enlightenment) for organized political resistance. *An Inconvenient Truth* helped raise consciousness about global warming. But did you notice that all of the solutions presented had to do with personal consumption—changing light bulbs, inflating tires, driving half as much—and had nothing to do with shifting power away from corporations, or stopping the growth economy that is destroying the planet? Even if every person in the United States did everything the movie suggested, U.S. carbon emissions would fall by only 22 percent. Scientific consensus is that emissions must be reduced by at least 75 percent worldwide.

Or let's talk water. We so often hear that the world is running out of water. People are dying from lack of water... Because of this we need to take shorter showers. See the disconnect? *Because I take showers, I'm responsible for drawing down aquifers?* Well, no. More than 90 percent of the water used by humans is used by agriculture and industry. The remaining 10 percent is split between municipalities and actual living breathing individual humans... People (both human people and fish people) aren't dying because the world is running out of water. They're dying because the water is being stolen.

(<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/4801/>)

University of Victoria is part of this absurdity. UVic is a corporation, driven by the same imperatives of efficiency, control, and management that makes agribusiness possible. More concretely, UVic uses massive sprinkler systems to water grass, shrubs, and other aesthetic plants. The food at UVic—in its cafeterias, its shops, and its catered conferences and meetings—is produced through destructive agricultural

techniques and exploitative working conditions (see other writings in this volume for details). So what can we do?

POLITICS: purposive social action directed at the conditions of collective life

Conventional forms of politics are boring as fuck. Find out who is in charge and ask them for permission. Drift through bureaucracy: exchange emails, form committees, sit in beige rooms and record your own decisions. If you want to get really 'grass roots' about things, you write slogans on placards and stand somewhere, or pace back and forth. Passers-by barely take notice: another protest, another issue, another set of demands. Maybe the bureaucratic machine churns out a response, maybe it doesn't. Reform is always possible, but it has built-in limitations.

Squeezed out by this is the possibility of taking action ourselves, in our own communities, by finding forms of intervention that don't need the approval of a committee or a bureaucratic authority.

Can politics be more creative? If 'politics' is about changing the conditions of our everyday lives, why does it always seem so fucking boring? Could it be that bureaucracy and protests aren't just shitty forms of politics, but forms that drain off our creativity and our ability to envision alternatives? Can we find new ways of doing politics here and now, where we live, work, and eat? Can UVic become a laboratory for political experimentation?

EXPERIMENT: a venture at something new or different

Experiment. Experiments are 'new' because the results are unknown. We aren't talking about experiments in the scientific sense, where variables need to be carefully controlled. Nobody, including the experimenters, can predict how things will turn out.

Variables will vary, uncontrolled. The garden(s) was an experiment, much to the horror of those who would like to see everything (including activism) managed, planned, and structured.

This makes experiments more dangerous, and much more exciting, than a political campaign that achieves its aim (or doesn't), withers, and dies. Maybe our experiments will inspire others to do the same (or different, and better). Maybe they will fail and die, but enrich the soil for new experiments to germinate. Maybe they will blow up in our faces, and the explosion will illuminate new possibilities.

When it comes to food and land, we need experiments. Desperately. The corporate capitalist monoculture is increasingly displacing all other foodways. Mega-corporations infest every link of the foodchain, from seeds to fertilizers to grocery stores and restaurants. Squeezed out is everything and everyone else: other ways of producing food, relating to the land, and relating to each other through our food. This process of corporate take-over is so slow that many of us have never known anything else: we were born into corporate capitalism.

Capitalism and colonialism are even older: most of us (and our parents, maybe our grandparents) were born into these systems as the only way to get food and relate to land. UVic is a potential site for experiments with alternatives: other ways of growing, eating, and sharing food. Other ways of doing politics that aren't strangled by bureaucracy. Other forms of creating social and political change that are open-ended and experimental. Other ways of relating to land. Perhaps with each experiment, the corporate capitalist food machine will seem less necessary, and alternatives will be increasingly possible...

Migrant Farmworker Facts

'The food that overflows our market shelves and fills our tables is harvested by men, women, and children who often cannot satisfy their own hunger' - Cesar Chavez

Farm work is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States. The death rate among agricultural workers nationwide was an estimated 20.9 per 100,000 workers in 1996; compared to the average for all industries of 3.9 per 100,000 workers.

