



# GROWING TOWARDS FOOD SELF RELIANCE: A WHOLE COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

**District of North Saanich: A Place to Live, Work, Play and Grow Food!**





## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                                                                                                      | 4  |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                                                                                                       | 6  |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                                                                                                           | 7  |
| Community Context                                                                                                                             | 7  |
| Purpose, Scope and Goals                                                                                                                      | 7  |
| National and Provincial Context and Relevance<br>(Challenges and Trends)                                                                      | 11 |
| Strategy Precedents                                                                                                                           | 13 |
| <b>Process</b>                                                                                                                                | 15 |
| <b>Analysis</b>                                                                                                                               | 16 |
| <b>The Whole Community Agricultural Strategy</b>                                                                                              | 18 |
| Priority Municipal Actions To Support The Local Food System                                                                                   | 18 |
| Priority Community Actions To Support The Local Food System                                                                                   | 25 |
| Easy (Low Hanging Fruit) Actions                                                                                                              | 26 |
| Edible Landscaping (Aka Beautiful Food)                                                                                                       | 27 |
| <b>Implementation Guide</b>                                                                                                                   | 29 |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                                                                                                             | 31 |
| A: Proposed Development Permit Guideline Wording<br>For Non-Traditional Agriculture In Multifamily,<br>Commercial and Industrial Developments | 32 |
| B: Other Good Ideas                                                                                                                           | 33 |
| <b>References</b>                                                                                                                             | 34 |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing that the role of food and food production systems are a key element in sustainable communities, the District of North Saanich has prepared a “Whole Community Agricultural Strategy” (WCAS).

This WCAS contemplates changing the way we view complete communities -- it suggests local communities must be seen as a food-shed supported by an integrated and diverse local food system. In this view, a complete community is a place to live, work, play *and grow food*.

Communities can have traditional and non-traditional forms of agriculture. While most of us are familiar with traditional forms of agriculture, non-traditional forms are an emerging phenomenon which we define as small scale food production operations on land not traditionally associated with farm business operations. This Whole Community Agricultural Strategy uses a local Food System paradigm to identify actions designed to promote both traditional and non-traditional agriculture.

By implementing a WCAS, 18 different benefits can be achieved in the areas of agriculture, public health, environment, economic development and social health.

Building on the 2010 Agricultural Area Plan recommendations for North Saanich, the Public and stakeholders were invited to an Agricultural Ideas Fair and Planning Workshop to consider and add to actions that can be undertaken by the municipality and the community. This input was used in identifying priority actions for the Strategy.

The WCAS is a part of an ongoing and evolving discussion focused on the effort to achieve local food self-reliance. It is a platform to move toward further dialogue and actions. The Strategy includes four categories of actions:

1. Priority municipal actions to support each factor in the local food system. Forty four actions were selected as priority municipal actions from the 89 actions identified during the preparation of this strategy.
2. Priority community actions to support the local food system. There were 11 recommended community actions.
3. Easy “low hanging fruit” actions that can be quickly and easily implemented. This category includes an additional 17 actions from the list of 89 actions. While not priorities they are included in the strategy because they do not take significant municipal resources to implement.
4. Edible plantings for use in the landscaping of single family, multifamily and commercial developments and on public lands. This list of plants was compiled from the suggestions provided in the Agricultural Ideas Fair.

Amaranth  
Black Currents  
Artichoke Plant





Arugula  
Apple Tree Blossoms  
Apple Tree



The top five priority municipal actions include:

- 1) Ensure municipal bylaws support agriculture.
- 2) Create an agricultural webpage (on the municipal website).
- 3) Represent local and regional interests in food/agriculture.
- 4) Undertake an agricultural economic development plan.
- 5) Support independent local agricultural organizations.

The WCAS includes an implementation guide that identifies further forums and dialogues to achieve local food self-reliance.

The results of the Agricultural Ideas Fair and Planning Workshop provided 89 discrete actions, 44 of which comprise the priority actions for the Strategy. Of the 89 actions, 47 applied to both traditional and non-traditional agriculture and 51 applied to more than one factor in the local food system. This illustrates the interconnectedness of the food system and the different forms of agriculture. It also indicates the likelihood of beneficial synergies resulting from the implementation of the WCAS, including:

1. the development of a more appreciative and supportive public for the value of agriculture and farmers. This would result from active engagement in non-traditional agriculture, promotional activities, branding and education;
2. the benefit of greater engagement in farming may also serve to attract more young people to become traditional farmers. Given that many farmers are near retirement, this outcome would be especially important to ensure we have people to produce food; and,
3. the increased effectiveness of the food system resulting from implementing actions in each factor of the food system instead of focusing on only part of the food system. In other words, the sum value of a more effective local food system is greater than the value of each of its parts.

The WCAS also includes an implementation guide which calls for a detailed work plan to be prepared and, recognizing the need for ongoing consultation and work, subsequent venues to move forward in improving local food systems. These venues should include additional public forums and stakeholder dialogues.

Implementation should also include an early and complete review of all bylaws affecting agriculture to ensure that the District's regulations help rather than hinder community agriculture. This effort should include changes to its Development Permit guidelines and sustainability checklist to encourage greenhouses, composting, rainwater capture in barrels, cisterns and ponds, irrigation, appropriate solar orientation, garden tool sheds, raised planters for herbs, edible landscaping (from the list in this strategy), private and common plots, arbors and adequate soil depths.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Community Context:

The District of North Saanich is a rural residential and agricultural community of approximately 11,000 people. It is situated on the Saanich Peninsula and is part of the Capital Regional District. Within the context of the Region, North Saanich is located entirely out of the Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area. As such, it is not a designated growth area. Its role within the region is to support agricultural and rural land uses and the cornerstone policy in the Official Community Plan is to retain the present rural, agricultural and marine character of the community.

In addition to the rural, agricultural and marine character, North Saanich contains a number of residential neighbourhoods, a federal government centre for plant health, an international airport, a major ferry terminal and other significant public institutional land uses. While these are significant land uses, agricultural land (1,407 hectares) represents the most predominant land use representing approximately 30% of the municipality.

Agriculture has deep roots in North Saanich beginning with the Wsanec First Nations cultivating, harvesting and preserving foods for thousands of years on the land. With European colonization, early pioneers began to grow food and forage crops in the 1860's. Agricultural activities subsequently evolved to include grain, hops, dairy, sheep, poultry and hog farming and these were accompanied by associated processing and distribution infrastructures.

Following the construction of the Royal Canadian Air Force Base in 1939, agricultural industries entered a period of decline beginning with dairy farms and after World War II, other farming activities due to the changing economics of farming and globalization of the agricultural sector. Farmers have been attempting to adapt to the changing conditions and this state of change and challenge has seriously affected local agriculture. Successful responses to the changing conditions include an increased number of organic farms, high value fruit (including some citrus) and vegetable crops, farm gate marketing, agri-tourism and off-farm employment.

