



**HELLMANN'S**

# **Local Food Guide**

**for British Columbia**

# GOING AND GROWING LOCAL

Here are actions, from simple to challenging, that you and your family can take to find more local food:

1. BUY, PREPARE AND SERVE
2. ASK FOR IT
3. GROW YOUR OWN
4. GET MORE INVOLVED
5. LEARN MORE

## 1. BUY, PREPARE AND SERVE

Get more local food in your diet by buying, preparing and serving by season...

### I. WHAT'S IN SEASON

#### II. WHERE TO BUY IT

- a. Grocery stores
- b. Farmers' markets
- c. Natural food cooperatives
- d. Community shared agriculture and food boxes
- e. Farms

### III. PREPARE AND SERVE

## I. WHAT'S IN SEASON

Here is some of the produce that is grown locally and when to find it. Some other local food products are also listed.

<http://www.realfoodmovement.ca/latesttalk/get-involved/seasonal-foods/>

## II. WHERE TO BUY IT

### A. ...AT THE GROCERY STORE

Local food is often labelled, but if not, look for a point of origin on the box. Note that if the label says, "packaged locally" or "distributed locally", the food in it may not actually be grown locally.

## B. ...AT FARMERS' MARKETS

At farmers' markets farmers sell the freshest food directly to you. Find one near you through the BC Association of Farmers' Markets <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/>.

## C. ...FROM NATURAL FOOD COOPERATIVES

Members of buying co-ops can spend less on higher quality produce since their money is pooled together to buy groceries in bulk directly from local farmers, wholesalers and producers.

## D. ...FROM COMMUNITY SHARED AGRICULTURE (CSA) SHARES OR A FOOD BOX

Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) is a way that farmers and consumers cooperate so that consumers are guaranteed the highest quality food as it becomes available and farmers have a guaranteed market. Typically you buy a share at the beginning of the season and pick your box up weekly at a drop off spot. CSA farmers sometimes offer flowers, herbs, fruits and other farm products too.

Food Box programs are a variation of a CSA. Here the consumer need not commit for an entire season, paying instead on a week-by-week basis.<sup>1</sup>

Others are listed on the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association website at <http://www.biodynamics.com/csacanada?page=0%2C0%2C0>.

## III. PREPARE AND SERVE

### A. ...PLAN SNACKS, MEALS, MENUS AND SHOPPING LISTS, SO THAT YOU USE MORE LOCAL INGREDIENTS AS THEY COME INTO SEASON.

For recipes see the BC Association of Farmers' Markets website at <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/recipes.htm>.

### B. ...SERVE LOCAL FOODS AT PARTIES AND EVENTS, LIKE WEDDINGS, BIRTHDAY PARTIES, POTLUCKS. TELL EVERYONE WHAT YOU'RE SERVING AND WHY.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions modified from Just Food website, accessed Mar 5, 2009 at [http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/en/community\\_shared\\_agriculture.asp](http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/en/community_shared_agriculture.asp)

For recipes see the BC Association of Farmers' Markets website at <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/recipes.htm>.

## 2. ASK FOR IT

### I. ...FROM YOUR GROCER

Grocers make decisions to buy produce and products based on availability, convenience and customer demand. If you don't say what you want, your grocer may pick the cheapest food, even if it has travelled thousands of kilometres. Frequent customer requests for local food often influence groceries' buying policies.

### II. ...FROM RESTAURANTS

As you come to know what's in season, you can ask for it in restaurants and fast food places. Make sure to ask if the item you are eating is actually local.

Look for restaurants that feature local food at <http://www.foodandwine.com/restaurants/list/british-columbia-canada>.

### III. ...FROM EVERYONE!

Ask that local food be served in cinemas, at events and festivals, in daycares and schools, and by airlines and other institutions.

## 3. GROW YOUR OWN

### I. ...IN YOUR GARDEN OR ON YOUR BALCONY

Here's a list of things to grow to keep your food costs down and taste buds tingling: beans, chard, cherry and heirloom tomatoes, leaf lettuce and salad mixes, kale, and peas for a smaller garden that produces a lot. If you have more space, you might want to try beets, carrots, garlic, heirloom potatoes, onions, parsnips, summer squash, winter squashes and zucchini. If you'll be in your home for a few years, plant edible perennials such as asparagus, gooseberries, raspberries, rhubarb and perhaps a few strawberries. See below for resources on organic and natural gardening.

