



# Growing Forward Small Scale Foods Program

South Slave Region

2013 Annual Report

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, GNWT





## Background

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Within the South Slave Region, the Small Scale Foods component of the Growing Forward Program is administered from Hay River under the direction of the Trade & Investment section of the Department of Industry, Tourism & Investment. Agriculturalists Jackie Milne and Helen Green were hired in February 2013 to assist in the development and delivery of the program.

The goal of the Small Scale Foods Program is to assist communities in developing and enhancing local food production by providing support, materials and equipment necessary to create sustainable gardens that can be planted and harvested year after year.

In the South Slave Region, the Small Scale Foods Program is comprised of two general initiatives, the Take A Kid Gardening Program and the Community Garden Program. The Department worked closely with local schools and community members to deliver these programs. The number of students and gardeners that participated in the program was high which indicates another successful year. A summary of the activities that were undertaken this year are as follows:





## Take A Kid Gardening Program

### Take A Kid Gardening Program

#### Indoor School Garden Program

Participating Schools and Communities:

- Deninu School - Fort Resolution
- DehGah Elementary and Secondary School – Fort Providence
- Ecole Boreale – Hay River
- Princess Alexandra School – Hay River
- Diamond Jenness Secondary School – Hay River
- Chief Sunrise Education Centre – Hay River Reserve

In the spring of 2013 an indoor school garden program was created to actively engage youth in local food production and raise awareness regarding local food security. The program consisted of hands on practical activities to introduce students to growing their own food. As outlined below, students participated in all aspects of the project from assembling planter boxes and grow lights to mixing soil and planting seeds:

- Assembling planter boxes and grow lights
- Mixing and preparing soil, compost and organic fertilizers
- Planting seeds and transplanting seedlings
- Plant identification
- Caring for plants on a daily basis (watering, feeding, pruning, checking for problems, etc.)
- Watching plants growth and helping solve problems (too much or too little moisture, light etc.)
- Harvesting vegetables and herbs and preparing and enjoying the fruits of their labor







## Take A Kid Gardening Program

Supplementary materials including seed catalogues and samples of northern grown produce (fresh and dried) were brought to enhance the learning experience.

The program was extremely successful in providing hands-on experiential learning and preparing students for the outdoor garden season. Materials including seeds, transplants, soil, organic fertilizer, planter boxes and grow lights were supplied by ITI. Equipment was carefully selected for easy use and to accommodate small classroom spaces.



Some schools had existing growing equipment such as an urban cultivator growing system or their own grow lights. This equipment was also incorporated into the indoor growing program. Ongoing support including phone and email consultation was provided by ITI Agriculturalists throughout all stages of the project.





## Outdoor School Garden Program

### Outdoor School Garden Program

Participating Schools and Communities:

- Diamond Jenness Secondary School – Hay River
- Chief Sunrise Education Centre – Hay River Reserve

South Slave Schools were contacted in the spring of 2013 to discuss and explore possibilities for creating outdoor school gardens. Two schools participated in the outdoor garden program this year and there was interest in most communities to work towards creating outdoor school gardens in the future. May and June is a very busy time for teachers to commit to taking on extra projects however with support from volunteers and interested community members we anticipate school gardens will play a significant role in local food production and education in the future.

Students participated in all aspects of the outdoor school garden projects from preparing soil, planting seeds, and harvesting produce in the fall. Details of activities undertaken by students throughout the outdoor school garden program include:

- Assisting with garden construction
- Weeding and preparing soil with compost and organic fertilizers
- Planting seeds and transplanting seedlings (some of these transplants were grown by the students themselves during the indoor school garden program)
- Transplanting hardy berry bushes
- Mulching
- Caring for plants on a daily basis (watering, checking for problems, etc.)
- Observing plant growth and development
- Plant identification
- Harvesting vegetables and herbs and preparing and enjoying the fruits of their labor
- Perennial plant care and winter garden preparation

Extra seeds and seedlings were shared with students who had home gardens or who were interested in exploring container gardening.



## Outdoor School Garden Program

As the pictures illustrate, the outdoor school garden program was extremely successful in providing a practical learning experience regarding all aspects of local food production. Materials including seeds, transplants and organic fertilizers were supplied by ITI.



Other funding sources were also accessed by the Chief Sunrise Education Centre for fencing and construction materials. Pre-existing cement planter boxes were utilized at Diamond Jenness Secondary School.



Ongoing support including phone and email consultation was provided by ITI Agriculturalists throughout all stages of the outdoor school garden program.

**A summary, by community, of the work that was accomplished under the Take A Kid Gardening Program this year is as follows:**

### Hay River

Project: Indoor Classroom Garden

- Princes Alexandra (grades 4-7). Started seedlings under grow lights and planted mobile planter boxes. March 2013.
- Ecole Boreale (grades 3-4 and 7-10). Started seedlings under grow lights and planted mobile planter boxes. March - April 2013.
- DJSS (grades 7-12). Started seedlings under grow lights. May – June 2013.

Project: DJSS Outdoor Garden

- Assisted with seeding and transplanting school garden and set up of irrigation system. Grades 7-12, June 2013.
- Assisted with school garden harvest and winter prep. Grades 10-12, September 24th, 2013.
- Provided dehydrator for drying herbs and kale, September 2013.





## Outdoor School Garden Program

### Hay River Reserve

Project: Chief Sunrise School Outdoor Garden

- Assisted in the design and planting of school garden and pyramid planters. Grades k-12, June 2013.
- Provided extra vegetable transplants, seed potatoes and berry bushes for home gardens, June 2013.
- Assisted with school garden harvest and winter prep. Grades k-12, September 18th 2013.