## Purpose, Scope and Goals:

The role of food and its production systems has become a key element in discussions and strategies focused on sustainability. Such dialogues have identified the role of food in our economy, social health, environment and culture. Increasingly, global issues like diminishing oil supply, water scarcity, greenhouse gases and climate change along with public health concerns are underscoring the importance of having healthy regional and local food systems.

A sustainable food system is one in which food production, processing, distribution, consumption and the disposal of end products are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a

Blueberries



Calendula  
Calendula & Borage Salad  
Borage



particular community and place. This can be local or regional, depending on the boundary chosen – geopolitical or otherwise. A food system is influenced and affected by the political and economic processes of policies, regulations, markets and services. By local food system we mean a local food supply chain based on the utilization of local or regional products and a short supply chain. The physical and temporal distances between the production, distribution and consumption is as short as possible. Local food systems can enhance community cohesion, promote links with the greater bioregion, and encourage a sense of place, among other claims.

Food production systems have moved from diverse local and regional systems to increasingly large centralized, national and global systems that require intensive energy inputs to produce food that has lessened in diversity and nutrition. Food supply chains have become longer. There is, however, increasing public interest in changing the food system (i.e., new patterns of food governance) and rural development that supports and encourages a shorter food supply chain focused on local food-sheds<sup>1</sup>.

This Whole Community Agricultural Strategy addresses the agricultural potential throughout North Saanich based on a comprehensive local food systems model. It looks at, and builds on, the municipality's recent Agricultural Area Plan (2010) and includes a focus on "non-traditional agriculture" which we define as small scale food production operations (plants and animals) on land not traditionally associated with farm business operations. Examples of non-traditional farming include residential yards (back, side and front), public road boulevards, community gardens, community orchards, roof tops, and green spaces in multi-family, institutional (e.g., schools) and commercial developments.

By combining both traditional and non-traditional agriculture, the result is an integrated "Whole Community Agricultural Strategy" that encourages a shorter food supply chain within our local food-shed. The goal of preparing an integrated Whole Community Agricultural strategy is to ensure that all of the agricultural potential and potential synergies between the two forms of agriculture are achieved for the best functioning local food system possible – one that is community-centered, relational, place based, seasonal, participatory and supportive of the local economy.

A food system is a complex economic and political creation that involves a multitude of stakeholders, numerous rules and regulations and can range from being sustainable to grossly inefficient. Municipal government plays a key role that can support or hinder the potential of community agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> The idea of the 'foodshed' as proposed by Kloppenburg et al. (1996), is a concept originating from the idea of a watershed and describes the physical, biological, social and intellectual components which interact in the multidimensional space in which we live and eat. In other words, it is the area that includes where a food is produced and where a food is consumed -- the land on which it grows, its transportation network, its markets and the tables on which it is consumed.



In general, a municipal government has four principal ways it can act:

- 1) Provide resources.
- 2) Undertake projects and programs.
- 3) Advocate (encourage) and facilitate.
- 4) Regulate and establish policy.

This strategy identifies and prioritizes municipal and community actions within each of the key factors that comprise and support our local food system.

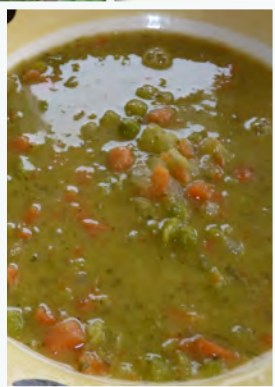
There are several benefits that may be achieved by having a Whole Community Agricultural Strategy:

1. Maximizing local agricultural potential can reduce the impacts of GHG, climate change and increasing energy costs. Agriculture is an important strategy to mitigate the impacts of global warming because it can reduce the energy footprint required for local food needs.
2. Food self-reliance can increase by maximizing local food production capacity
3. Nutrition can improve as local food delivery times are shorter; therefore, fewer nutrients are lost due to time used in warehousing, travel and delivery.
4. Non-traditional agriculture can be a recreational opportunity for residents.
5. Public health can improve through increased access to fresh, whole foods that replace unhealthy processed products in local diets. Those gardening or farming have a more active lifestyle.
6. Community building and well-being can be integrated into the social fabric of the local area through agricultural activities (i.e., community gardens, farmers markets).
7. Biodiversity can increase as monoculture lawns are converted to diverse agro-ecosystems that provide habitat for birds and wildlife.
8. Increased biodiversity can enhance ecosystem services essential to agriculture, including recycling of nutrients, regulation of microclimate and local hydrological processes, suppression of undesirable organisms, and detoxification of noxious chemicals.
9. Education can be provided about the value of natural areas which also provide ecosystem services such as pollination and flood control - roles that are difficult to define in monetary terms, yet vital aspects of a farm or ranch and the rural landscape.

Blackberries  
Cherry Tree  
Camas



Bush Pea Plants  
Bush Pea Soup  
Quinoa Plant



10. Community Agriculture can be highlighted as a concrete example of Sustainability. This is especially relevant to more rural or small town communities that cannot, and arguably should not, pursue more urban approaches to sustainability. If we cannot feed ourselves we are not sustainable in either urban or rural contexts.
11. Residents and developers can own or build more sustainable residential, commercial, institutional and industrial places by incorporating non-traditional agricultural elements.
12. Economic growth can be supported from a more integrated and effective food system.
13. Productive and sustainable use of land not previously used for agriculture can be used for agriculture.
14. The local food culture can be developed and enhanced.
15. There can be improved public connection to, and support of, food systems through increased use of local and backyard farming initiatives, farm gate and farmer market sales.
16. The process can lead to increased institutionalized support for agriculture (e.g., municipal, schools and other agency programs).
17. Agricultural educational and mentoring opportunities can be identified and encouraged.
18. There can be greater diversion of compostable waste from the landfill and an associated improvement of growing soils with the use of compost.

The scope of these benefits illustrates the inter-connectedness of agriculture with other elements in sustainability.

Authors such as Michael Pollan<sup>2</sup> in his “An open letter to the next farmer-in-chief” (2008), discusses the issues we currently face with our food systems as well as possible solutions. He states that aside from cars, food systems use more fossil fuels than any other sector of the economy and it is expected to use more as time progresses. His solutions for these issues are to rely on local and urban agriculture, which will address energy issues and additionally a vast array of social, economic, cultural and health problems.

Most of the food that local residents consume is not locally grown. Therefore, enhancing our local food system is a significant endeavour. Strengthening our local food system will improve public health, the environment and our local and regional economy. We can use food and agriculture to better our community.