In some BC towns and cities you can join a backyard sharing program if you don't have your own space to garden. See Sharing Backyards at [www.sharingbackyards.com](http://www.sharingbackyards.com).

A local example: The Vancouver Fruit Tree Project

This project connects people who have fruit trees, people who are willing to harvest fruit, and community groups that distribute or eat it. For people with fruit trees that need to be picked, this is a wonderful way to share the bounty.

Adapted from original text at <http://www.vancouverfruittree.com>.

## II. ...IN A COMMUNITY GARDEN

A community garden is a space where gardeners grow together, either on individual allotments or on common plots.

To find a community garden near Vancouver or Victoria, check with City Farmer at <http://cityfarmer.org/vanccomgard83.html#vanccomgard>.

## 4. GET INVOLVED

To increase the availability of local food in your area, join others who:

- I. LOBBY
- II. ORGANIZE
- III. TALK POLICY
- IV. DO A PROJECT
- V. TEACH ABOUT IT

### I. ...LOBBY

Lobby people who buy on behalf of a lot of others to purchase a larger percentage of local food. This strategy has begun to be effective in a number of cities and towns around the world. It takes dedication, but as institutions come under pressure to improve their food services, they have an opportunity to take more of a leadership role in developing local and sustainable food systems. Remind your municipality, school or hospital that it will support local farmers and the economy by buying local.

Contact Farm Folk City Folk in Vancouver to get involved <http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/>

### II. ...ORGANIZE

For example, you might join a committee or become a board member of a buying co-op, which can be organized at almost any scale. Co-ops can serve the needs of a few families, multiple families and even multiple consumer-run stores.

For something different, you might want to join others in a community cooking adventure. See Fresh Choice Kitchens for a community kitchen near you and for other family cooking activities - [www.communitykitchens.ca](http://www.communitykitchens.ca).

You might also join a group that plans actions to influence how people think about food.

See BC Food Systems Network for links to many projects <http://fooddemocracy.org/links.php>.

### III. ...TALK POLICY

Food policy discussions help communities, cities and even provinces to get clearer about what people want. There are many conversations going on, from the grassroots all the way to provincial and national levels.

A local example: Vancouver Food Policy Council

It took ten years of discussions and lobbying before the Food Policy Council was formed to advise the City of Vancouver. They work on innovative policy as well as a range of projects, from supporting people to keep chickens and bees to substantially increasing the number of food community gardens in the city.

Adapted from original text at The Vancouver Food Policy Council at <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/index.htm>.

See BC Food Systems Network for links to policy discussions <http://fooddemocracy.org/links.php>.

### IV. ...DO A PROJECT

There are many projects you might do. For example, you could start a community garden, where you connect with a group, as well as find a host site with sun, water access, storage and a washroom. You'd want to establish good communication and ways to resolve conflicts. You might also want to seek funding and plant extra for hungry folks and animals. There are many great resources available on how to involve your community, as well as how to handle issues that come up in public garden spaces.

A local example: Sharing Backyards

This organization links people who want to grow their own food with people who have backyards to share. It also aims to help people connect with each other, no matter their background or socio-economic status. There are a number of participants in BC and now a few in other Canadian cities.

Adapted from original text at [www.sharingbackyards.com](http://www.sharingbackyards.com).

Here are some community garden resources to get you started:

How Does our Garden Grow: A guide to community garden success. A manual by FoodShare.  
<http://www.foodshare.net/garden03.htm>

## V. ...TEACH ABOUT LOCAL FOOD

Here are some links for educators who want to teach about the importance of growing and eating local food in the classroom.

Local food resources for educators

Centre for Ecoliteracy <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/>

Information, inspiration, and support for K-12 educators, parents, and other members of the school community who are helping young people gain the knowledge, skills, and values essential to sustainable living. Has resources on Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment, as well as rethinking school lunches.

City Farmer - Children and School Gardens and Urban Agriculture

<http://www.cityfarmer.org/schgard15.html> and

<http://www.cityfarmer.org/subchildren.html#children/> Brief descriptions of projects and links to their sites.

Green Teacher <http://www.greenteacher.com/>

A magazine and on-line resource by and for educators to enhance environmental and global education across the curriculum at all grade levels. Articles, lesson plans and links.

Healthy Schools <http://healthyschools.sd61.bc.ca/html/resources.html>

Links to food resources for schools and educators.

Healthy Eating at Schools

<http://www.healthyeatingatschool.ca/>

Resources on healthy eating and projects you can do. Includes recipes and success stories.