Project: Indoor Classroom Garden - Urban Cultivator

- Held a class with junior high students on growing microgreens in their Urban Cultivator. October 16th, 2013.



### Fort Resolution

Project: Indoor Classroom Garden

- Deninu School (grades 2-5). Started seedlings under grow lights and planted mobile planter boxes. March 12th 2013.

### Fort Providence

Project: Indoor Classroom Garden

- DehGah Elementary School (grades k-6). Planted mobile planter boxes. March 8th 2013.
- DehGah Secondary School (grades 10-12). Transplanting session with flower and vegetable plugs and grow light. May 1st 2013.

For next year, Region will be commencing the Take A Kid Gardening Program six weeks earlier to allow other schools throughout the Region including those in Fort Smith and Kakisa to participate in the Program.



## Community Garden Program

### Community Garden Program

It was another very successful growing season throughout the South Slave Region. The level of involvement and participation was even higher than the previous year. A summary of the activities under this Program are as follows:

#### Fort Providence:

##### Status:

- Currently there is no community garden however; a small garden does exist at the local health center. The Department's goal for this year was to work with the community to determine a site for the community garden.

##### Accomplishments:

- Department worked with local leadership and identified a site for the community garden.
- Purchased fencing for the garden site. The fencing will be erected in the spring of 2014.
- Held a pyramid planter workshop on June 25th at the Community Health Centre. Three planters were assembled and planted with vegetable seeds and transplants.



Approximately 15 community members of all ages participated in the workshop. Extra vegetable transplants, seeds, seed potatoes and berry bushes were made available for home gardens in the community. Assistance with planting berry bushes was provided to seniors. The community was very keen to hold more workshops of this nature in the future.





## Community Garden Program

### Kakisa:

#### Status:

- A garden site within Kakisa was established several years ago. However, for the past two years there was been no interest by the community to utilize the site. This year's goal was to re-establish the garden.

#### Accomplishments:

- Met with local leadership and community members several times over the summer months and still no interest to re-establish the garden. Though, there is interest and support to establish a small fruit/berry (raspberry, Saskatoon, currant, etc.) orchard at the garden site. The Department will be providing the community with the required shrubs/plants for next year.

### Hay River:

#### Status:

- A community garden was established in Hay River several years ago. The garden site consists of several raised beds and a small greenhouse. The garden is very successful as it attracts several gardeners from within the community. The garden is currently operated by the Hay River Garden Society.

#### Accomplishments:

- A number of work sessions were held at the Hay River Community Garden site from June to September 2013. Assistance and guidance was provided in the construction of additional raised beds to accommodate growing demand for garden space. Assistance was also provided in greenhouse construction (application of plastic covering) and in the design and construction of raised beds for the interior of the 30 x 60 foot greenhouse.
- A gardening workshop was held at the Hay River Community Garden site in June 2013. Approximately 20 people participated in the workshop which focussed on spring garden preparation including seeding and transplanting.
- Assisted in greenhouse construction (putting the plastic on) and bed design for inside greenhouse. June – August 2013.
- Provided ongoing support including phone and e-mail consultations throughout the growing season.





## Community Garden Program

### Hay River Reserve:

#### Status:

- No community garden existed. The objective for this year was to establish a community garden for the Hay River Reserve.

#### Accomplishments:

- The Department and members of the Hay River Reserve began work at the Judith Fabian Group Home in July 2013 to revitalize the existing garden site. The site was expanded to make it wheel chair accessible and a number of raised beds were constructed. The garden is situated in a central location on the reserve allowing easy access for any interested gardeners in the community as well as residents of the Judith Fabian Group Home.
- The Department provided funding under the program for building materials, hardware, water tank, fencing and soil. The garden is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2014.
- Provided extra vegetable transplants, seeds, seed potatoes and berry bushes for home gardens. June 25th 2013.
- Provided ongoing support including phone and e-mail consultations throughout the growing season.



### Enterprise:

#### Status:

- A small community garden was established several years ago and is operated by the Enterprise Community Council.

#### Accomplishments:

- Provided ongoing support including phone and e-mail consultations throughout the growing season.

### Fort Resolution:

#### Status:

- Currently, no community garden exists. The Department's goal for this year was to work with the community to determine a site for the community garden.

#### Accomplishments:

- Met with local leadership and community members several times over the summer months. Two garden sites were identified.
- The Department provided funding under the program to assist with costs associated with establishing these garden sites.





## Community Garden Program

### Fort Smith:

#### Status:

- The community garden was established several years ago. Over thirty residents from Fort Smith garden at the site making it one of the most active community gardens in the South Mackenzie. One of the Department's goals for the garden is to get the community more involved in the operations of the site.

#### Accomplishments:

- Again, the Department took a very active role in preparing the garden site and organizing the gardeners.
- Worked with the community in an attempt to establish a garden society. There was definite interest expressed by gardeners to work towards this goal. This will allow the gardeners to have greater responsibility and management over the community garden site. Once a society is formed they will be working towards creating more raised beds and adding infrastructure such as a greenhouse to the current community garden site.
- Provided ongoing support including phone and e-mail consultations throughout the growing season
- A workshop was held at the community garden site in Fort Smith on July 20th, 2013. Approximately 12 local gardeners participated in the workshop. Topics covered included:
  - Garden maintenance and soil enhancement
  - How to read your garden
  - Composting, organic fertilizers and how to replenish soil
  - Weeding – how to and useful tools
  - Pruning tomatoes
  - Growing squash
  - A question and answer session was provided to address specific concerns and a discussion on creating a long-term plan for fruit crop production was also had with workshop participants. A number of hardy berry bushes including raspberry, Saskatoon, gooseberry, currant and haskap were made available to Fort Smith community gardeners.