## National and Provincial Context and Relevance (Challenges and Trends):

At the national level, it is reported that only two percent of the population in Canada are farmers. Of these, only 0.3% are responsible for producing 75% of the farm products in Canada. Farmers are also aging and there will be a need to find young farmers to take over farm operations. It will be essential to ensure that farming is economically viable in order to attract new farmers into the sector. It is also important to expose our young people to farming as a way of attracting them to the industry.

Provincially, agriculture is a significant part of our economy. With approximately 250 different crops and livestock produced on BC farms and 14% of the provincial workforce employed in the food system sectors producing over \$35 billion in revenue, agriculture is an economic stabilizer and vitally important to our future.

While the province has a very large land base, only 5% has agricultural production potential due to geo-climatic constraints. The same constraints limit the amount of useable land available for human habitation thus resulting in land development eroding the agricultural land base. Given that over the next 20 years the provincial population is expected to increase 30% to 5.5 million people, this competing interest may further challenge the agricultural land base. In addition to food production, farming contributes to the multi-functionality of the landscape: open space, clean air, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, ecosystem services, tourism, recreation and public health. Clearly, the importance of agriculture in a sustainable future is vital and critical.

The economic viability of agriculture provincially is currently being challenged. There were three consecutive years of total negative income for farming provincially (2006 to 2008). The lack of profitability is a major challenge for the future success of farming. In addition to this lack of profitability, there are several trends and factors that are contributing to the demise of agricultural viability:

1. Diminishing agricultural research capability
2. No extension support
3. Aging population of farmers
4. Lack of available labour
5. Trade barriers for agricultural exports
6. Insufficient domestic branding of agriculture/inadequate marketing and education
7. Climate change impacts (drought, flooding and extreme weather)
8. Insufficient or uneconomic water supply
9. High land prices
10. Cheap imported food
11. Decreasing farm revenue

Cabbage  
Cabbage Dish  
Cabbage Garden



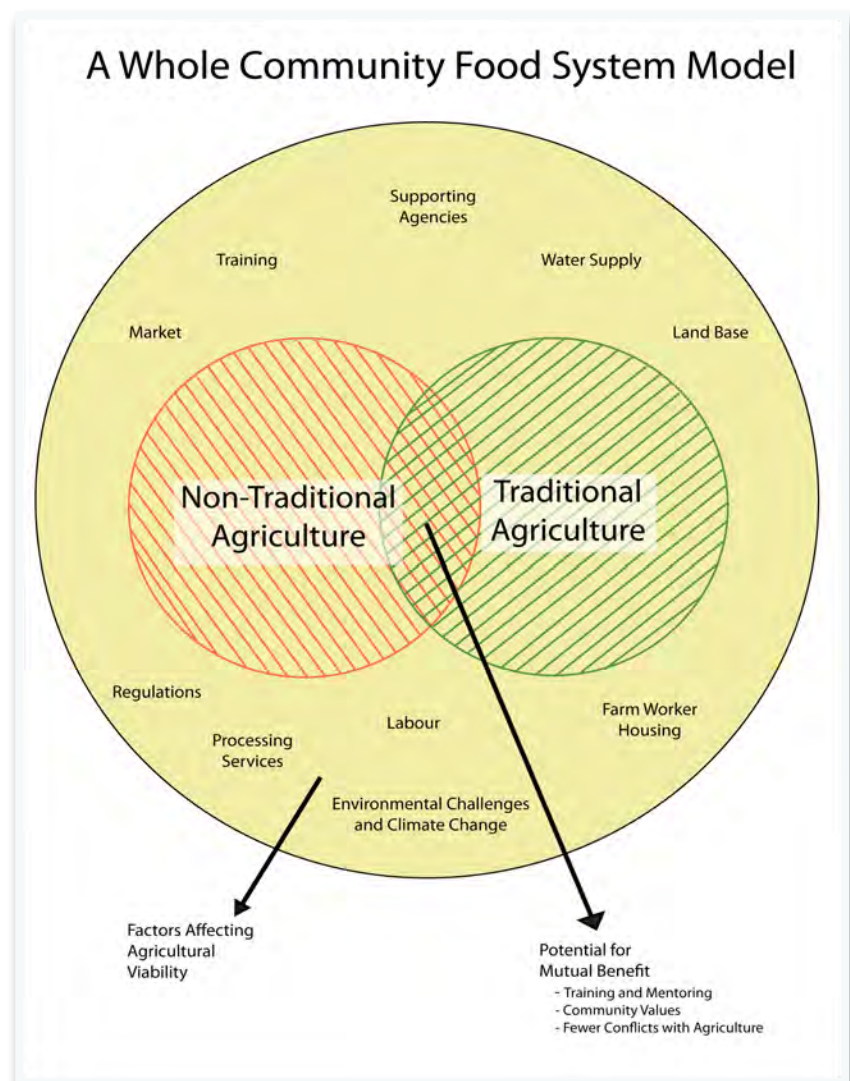


In the face of these trends and challenges, it is important for communities to not only maintain and support existing agricultural lands and operations, it is also important to find ways to improve local and regional agriculture. Creative solutions supported by an educated population will help. For example, non-traditional forms of agriculture, such as community gardens, back yard or front yard crops, and green roofs are increasing phenomena in cities around the world.

Where traditional agriculture occurs on larger tracts of land in rural settings, non-traditional (urban) agriculture occurs within the developed portions of communities in locations like residential yards, community gardens and roof tops. While it is different from traditional rural agriculture, it is also complementary. Where land development has previously alienated land from the food system, non-traditional agriculture can not only reintegrate parts of that land back into the food system, it can also foster an engaged culture more supportive of agriculture.

The following schematic illustrates the key factors in a Whole Community Food System and the common area between traditional and non-traditional agriculture.

Cardoon Stalks  
Cardoon Breaded Fritters  
Cardoon Plant





## Strategy Precedents:

In broad terms, the practice of planning has been influenced by the principle of building complete communities, places where people “live, work and play”. Its purpose is to encourage communities to be built with many services close by to allow residents to reduce the use of automobiles in accessing the services they typically need. It is suggested that this planning principle be expanded to include agriculture as a key community feature. Through the lens of this expanded principle, communities would now be seen as places to “live, work, play and grow food”.

Authors like Wayne Roberts in *The No-nonsense Guide to World Food*, (2008) have discussed the historical effectiveness of urban agriculture. For example, during the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba was left without Russian oil and grain to feed their population and run their agricultural machinery. To address this crisis, they used urban agriculture approaches like community gardens to address the food shortage. Local farmers were successful, community health improved, waste was reduced, composting was effectively implemented, and the need for fossil fuels was significantly reduced. A local approach to non-traditional agriculture is documented in Carolyn Herriot’s “Zero Mile Diet” book. She happily eats food from her backyard garden every day of the year.