Many farm workers are paid by the amount of the crop they harvest. For example, cucumber pickers in North Carolina receive approximately 65 cents for each 33 pound bucket they harvest. This averages out to around \$3.90 per hour.

The United Farm Workers Union estimates that there are 800,000 migrant farmworkers between the ages of fifteen to seventeen year olds within the United States. These children often work 12 to 14 hours a day or more, seven days a week. One-third of those interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported earning significantly less than the minimum wage, sometimes as little as \$2.00 an hour. An estimated 100,000 children suffer agriculture-related injuries annually in the United States.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 300,000 farm workers suffer pesticide poisoning each year. Pesticide exposure can cause a variety of health problems, such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, rashes and burns. Long-term effects of pesticide exposure can include cancer, sterility, birth defects, and damage to the nervous system.

Farmworker women routinely earn less money than men for doing the same work and face frequent sexual harassment. Prolonged standing and bending, overexertion, dehydration, poor nutrition, and pesticide and chemical exposures contribute to an increased risk of spontaneous abortion, premature delivery, and fetal abnormalities.

The *New York Times* reported that: "The housing shortage (for farm workers) is so severe that in harvest time visits to farming communities up and down both coasts...workers were found packed 10-12 into trailers, and sleeping in garages, tool sheds, caves, fields and parking lots. (www.nfwm.org)

Garden the Colony!

Settler Reflections on Colonialism and Guerrilla Gardening

Colonialism is a part of everyday life in Victoria, so it's worth thinking about for a guerilla gardening project. People often speak of 'colonialism' as something from a history book, as something that happened a long time ago. The colonization of what's now called "British Columbia"

began over 150 years ago, but it's not so common to talk about colonialism as something that's *still happening today*.

What would it mean to think about colonialism as a present reality, an ongoing process?

What would it mean to think about colonialism as a present reality, and an ongoing process, rather than something that happened long ago? What would it mean to think of ourselves as settlers (as most of us are at UVic) who continue to benefit from the ongoing process of colonialism?

Some aspects of colonialism are overt, such as the recent destruction of Bear Mountain: 'In November 2006, a sacred First Nations cave on SPAET was bulldozed over... part of an orchestrated land grab by greedy real estate developers and their political cronies.' (http://www.firstnations.de/development/coast_salish-spaet.htm).

These actions were resisted by indigenous peoples and their allies, and SPAET continues to be a site of struggle against colonialism. This event is an especially overt aspect of continuing colonialism, where Settler ways of thinking (private property, economic interests and corporate greed) take precedence over indigenous relationships to the land.

Colonialism isn't just about corporations destroying indigenous lands. Colonialism is a continuing reality of exploitation and oppression in

'Canada', but this realization often makes us uncomfortable, and we tend to seek easy answers: isn't colonialism a reality we have to accept? The common idea that we should 'move on' from colonialism shows how deep colonial thinking is ingrained in us: the myth of colonialism as something that happened 'back then' helps to obscure the fact that it's happening 'right now', and that we are all caught up in it. But isn't it the government's job to resolve this issue?

The Canadian government has certainly be trying to 'fix' the 'Indian problem' for over a century, at first through treaties and wars, later

When Settlers start to recognize the reality of colonialism, we're often struck by paralyzing guilt

through genocidal policies like the residential schools, and now through 'multiculturalism' and 'land claims', where indigenous

people are given the chance to ask for (some of) their land back. So far, no luck for the government: indigenous peoples and their allies continue to resist colonialism and the government's 'solutions' to the problem.

When Settlers start to recognize the reality of colonialism, that we (not just our ancestors) are colonizers, we're often struck by paralyzing guilt. We need to move past this guilt and start asking questions: What would it mean to respond to colonialism as a Settler? What would it mean to shake off the colonial mentality that tells us 'colonialism' is something far back in time, or a far-away problem for governments and administrators to deal with? What would it mean to think about the way our everyday lives are part of the colonial process? What would it mean to do things differently, to short-circuit some of the processes colonialism needs in order to function?