Kids Gardening <http://www.kidsgardening.com>

Kids Gardening provides information, resources, and supplies for children, parents, and teachers who are interesting in gardening.

Life Lab <http://www.lifelab.org>

Through its curricula and programs, Life Lab helps schools develop gardens where children can create “living laboratories” for the study of the natural world.

The Food Project <http://www.thefoodproject.org/about/index.asp>

Program for youth and adults from diverse backgrounds to work together to build a sustainable food system.

The Food Timeline <http://www.foodtimeline.org/>

Morris County, New Jersey librarians created the Food Timeline as a way to help students, parents, and teachers locate food history and period recipes. Not one single website, but a collection of related web pages.

## 5. LEARN MORE

Links and resources to help you access and advocate for well local food or grow a garden.

100 Mile Diet <http://100milediet.org/>

Local eating for global change. You can use the site to map the 100 mile zone around you (i.e. your local foodshed).

BC Food Systems Network <http://fooddemocracy.org/>

A province-wide network of people doing food-related action in communities. Good links to local seed companies and community food organizations across the province.

Canadian Gardening [www.canadiangardening.com](http://www.canadiangardening.com)

Canadian Organic Growers (COG) [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)

A national information network for farmers, gardeners and consumers. COG promotes organic foods through national publications and events, and through memberships in local chapters.

City Farmer’s Urban Agriculture Notes [www.cityfarmer.org](http://www.cityfarmer.org)

Canadian information, research and news about urban agriculture, community gardens, etc.

Farm Folk City Folk [www.ffcf.bc.ca](http://www.ffcf.bc.ca)

A non-profit organization working to relocalize food systems.

Food Secure Canada <http://www.foodsecurecanada.org/>

Has a database with information, policy and educational resources on: Agriculture & Harvesting; Indigenous Food Sovereignty; Food Culture & Practice; Food & Health; Food & the Environment; Household / Individual Skills; Hunger / Short Term Relief; Policy Work / Systems Change; Community Building.

Local Food Plus <http://www.localfoodplus.ca/>

A non-profit organization that brings farmers and consumers to the table to share in the benefits of environmentally and socially responsible food production.

Mother Earth News <http://www.motherearthnews.com/Real-Food.aspx>

How to find fresh, local, sustainable food. Recipes too.

Natural Dominion <http://naturaldominion.com/>To find a Farmers Market, Organic Farm, CSA program or Food Delivery service near you. Focus is on GMO free food sources.

Organic Gardening [www.organicgardening.com](http://www.organicgardening.com)

Organic Gardening from A-Z

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada <http://www.organicagcentre.ca/>

The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada plays a leading role in organic research and education, linking organic knowledge across Canada. OACC is dedicated to farm profitability and enhancing the environmental and social integrity of agriculture.

People and Planet <http://www.planetfriendly.net/>

Local and Organic information covering Food, Gardening, Agriculture, Eating, Learning, Growing, Working in Canada and beyond.

Seeds of Diversity [www.seeds.ca](http://www.seeds.ca)

Lists heirloom and heritage seeds being saved by members of the public sector. Hosts a database of seed companies, Canadian growers and a living library of seeds. For organic, open-pollinated, GMO-free and heirloom seed companies, see <http://www.seeds.ca/rl/rl.php>.

Sharing Backyards [www.sharingbackyards.com](http://www.sharingbackyards.com).

In some Canadian towns and cities you can join a backyard sharing program, which matches people if you don't have your own space to garden. You can also share your backyard with others who would like to grow food.

Simply in Season Fruit and Vegetable Guide

<http://www.worldcommunitycookbook.org/season/guide/index.html>

Tips on how to choose, store, prepare, and use selected fruits and vegetables.

Slow Food Canada [www.slowfood.ca](http://www.slowfood.ca)

Is interested in developing an enogastronomic culture with support for those battling to defend food and agricultural biodiversity around the world. Slow Food stresses the need for taste education as the best defense against poor quality and food adulteration.

Sustainable Table [www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org)

Celebrates local sustainable food, educates consumers on food-related issues and works to build community through food. Based in US, but good overview.

UBC Farm <http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/ubcfarm/>

Demonstration gardens and food education for community and university students.

Vancouver Food Policy Council <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/index.htm>. They advise the City of Vancouver, work on innovative policy as well as a range of projects, from supporting people to keep chickens and bees to substantially increasing the number of food community gardens in the city.

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