At a national level, there is currently no long term strategy for agriculture and food production (BCAC : April 26th, 2010). The Province of British Columbia has been financially supporting the development of local Agricultural Area Plans. Similar to other municipalities, North Saanich has prepared and adopted an Agricultural Area Plan.

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) prepared a Regional Food System Plan in 2009. That plan addressed each of the food system factors and some attention was given to non-traditional agriculture. As such it provides good information and guidance to inform this Whole Community Agricultural Strategy. The difference between the two, though, is that our strategy’s focus is even more localized. Greater attention is given to non-traditional agriculture and, in particular, the connections and potential synergies between the two forms of agriculture. Another way of describing this approach is that it looks at a local community (City, town or village) as a food-shed supported by an integrated and diverse local food system.

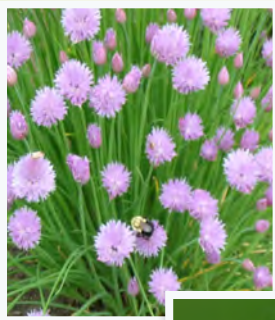
Sunflower Plants  
Strawberries  
Chicken Dish



The reason for the greater focus on non-traditional agriculture in this strategy compared to the RDNO approach is that we believe that non-traditional agriculture can have a significant impact on food security. Also, this strategy specifically looks for the links between traditional and non-traditional agriculture in order to determine when there might be efficiencies and increased effectiveness in local government actions to support all agriculture.

The implementation of non-traditional agricultural solutions could produce economic benefit. BioCycle Magazine (BioCycle Vol: 50 Issue: 4) identifies the practical applications from the implementation of composting in recycling centres and for waste disposal as well as the economic benefit. Locally, the Capital Regional District has identified that over 30% of the garbage going into the Hartland landfill is organic material that could be composted and reused in a variety of ways. Currently, an initiative to reduce organic waste (Kitchen Scraps Initiative) has been proposed for the region to reduce waste and make use of organic resources.

Chive Plant  
Chives in food  
Chive stock



## PROCESS

The recently prepared Agricultural Area Plan for the District of North Saanich provides a good framework for addressing traditional agriculture and many action items for this strategy. All of the AAP's recommendations were addressed during the preparation of this strategy and are included in the appendices. The strategy includes the recommendations identified as being the highest priorities. The preparation of this strategy used the following steps:

1. Scan of food system models and non-traditional (Urban) agriculture.
2. Participation and advice from the District's Agricultural Advisory Commission
3. An Agricultural Ideas Fair and Public Workshop provided information to participants through presentations from Guy Dauncey (on global trends impacting local food systems) and Carolyn Herriot (on the Zero Mile Diet) Bob Maxwell, Chair of the Peninsula Agricultural Commission, with his team of Agrologists (Andrea Lawseth, Bejay Mills, Paula Hesje and Wanda Gorsuch). The presentations were videotaped for subsequent podcasting from the municipal website.

The event was used to assist in developing ideas and initiatives, facilitating dialogue and prioritizing actions in each of the strategy areas i.e., within each key factor of the Food System. Participants prioritized actions by casting a limited number of votes for or against each of the potential actions. The votes of farmers were differentiated from those of non-farmers in order to recognize the difference in knowledge base between the two groups. It is worth noting that while negative votes were allowed, very few were given and in the few actions that received some negative votes, there were a greater number of positive votes.

4. A validation process where stakeholders and community members could comment on and validate the strategy elements. The worksheet summaries of the Agricultural Ideas Fair and Public Workshop were distributed to the participants to confirm their accuracy.

This process and the resulting strategy is not a final step in the effort to achieve local food self-reliance; it is part of a continuum of community efforts to pursue a prosperous local food system. It is also an important step and platform from which to move the community forward into further action and dialogue in the pursuit of local food self-reliance.

Purple Potatoes  
Potato Plant in Bloom  
English Walnut Tree





## ANALYSIS

This Whole Community Agriculture Strategy presents a new approach to planning for agriculture in communities. Previously plans and strategies have been prepared for traditional agriculture or for “urban” agriculture but not for both in combination.

This strategy approaches planning for agriculture on the basis of combining traditional and non-traditional (i.e., urban) agriculture on the premise that there would be benefits resulting from the approach which perhaps would be less likely to be achieved by conducting separate plans. Whether this approach does in fact deliver additional benefits will need to be measured during its implementation. The results of the process to date, however, suggest additional benefits.

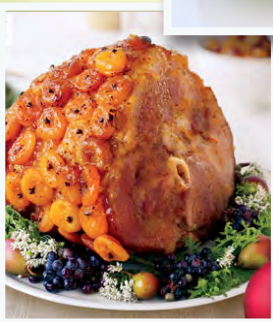
As a result of the November 27, 2010 Agricultural Ideas Fair and Public Workshop public input, there are a total of 89 suggested municipal actions and 45 community actions.

A total of 47 of the recommended municipal actions were identified as applying to both traditional and non-traditional agriculture. These 47 recommended actions represent approximately 53 % of all the recommended actions. This suggests there could be great efficiency and effectiveness in that each single action will benefit both forms of agriculture. Given that this occurs 47 times it speaks to the benefit of addressing both forms of agriculture concurrently.

In addition to the frequency that actions benefit both traditional and non-traditional agriculture, it is also worth noting that 51 of the 89 recommended actions also apply to two or more of the food system factors. For example, undertaking an Agricultural Economic Development Plan is identified as relevant to 8 of the 9 food system factors.

Municipal bylaws that support agriculture and the creation of a municipal agricultural website are relevant to six of the nine factors. Municipal support of independent local agricultural organizations and the representation of local agricultural interests are relevant to five of the nine factors.

Chard Plants  
Chard Quiche  
Ham





The high incidence of actions that impact more than one of the food system factors illustrates the interrelationship and interconnectedness of the food system. It also points to the benefit of undertaking a Whole Community Agricultural Strategy based on the food system model approach. The Whole Community Agricultural Strategy enables the identification of actions that have multiple benefits for traditional and non-traditional agriculture as well as all factors in the food system.

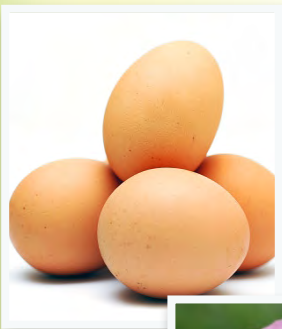
As previously mentioned, the strategy will need to be implemented to be able to fully assess the benefits and synergies resulting from the approach. In addition to the benefits already identified, there are three very significant beneficial synergies anticipated.

Firstly, there is the potential shift in values and perspectives that should come from viewing the entire community as a farm and as part of the food system and food shed. People undertaking non-traditional agriculture will appreciate the effort and challenges required to successfully grow food. This will lead to a greater appreciation of farming and farmers and on the value of food itself.