There are no easy answers here: only partial responses, experimental gestures. Maybe one gesture is guerrilla gardening. One way

colonialism perpetuates itself is by imposing a specific relationship to the land: property. Maybe we can use guerrilla gardening to start thinking about relationships to land other than private property. Maybe guerrilla gardening can be used to help us think critically about colonialism, and the way the University of Victoria is part of the colonial process (a monument to the highest colonial authority, built on colonized Lekwungen land?).

Maybe colonial processes will seem a little less natural, a little less necessary. Maybe guerrilla gardening will make us wonder how it is that we only think of land as 'public' (property of the colonial authority) or 'private' (mine, not yours). Maybe. Guerrilla gardening is not a solution to colonialism; it's an experiment, and we won't know what it has to do with colonialism until we've tried it. Again and again.

There are dangers here. If Settlers plant gardens and we think this means the land is ours, we're forgetting that we're squatters here. This danger was expressed by a banner raised on March 31st, which read "RECLAIM THE COMMONS." Later, an indigenous activist pointed out that 'the commons,' in the way Settlers imagined it, never existed here, and the slogan reproduces Settler sentiments of entitlement: 'our' Commons. 'The Commons' is an idea imported from European histories of resistance to enclosures in Britain and elsewhere. White European Settlers need to find ways to engage with our own histories of resistance and struggle, while also reshaping these practices in the context of colonialism here and now.

Settlers 'resisting' colonialism are always in danger of reproducing messianism, entitlement, and oppression. Dangerous, yes, but everything is dangerous, especially doing nothing. We're always Settlers here, but we can also be guerrillas.

The Garry Oak Ecosystem and 'Conservation'

"Prior to European settlement, much of southeastern Vancouver Island was dominated by Garry oak ecosystems, playing an important role in the rich and complex culture of the First Nations of this region. In the past, some First Nations deliberately burned selected woodlands and meadows to maintain open conditions and promote the growth of berries, nuts and root vegetables such as camas..."

To early settlers, the openness of the rolling landscape offered a bright contrast against the conifer-dominated woods. In the year of Victoria's founding as "Fort Camosun" by the Hudson's Bay Company, Chief Factor James Douglas described the natural setting as "a perfect 'Eden' in the midst of the dreary wilderness of the North"..."

Over the past 150 years, waves of settlers have been attracted to Vancouver Island's southeastern coast. Less than 5% [of Garry Oak ecosystems] now remains in a near-natural condition, and that too is threatened."
(<http://www.goert.ca>)

Although the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) acknowledges that Indigenous peoples lived in harmony with the Garry Oak ecosystem, the dominant approach to ecological destruction is one of 'conservation.' This is an increasingly prevalent discourse: once Settlers realize they have separated themselves from nature and destroyed it, we attempt to 'preserve' it. Although it is important to recognize ecological destruction and take steps to confront it, the discourse of 'conservation' often reproduces the colonial mentality in subtle ways. When Settlers become conservationists, it becomes easy to forget that we are on colonized land and that 'nature' is being destroyed not because of 'humans' in general, but because of 150 years of colonialism by a white supremacist society here on Vancouver Island.

There are practical and conceptual obstacles to this task in Victoria. We currently depend on introduced foods for our food supply, and we lack the knowledge and expertise to establish foodways with Indigenous plants. How can we think about the relationship between Indigenous foodways and plants, and those that have been introduced by Settlers? What does it mean to grow food in a colonial context, where natural ecosystems are colonized? As with other issues of colonialism, there are no easy answers here.

Making Things Grow

We don't have a complete guide on how and when to plant, transplant, water, weed, harvest, and seed-save. However, there are a number of excellent resources available.

Visit the site below for more information:

<http://vfnl.wordpress.com/gardening-resources/>

It's also important to **avoid all invasive species:**

http://www.goert.ca/about_invasive_species.php

That said, we've compiled some information below, so read on!

The Rabbit Problem

The rabbit infestation is a significant obstacle to the creation of gardens and alternative foodways at UVic. Rabbit-proofing a garden is a significant challenge; however, there are a number of plants that rabbits (probably) won't eat:

**Anise, Hyssop, Basil, Catmint, Chamomile, Chives, Dill, Fennel, Garlic,
Lamb's ears, Lavender, Lemon balm,
Mint, Mullein, Oregano, Onions,
Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Thyme.**

*There are many plants
that rabbits (probably)
won't eat*

This means that **these plants can be planted immediately**, without any

fencing, netting, or other schemes to protect them from hungry bunnies. Included below are instructions for transplanting seedlings that have been grown indoors or in a greenhouse.

Transplanting: so you've started your seeds in containers and now it's time to transplant them, what do you do?

A good rule is plant the seed in a depth of 3 times its length.

- Be gentle. Dig a hole in your garden/container the same size as the pot you grew your seedling in. Water the hole thoroughly.
- Take the container with the seedling and put two fingers on either side of the seedling, now tip it over directly over the hold you dug.
- Gently tap the container until the seedling and it's dirt fall out into your hand. You might also need to press on the sides of the seedling to loosen it a bit.
- Remove the container and gently turn right side up as you place it in the hole.
- Press the plant down gently in place.
- Water generously; you're done!

The 10-step Garden

Lasagna gardening is by far the easiest, fastest, and most fertile way to start your garden. Unlike raised beds, or double digging methods there is no digging and no construction necessary, you simply build your garden directly on top of your lawn. Sounds pretty amazing doesn't it? Basically you layer green and brown materials on top of your lawn and plant directly into them. Since the layers are constantly breaking down, there is a continual supply of nutrients. With such high levels of fertility you can plant more in a smaller area. The layering holds in moisture, so you water less. If weeds appear, pull them or cover them up! Best of all, you can get everything you need for free! It's as simple as that.

Step 1. Choose your location.

Choosing where to put your garden is very important, and what is most important in the location you chose is sunlight. 11 hours or more of sunlight is fantastic, 10-8 hours is great. 7-6 hours is possible for cool weather plants and some plants that like partial shade, or to be shaded during the hottest parts of the day, but less than 4 hours of sunlight is impossible. This isn't really something you can mess around with.

Step 2. Manure

Put down a 2" layer of manure. Level it out with a rake. Manure provides a nitrogen kick to plants later in the season, and introduces earthworms that till soil. Fresh manure on the bottom of the pile will be broken down by microbes before roots can access it so this is the one time I will advocate using fresh manure over aged. The fresh stuff has more living microbes in it, and therefore the lawn even faster.

Step 3. Cardboard

Cover over the manure with sections of plain cardboard, edges overlapping (make sure there is no grass showing in between, grass is sneaky and will invade your garden). Wet down. (no coloured cardboard)

Step 4. Manure

Cover with a 2" layer of manure (aged this time), or a layer of garden soil. Level with rake.

Step 5. Leaves or straw

Add a 2" layer of leaf mulch (the leaves you raked up in the fall and have been storing all winter) or straw. You can buy straw easily enough, but make sure you are not buying hay. Straw is more expensive than hay, but hay will have weed seeds in it and will introduce weeds to your brand-new weed free garden. Level it with a rake.

Step 6. Manure

Add another 2" layer of manure, rake level

Step 7. Lime

Cover with a good dusting of dolomite lime. Lime neutralizes pH, breaks down clay and adds calcium and magnesium to soil. If your

plants are growing slowly or reach about 2" high and stop it might be due to pH levels and lime will resolve this problem.

Step 8. Leaves, straw or coco peat

Add a 2" layer of coco peat (coir), straw or leaf mulch. Rake level. Coconut fibre (coir) is a waste product from coconut husks used as an alternative to peatmoss, which is a non-renewable resource.

Step 9. Compost or topsoil

Finish with a 2" layer of screened compost or topsoil. Water well.

Step 10.

Plant. VOILA! You are now ready to plant! Ideally the finished bed should be about 12 inches in height, it will be quite light and easy to plant into and will absorb water easily and drain well. You can direct seed if the weather is obliging, or transplant directly into the top layer of the bed. The high fertility of the growing medium means it's possible to plant in close rows or blocks so that overlapping leaves keep weeds at bay and lock moisture in around the roots.