Secondly, a greater appreciation of agriculture may also lead to more young people choosing farming as their vocation. This would be a valuable outcome given that only 0.3% of our population produce 75% of our food and that many of these farmers are near retirement.

Lastly, there is the benefit of implementing actions in each of the food system factors. Individually they would be a benefit to the specific factor, collectively they should result in a better, more efficient and effective local food system. This can be achieved by implementing enough individual actions that have a sufficiently positive relationship to a broader system such that it improves significantly as well.

Eggs  
Crab Apple Tree Bloom  
Chicken



# THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

This strategy builds on the ongoing efforts of the Municipality and community interests in agriculture including the recently completed Agricultural Area Plan which provides many good recommendations for improving traditional agriculture. Through additional research and community dialogue, the following strategy identifies several additional and prioritized actions to improve and support the future of non-traditional agriculture in each of the key food system factors.

This section includes:

1. Priority municipal government actions to support the local food system.
2. Priority community actions to support the local food system.
3. Easy “Low Hanging Fruit” actions that can be quickly and easily implemented.
4. Edible landscaping plant suggestions from the community to be considered for use in the landscaping of single family, multifamily and commercial developments and in public lands.

## Priority Municipal Actions to Support the Local Food System:

The following tables include the actions which received the most community support and those that serve to assist in more than one local food system factor. The factors include:

Land Base  
Marketing  
Labour  
Farm Worker Housing  
Processing Services  
Training and Information  
Water Supply  
Support Agencies  
Environmental and Climate Change Challenges

It is also important to note that regulation is also a key food system factor. It is addressed in each of the other food system factor tables as a category for action.

Elderberry  
Fern  
Gooseberry



## Municipal Actions to Support the Agricultural Land Base

| Priority Actions                                                            | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                                                                            | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Develop and maintain bylaws that support agriculture.                       | Several types of bylaws can impact agriculture e.g., zoning, signage and business regulation. All should be structured to support agriculture.                                                           | Yes                                | Yes                                    |
| Establish an agricultural web page on the municipal website.                | An information page on agriculture can provide links to other agricultural websites, provide important local information to assist local farmers and agricultural events.                                | Yes                                | Yes                                    |
| Allow and encourage bee hives throughout the municipality.                  | This could be achieved by making the keeping of bee hives a permitted use in all zones in the municipalities and informing the public on the municipal agricultural web page.                            | Yes                                | Yes                                    |
| Provide a service that links available farm land with future farmers.       | This could be achieved by encouraging farm land owners to identify and provide unused farm land for others to farm. An inventory could be kept on the municipal agricultural web page.                   | Yes                                | Yes                                    |
| Acquire the Sandown Raceway property for agricultural uses                  | Important parcels of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve at risk of being removed or otherwise alienated from farming could be publicly acquired to ensure their future role and value in agriculture. | Yes                                | Yes                                    |
| Encourage realtors to market farm land for farming rather than estate homes | This would be an ongoing educational and advocacy relationship between the municipality and the real estate industry.                                                                                    | Yes                                |                                        |
| Allow more meat birds and roosters on residential lands                     | This would require an amendment to the zoning and animal control bylaws.                                                                                                                                 |                                    | Yes                                    |
| Support the establishment of a farmland trust                               | This advocacy role could be promoted by the municipality within the region and possibly supported using density bonusing during development approvals.                                                   | Yes                                | Yes                                    |



## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Marketing

| Priority Actions                                                                                                                             | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Implement a local/ethical food procurement policy                                                                                            | This applies to all food purchased by the municipality and functions as an example and encouragement for other local public institutions. As an associated action, the municipality could encourage other public and private organizations to enact similar policies. | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Allow signage for home based produce markets and sales.                                                                                      | This would require changes to the Zoning and signage bylaws.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                    | yes                                    |
| Provide a site for a permanent farmers market                                                                                                | This will require land acquisition and zoning to permit the market.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Support the formation of a local foods distribution coop                                                                                     | This would need to be a grants in aid or partnership program with the municipality.                                                                                                                                                                                   | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Develop an agricultural promotion strategy involving festivals, food promotion campaigns, farm tours, signage, website, branding and awards. | Development of a comprehensive promotion strategy may facilitate a maximum return on the expended resources.                                                                                                                                                          | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Start a local, healthy food initiative                                                                                                       | This is similar to the food procurement action and potentially expands as a community education initiative.                                                                                                                                                           | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Encourage the provincial government to provide financial assistance in establishing new farmers markets                                      | This can be achieved through letter writing, UBCM resolutions and meeting with provincial ministers.                                                                                                                                                                  | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Encourage the CRD to encourage all municipalities to have a local food procurement policy                                                    | Implementation of such policies with appropriate awareness would be an effective means of raising awareness and displaying products.                                                                                                                                  | yes                                |                                        |





## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Labour

| Priority Actions                                                                        | Implementation Considerations                                                                                              | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Establish a local agricultural labour pool on the municipal website                     | This can be done on the municipal website and a newsletter and news advertising can raise awareness about the labour pool. | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Undertake an agricultural economic development plan                                     | There may be senior government funding to assist in this strategy.                                                         | yes                                |                                        |
| Encourage local schools to teach students about farming.                                | This would have the benefit of training prospective farm workers as well as home based farming.                            | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Encourage community groups to steward, facilitate and work on local farming initiatives | This can be done on the municipal website and newsletter.                                                                  | yes                                | yes                                    |

## Municipal Actions to Support Farm Worker Housing

| Priority Actions                                                                                                                | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                                                                       | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Ensure bylaws allow farm worker housing                                                                                         | Review and implement zoning bylaw changes to ensure farm worker housing is a permitted farm use.                                                                                                    | yes                                |                                        |
| Provide a farm worker housing affordability fund                                                                                | Could use a density bonusing tool to collect funds from developers                                                                                                                                  | yes                                |                                        |
| Undertake an Agricultural Economic Development Plan                                                                             | This is also a priority strategy under labour.                                                                                                                                                      | yes                                |                                        |
| Explore and encourage changes to farm regulations to permit more flexibility for farm worker housing e.g., strata or coop farms | This will require a review of municipal and Agricultural Land Reserve regulations. If there is community support for an innovative approach, it may be best to restrict the effort to a pilot case. | yes                                |                                        |

## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Processing Services

| Priority Actions                                                                                                           | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                            | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Amend policies to support additional agricultural processing infrastructure.                                               | This would include a review of the OCP and Zoning bylaw to ensure land is designated and zoned for agricultural processing services.                     | yes                                |                                        |
| Provide property tax reductions for organizations that provide community access to certified kitchens for processing food. | This could be achieved under the Community Charter's revitalization tax exemption provisions.                                                            | yes                                |                                        |
| Support establishment of a carbon credit to reflect benefit of locally produced food                                       | Staff will need to research the viability of using a carbon credits system for this purpose.                                                             | yes                                |                                        |
| Support value added farm operations                                                                                        | This would include a review of the ALR regulations, and the OCP and Zoning bylaw to ensure land is designated and zoned for value added farm operations. | yes                                |                                        |
| Provide property tax reductions to attract key processing infrastructure like an abattoir                                  | This would include a review of the OCP and Zoning bylaw to ensure land is designated and zoned for abattoirs.                                            | yes                                | yes                                    |

## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Training and Information

| Priority Actions                                                                 | Implementation Considerations                                                                                               | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Encourage and support schools to grow food and include farming in the curriculum | This would not require anything but advocacy measures from the municipality.                                                | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Have an agrologist on staff as a resource to residents and farmers               | This initiative would also provide a resource to help implement the priority actions.                                       | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Host agricultural dialogues (forums, presentations, etc)                         | This could be a part of the ongoing implementation of the agricultural strategy working with local expertise and resources. | yes                                | yes                                    |

## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Water Supply

| Priority Actions                                                                           | Implementation Considerations                                                                                               | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Maintain bylaws that support favourable water rates for agriculture                        | This would require consideration on how to measure and validate non-traditional agriculture for the purpose of water rates. | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Undertake an Agricultural Economic Development Plan                                        | This priority action is also identified in the labour and housing food system sectors.                                      | yes                                |                                        |
| Support residents in using self-sufficient or other non-municipal water collection systems | The municipality could gather and share information on non-municipal irrigation systems.                                    |                                    | yes                                    |

## Municipal Actions to Support Agricultural Support Agencies

| Priority Actions                                                                                                                           | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                                                                                   | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Encourage neighbourhoods with private restrictive covenants (e.g., Dean Park) to allow residents to have back yard chickens and composters | The municipality can hold public information meetings on the merits of back yard animals. However, the municipality can only support or advocate in this role as it has no jurisdiction over private covenants. |                                    | yes                                    |
| Encourage a federal government bond program to purchase farmland                                                                           | This could be supported through a resolution from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.                                                                                                                 | yes                                |                                        |
| Undertake an Agricultural Economic Development Plan                                                                                        | This priority action is also identified in the water, labour and housing food system sectors.                                                                                                                   | yes                                |                                        |
| Require developers to contribute to a farm land acquisition fund.                                                                          | This could be done as a density bonusing provision in zoning bylaws.                                                                                                                                            | yes                                |                                        |
| Encourage and support schools to grow food and include farming and nutrition in the curriculum                                             | This priority action is also identified in the training and information and labour food system sectors.                                                                                                         | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Support traditional agricultural organizations like the Four H club.                                                                       | Support can be in the form of funding, in kind or in principle. Specific measures would be subject to Council deliberation.                                                                                     | yes                                | yes                                    |

## Municipal Actions to Address Environmental and Climate Change Challenges

| Priority Actions                                                                            | Implementation Considerations                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Applies to Traditional Agriculture | Applies to Non-traditional Agriculture |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Establish and run a problem wildlife program to reduce wildlife impacts on farming          | Given jurisdictional issues, this issue will likely require the participation of regional and provincial government agencies.                                                                                                                              | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Allow residents to burn agricultural refuse not suitable for composting.                    | This would be subject to provincial regulations.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Undertake an Agricultural Economic Development Plan                                         | This priority action is also identified in the support agencies, water, labour and housing food system sectors.                                                                                                                                            | yes                                |                                        |
| Control of agricultural water run off during the rainy season                               | This could be addressed through drainage controls on private and public lands.                                                                                                                                                                             | yes                                |                                        |
| Establish a municipal web page to provide environmental information relevant to agriculture | This priority action is also within the land base sector of the strategy.                                                                                                                                                                                  | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Provide more tree and hedgerow plantings                                                    | This would occur on municipal land and be integrated into the parks budget and could include edible plants and trees                                                                                                                                       | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Provide a community ‘hot composting’ facility                                               | Council could consider expanding its green waste program to include a community hot composting facility. This could be a sub-regional facility developed in conjunction with the upcoming ban on kitchen organics disposal in the Regional Land Fill site. | yes                                | yes                                    |
| Plant food producing plants on public lands                                                 | This could be done in partnership with a number of organizations like for example the B.C. Fruit Testers Association or food security groups.                                                                                                              |                                    | yes                                    |





The tables above list the priority actions relevant in each of the food system factors. It is worth noting that a number of actions are identified as important in more than one food system factor and also relevant to both traditional and non-traditional agriculture. In addition to this prioritization, we have identified the top five actions based on the number of times they were identified throughout all of the food factor tables in Appendix 1.

The top five (i.e., most frequently recommended) actions are:

- 1) Ensure municipal bylaws support agriculture.
- 2) Create an agricultural webpage (on the municipal website).
- 3) Represent local and regional interests in food/agriculture.
- 4) Undertake an agricultural economic development plan.
- 5) Support independent local agricultural organizations.

These actions should be recognized and supported by the Municipality.

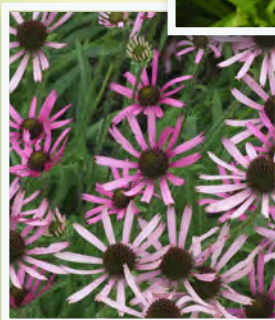
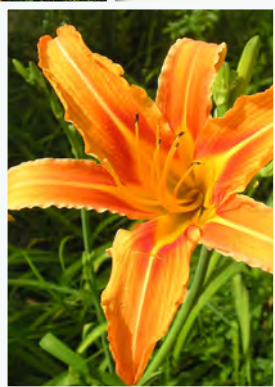
### **Priority Community Actions to Support the Local Food System:**

In addition to identifying and prioritizing potential strategic actions for the municipality to undertake, participants in the process also identified several potential actions that could be undertaken by members of, or groups in, the community.

The inclusion of community based actions, whether they be from an individual home owner, a farmer or a community organization, recognizes that the health of the local food system depends on private interests, public bodies and community interests to actively pursue a wide range of complementary and connected initiatives. The following list identifies the community actions that received the most support.

1. Address the impacts on agriculture from deer, geese and raccoons.
2. Form a farmers lobby group.
3. Encourage support agencies to reallocate some of their funding to community based initiatives.
4. Use large cisterns with solar pumps.
5. Capture and reuse grey water in private property.
6. Create a list-serve allowing members to advertise produce and locate produce.
7. Encourage agricultural programs in schools.
8. Set up an abattoir or support a mobile abattoir.
9. Retrofit farm buildings for farm worker housing.
10. Undertake cooperative produce sharing arrangements for farmers using other farmers land for a share of the harvest.
11. Encourage local stores to carry and showcase local products.