Resilience poem

a stone is thrown
a stolen rock
a non-feature
pain for those who would control

ground breaks,
and a swarm of hands
is frantic with festivity

this power
is a stir inside of me
open palm and seed
raised fist
and burning love

as a wave strikes and rolls
the stones become enlivened, raucous
the crest subsuming and receding
surge of nutrients and energy
an orchestra, a chorus,
a whole of parts.

i am building this power to counteract
counterbalance
the dimming candle of diversity

we are building this power
communities of creatures
people of places
lovers of life

my love is resilient

it is wild
it is for every one of our children

UVic as a Garden Campus

When the second garden was planted on March 31st, a number of students circulated a petition aimed at garnering support for a proposal for "UVic as a Garden Campus." Below is the text of the petition. It also documents the history of struggles and proposals for a more sustainable campus, which have been largely ignored by the administration. For example, UVic administration eventually read this proposal, and spokesperson Bruce Kilpatrick quickly dismissed it as 'nuts.'

The proposal below speaks to the efforts and dedication of people who have worked within the frameworks and procedures that have been created by the University. They also speak to the limitations of these channels. This doesn't mean that lobbying for reform is pointless; it means that it's not enough on its own...

Imagine a campus where students, staff, and faculty come to learn how to connect with the land and our community. A living laboratory where we can demonstrate innovations in integrating sustainability into teaching, learning, research, and community partnerships. A place to further advance our commitment to sustainability on the ground, in the classroom, in research and in the region. There is a history within the UVic community around this vision, with past proposals focusing on this kind of garden campus initiative. Yet no action:

in 1994, there was the Trilium project, a proposal for a learning center and sustainable farm on the Cedar hill corner

in 1997, there was the Camassia center for sustainable living, another proposal for the Cedar Hill corner property to be a place dedicated to sustainability and food production

in 2005, the Mystic Vail Farmlands and the Urban Village idea were proposed as a means to support the Uvic community and further our commitment to sustainability

in 2008, the Common Energy food group proposed a community supported agriculture box program on a small $\frac{1}{4}$ acre farm, also proposed for the Cedar Hill corner

In light of recent events and past inactions, we seek to open dialogue. We propose that the University commit to:

- Creating a garden in the center of the campus that would be a visual hub, and a demonstration of an active commitment to food sustainability.
- Dedicating 15 acres of the Cedar hill corner lands to become an educational farm.
- Creating 10 acres of ethnobotanical gardens spread across campus managed in accordance with the First Peoples House where the community can develop the skills and knowledge to cultivate and celebrate traditional indigenous foods.
- Planting of 500 fruit and nut trees around campus over the next 5 years.
- Matching these commitments with the creation of a new Urban Agriculture School with 6 dedicated faculty.
- Building a small LEED certified building with innovations of natural building technologies on the Cedar Hill corner as a learning center to manage the various agricultural projects around campus.
- Celebrating these achievements with an annual UVIC Harvest feast which would cultivate community while shining the spotlight on UVIC's sustainability initiatives.

The creation of such a facility will enhance the public profile of UVIC as a leader in sustainability by taking concrete steps towards sustainable food systems. Students, faculty and staff from around the world will be clamoring to get into to the two-year program, attracting new and vibrant faculty, students and staff to the already outstanding UVIC community. UVIC will be a world leader.

The farm, gardens and trees will supply the revitalized Grad Lounge, University Club and Student Union Building

Over the next five years, our vision sees the creation of five 2 acre farms on the Cedar Hill corner with a small center to facilitate learning and

support the management of sustainable food production. All the gardens will be tended by the students in the program. All new ornamental trees and shrubs will be fruit producing. The farm, gardens and trees, will supply the revitalized Grad lounge, University Club and food outlets in the Student Union Building.

We need a public commitment from UVIC to take meaningful and substantial action towards implementing these proposals over the next 3 years, starting now. Students and community support this plan, and the actions of the past week will continue to grow unless there is a commitment from the University now. We seek to cooperate with UVIC to make this happen, but we will not cease negotiations and action until these demands are met.

Please sign this letter to show your support for this vision.

Food Initiatives at UVic

The Office of Community-Based Research has been working to connect and strengthen some of the food-related groups, research, and initiatives on campus at UVic. What is the relationship between these groups and other practices geared towards direct action and more radical political agendas? This question is a difficult puzzle, but **one thing is certain: nothing will be gained by dismissing these practices as ‘merely reformist’ or by dismissing direct action as ‘naïve’ or ‘illegitimate’.**

All too often, direct action is measured by its capacity to initiate reforms, force policy changes, or convince ‘the public’ about the need for change. Direct action may have these effects, but it may also be ‘effective’ in more subtle ways: it can challenge common sense, unsettle our habits, and open new possibilities for thought and action. The relationships between direct action, lobbying, and reform are complex, and doing one doesn’t mean abandoning the other.