Dandelion  
Daylily  
Echinacea



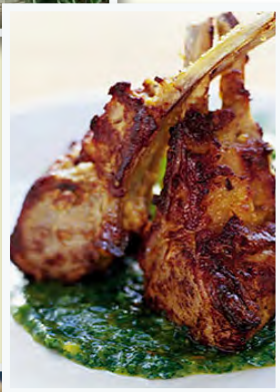
By including these actions in the WCAS, there is a recognition that there is a significant and vital role for the community and its different interests in improving agriculture and food security. Building on this recognition are several actions that could be undertaken by the community.

### Easy (Low Hanging Fruit) Actions:

In addition to the prioritized actions in the previous sections, there are a number of relatively easy initiatives that could also be undertaken. While some of these actions are easy because they are within the municipality's jurisdiction and would not require significant resources, the others may be more difficult to achieve given the need for external resources and agreements to be fully realized, e.g., implementing regional recycling for soil amendments will require agreement and implementation at a regional scale. The municipality can, though, readily give its support to the objective. The easy actions are:

- 1) Encourage greenhouses by making them exempt from site coverage restrictions.
- 2) Support local and regional recycling for soil amendments.
- 3) Encourage an independent local agriculture organization.
- 4) Schedule boulevard maintenance so as to not impact berry season.
- 5) Provide land for community orchards.
- 6) Make boulevards available for agriculture.
- 7) Change bylaws to allow on-farm markets.
- 8) Allow farmer markets in appropriate locations.
- 9) Allow farmers to post information on the municipal website.
- 10) Pursue an agricultural branding strategy.
- 11) Establish a roadside signage program.
- 12) Allow sales of home grown produce from residential properties.
- 13) Prepare an inventory of traditional and non-traditional farms and products.
- 14) Encourage food plants and plant diversity in its Development Permit guidelines and sustainability guide.
- 15) Plant trees.
- 16) Encourage integrating rain collection into development guidelines.
- 17) Support regional food and agricultural committees.

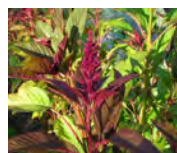
Yarn  
Lamb  
Sheep Slippers



## Edible Landscaping (aka Beautiful Food):

During the November 27th, 2010 Agricultural Ideas Fair and Planning Workshop participants were invited to assist in compiling a list of plants that could be used locally for landscaping. This list can be used as a resource for residents and property owners who want to have their landscaping also used for non-traditional agriculture. It can also be incorporated into landscaping Development Permit Guidelines.

Grapes  
Ground Cherry  
Herbs



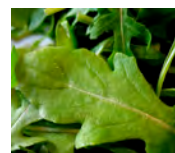
Amaranth



Apple Trees



Artichoke



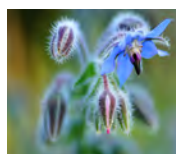
Arugula



Black/Red Currants



Blueberry



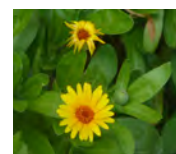
Borage



Bush Peas



Cabbage



Calendula



Camas



Cardoon



Chard



Clover



Crab Apple



Blackberry  
(Thornless & Native)



Dandelion



Daylily



Echinacea



Elderberry



Fern



Gooseberry



Grapes



Ground  
Cherries



Herbs



Honey Suckle



Horseradish



Huckleberry



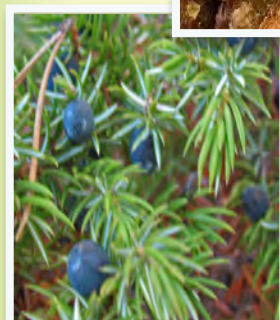
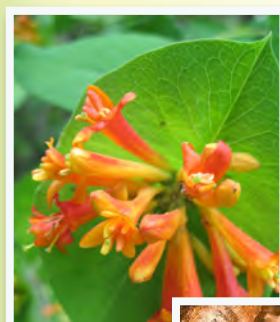
Juniper



Kale



Honeysuckle  
Horseradish Root  
Juniper



Kinnikinnick



Lavender



Lettuce



Magenta Spleen



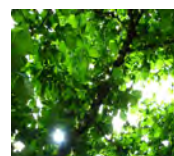
Miners  
Spinach



Nasturtiums



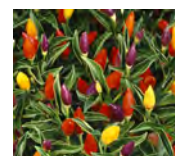
New Zealand  
Yams (OCA)



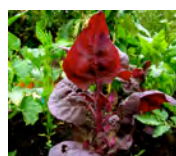
Nut-trees



Oregon Grape



Pepper Plants  
Multicoloured



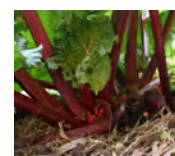
Purple Orach  
(Mt. Spinach)



Purple Potatoes



Quinoa



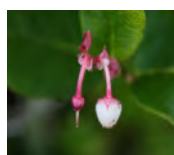
Rhubarb



Roses



Sage



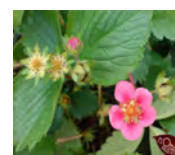
Salal



Salmon Berry/  
Thimble



Scarlet Runner  
Beans



Strawberries  
Lipstick,  
Spline



Sunflowers



Tomatoes



Wild Cherry





## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The strategy section identifies 44 priority municipal actions to support factors in the food system and agriculture. In addition, there are 11 priority community actions and 18 other municipal actions which would be relatively easy to achieve. Further, there are the “Other Good Ideas” identified by the community and a list of edible food plants that can be used for landscaping.

One of the points repeatedly made during the Public Workshop and Agricultural Ideas Fair was that the workshop should be considered as only one step in the effort to achieve food self-reliance. We strongly agree with this point. Therefore, it is recommended to have further community dialogues to review, adjust and validate the priority actions. These dialogues should be scheduled to occur every two years in order to allow for time to implement and monitor results. In addition, it is recommended to develop and convene a dialogue of stakeholders to address key strategy actions. This can be done as an e-dialogue in a web-based forum hosted by the Municipality. The benefit of bringing together key stakeholders to address specific strategy actions is that complex issues and implementation solutions require an iterative and informed dialogue to be effectively resolved.