Some Current Food and Agriculture Initiatives on Campus:

*** Campus Community Garden**

The Campus Community Garden is located next to Parking Lot 7 and operates year round through campus and community volunteers. Plans are underway to relocate the gardens to a larger space on campus in 2011.

*** Family Student Housing Complex Demonstration Garden**

Plans are underway to create a community garden for the residents of the Family Student Housing Complex.

*** The Pathways Forward: Community Campus Partnerships for Food, Health, and Sustainability Report (Coming Soon!)** This report will provide an overview of the work of the OCBR in the past two years to unearth what is happening on campus and in communities around research and action to promote more sustainable food systems. As well as outline the Priority Areas for Research that have been identified, Key Strategies and Tools, Ideas for Partnership Initiatives, explore UVic as a community, a model, and knowledge and learning resource. The report will also outline directions for the OCBR over the next three years.

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Ready Your Shovels...

Before we start, there are two things that you should know.

First: your gardens (and your politics) aren't going to be perfect. But that's fine – the pursuit of perfection often sacrifices experiments for some sort of unattainable ideal. Don't expect perfection.

Second: guerrilla gardening can get you into trouble. The University administration and the Saanich Police have tried to intimidate, threaten, vilify and persecute those who were involved in the guerrilla gardens.

Struggles against racism, sexism, homophobia, capitalism, colonialism, and other injustices have taken many forms, sometimes open and organized, or clandestine and loosely networked. When people fear those in power, and cling to obedience even in the face of dire threats to places and people that they love, then we find ourselves in a dire situation. This is the situation we are in today.

As University students, many of us are living highly privileged lives. We need to start using our positions of privilege to aid in the struggle against domination in all its various forms. For those of you who say, "Well, I need to wait until I graduate, then I'll have more time to do all this kind of stuff!" or "Well, I think we should organize a little more before taking action," we say: you can analyze something forever – that's what we're taught to do in University. Analysis, complexity, and academic critique aren't wrong, or bad, or ineffective: far from it. However, they can easily become excuses that we use to convince ourselves not to experiment with other practices, tactics, or actions.

Experiment! If you want to wait until you graduate until you start challenging power in meaningful ways, so be it. But don't be surprised if you look back on your life in forty years and see that you've put it off for four decades.

If these words and ideas inspire you...

- Organize your own meetings and collectives to take autonomous action against destructive foodways and the practices, procedures, and ideas that support and reinforce them.
- Find ways to support local small-scale farmers, indigenous struggles, and other land-based, non-corporate foodways
- Experiment with different forms of politics! Policy, bureaucracy, and reform are not 'bad'; they are severely limited.
- Visit the 'Food not Lawns' website: www.vfnl.wordpress.com

What would it mean for the university community to make collective decisions about how we—as members of the UVic community—relate to the campus, and how its spaces are used? What would it mean to invent political practices that unsettle sedimented practices and routines?

These are only some of the problems that are raised by the guerrilla gardens. For many of us at UVic, the notion of collective decision-making is unthinkable: bureaucratic, hierarchical processes seem natural, as if there have never been other ways of deciding how to live and learn together. Similarly, thinking about colonialism as a present reality—rather than a part of history—makes us uncomfortable and throws our ways of life into question. It's becoming increasingly apparent that we need to be growing our own food locally and sustainably, but corporate control of the foodchain continues to intensify.

The UVic administration is not capable of solving these problems, and no one is asking them to. The guerrilla gardens offered no catch-all solutions either; only responses, which may deepen these problems further, connect them, and tease out the implications they have for our everyday lives. These problems are anything but marginal: they concern us all, and they won't go away. They need to be fertilized, and if they get bulldozed, they'll only grow back...

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Resistance is Fertile. *Food Not Lawns: New Experiments in Foodways for our Colonial, State-Capitalist Context*. Victoria: Food Not Lawns!, 2010. Available: www.vfnl.wordpress.com