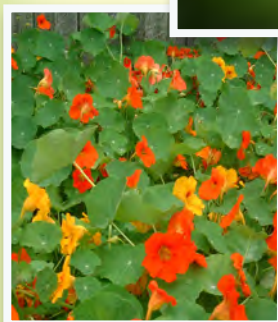
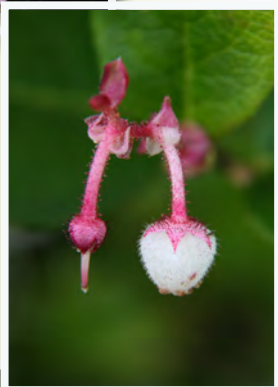
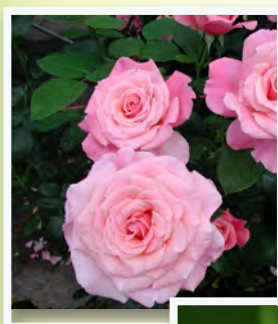
To achieve all of the municipal actions identified, a detailed work plan is required. It is recommended that the work plan be prepared for a two year period and that it address necessary resources. This should be prepared within two months of the approval of this strategy. It is also recommended that the top five recommended actions are prioritized in the work-plan. These are:

- 1) Ensure municipal bylaws support agriculture.
- 2) Create an agricultural webpage on the municipal website.
- 3) Represent local and regional interests in food/agriculture.
- 4) Undertake an agricultural economic development plan.
- 5) Support independent local agricultural organizations.

Huckleberry  
Kinnikinnick  
Lavender



Rose  
Salal  
Nasturtiums



It is recommended that the work plan include as an early effort a complete review of all bylaws affecting agriculture to ensure that the District's regulations help rather than hinder community agriculture. This effort should include changes to its Development Permit guidelines and sustainability checklist to encourage greenhouses, composting, rainwater capture in barrels, cisterns and ponds, irrigation, appropriate solar orientation, garden tool sheds, raised planters for herbs, edible landscaping (from the list in this strategy), private and common plots, arbors and adequate soil depths.

In addition to the work plan, it is also recommended that the Planning and Community Services Department provide an annual report to update Council and the community on progress on the anniversary date of the first work plan.

With respect to the community actions and "other good ideas" listed in the strategy, it is recommended to refer these to the District's Agricultural Advisory Commission for their advice on how to engage and encourage the community to undertake the priority actions.

Over time it will be important to monitor and evaluate the progress in implementing this strategy and versions that may follow it. Some of the indicators of success will include an increase of the amount of land in production, an increase in farm income and an increase in the amount of food grown locally along with a decrease in the percentage of food imported to meet our needs. It is recommended that Council consider assigning staff resources to develop the data base from which to monitor these indicators. This should be addressed in the work plan.



## APPENDICES





## Appendix A: Proposed Development Permit Guideline wording for Non-traditional agriculture in Multifamily, Commercial and Industrial Developments:

- 1) To encourage food production in multifamily, commercial and industrial developments, development proposals should include in their plans the details and locations of:
  - a) greenhouses,
  - b) composting facilities,
  - c) rainwater capture in barrels, cisterns and ponds,
  - d) irrigation including manual connections for food plants,
  - e) garden tool sheds,
  - f) raised planters for herbs,
  - g) private garden plots,
  - h) community gardens,
  - i) arbours and associated plantings e.g., grapes, kiwi vines or other food producing vines
  - j) bee hives to provide pollination and honey production
- 2) Adequate soil depth should be specified for all plantings.
- 3) The design and layout of food plants and buildings for gardening shall optimize solar orientation to ensure adequate sun exposure for plantings.
- 4) Edible landscaping in common planting areas using plant selections from the following list:

- |                                     |                                |                                                              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| * Amaranth                          | * Fern                         | * Pepper Plants multicoloured                                |
| * Apple Trees                       | * Fruit trees and berry shrubs | * Purple Orach                                               |
| * Artichoke                         | * Gooseberry                   | * Purple Potatoes                                            |
| * Arugula                           | * Grapes                       | * Quinoa                                                     |
| * Black/red currents                | * Ground Cherries              | * Rhubarb                                                    |
| * Blueberry - high/low              | * Herbs                        | * Roses                                                      |
| * Borage                            | * Honey Suckle                 | * Sage                                                       |
| * Bush peas (darlaine)              | * Horseradish                  | * Salal                                                      |
| * Cabbage                           | * Huckleberry                  | * Salmon berry/Thimble                                       |
| * Calendula                         | * Juniper                      | * Scarlet Runner Beans                                       |
| * Camas                             | * Kale                         | * Strawberries - Lipstick, Spline                            |
| * Cardoon                           | * Kinnikinnick                 | * Sunflowers                                                 |
| * Chard                             | * Lavender                     | * Tomatoes (Currant Hawaiian Currant, Coyote Yellow Currant) |
| * Chives                            | * Lettuce                      | * Wild Cherry                                                |
| * Clover                            | * Magenta Spreen               |                                                              |
| * Crab Apple                        | * Miners spinach               |                                                              |
| * Cultivated Thornless Blackberries | * Nasturtiums                  |                                                              |
| * Dandelion                         | * Native Blackberry            |                                                              |
| * Daylily                           | * New Zealand Yams             |                                                              |
| * Echinacea                         | * Nut-trees                    |                                                              |
| * Elderberry                        | * Oregon Grape                 |                                                              |

Lettuce  
Magenta Spreen  
Pepper Plant





## Appendix B: Other Good Ideas:

During the November 27th, 2010 Ideas Fair and Planning Workshop, participants were invited to provide ideas that they did not feel necessarily fit in the categories within the identified Food System Factors. These ideas are listed below in priority determined through the “dotmocracy” voting.

1. Build a local seed bank - known to be grown successfully in our micro climate.
2. Promote municipal compost operation so we are not wasting valuable biomass.
3. Create a starter package for new small scale farmers.
4. Establish farm equipment pool.
5. Declare North Saanich as genetically modified free zone.
6. Maintain and develop pollination resources - think of insects other than bees that also play a constant role in pollination.
7. Give more flexibility to farmers to carry on home businesses on the property.
8. Community buys shares in livestock and processing is done with farmer assistance on the property.
9. Let's have clear goals (rules or bylaws) for everyone and then stick to them.
10. Encourage the creation of value added products from the bottom of the supply chain to the top i.e., glass jars and lids.
11. Remove the current (hidden) tax on vegetable gardens. This tax is based on guess work and is grossly unfair, (along with the current tax on solar energy). Anyone in most areas of North Saanich who wishes to grow a variety of vegetables requires an area protected from deer and rabbits by a deer fence. This results in an increase in one's property assessment and hence an increase in property tax regardless of whether one grows vegetables or not.
12. The current tree protection by-law may prevent trimming or removing trees to allow necessary sunlight to reach my vegetable garden. Amend the by-law to allow for reasonable tree trimming/removal.
13. Water used to irrigate non-traditional crops is purchased at a high cost to subsidize “traditional agriculture”. Please consider allowing non-traditional farmers access to water at the same rate as is charged for traditional farms.
14. Trade housing for farming expertise e.g., provide labour and knowledge in exchange for cheaper accommodations.

New Zealand Yam  
Salmonberry  
Scarlet Runner & Purple Bean  
Pods



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